STAGING THE NATION, STAGING DEMOCRACY:
THE POLITICS OF COMMEMORATION IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA, 1918-1933/34

By

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Between 1914 and 1919, Germans and Austrians experienced previously unimaginable sociopolitical transformations: four years of war, military defeat, the collapse of the Hohenzollern and Habsburg monarchies, the creation of democratic republics, and the redrawing of the map of Central Europe. Through an analysis of new state symbols and the staging of political and cultural celebrations, this dissertation explores the multiple and conflicting ways in which Germans and Austrians sought to reconceptualize the relationships between nation, state and politics in the wake of the First World War. Whereas the political right argued that democracy was a foreign imposition, supporters of democracy in both countries went to great lengths to refute these claims. In particular, German and Austrian republicans endeavored to link their fledgling democracies to the established tradition of großdeutsch nationalism – the idea that a German nation-state should include Austria – in an attempt to legitimize their embattled republics. By using nineteenth-century großdeutsch symbols and showing continued support for an Anschluss (political union) even after the Entente forbade it, republicans hoped to create a transborder German national community that would be compatible with a democratic body politic.

As a project that investigates the entangled and comparative histories of Germany and Austria, this dissertation makes three contributions to the study of German nationalism and
modern Central European history. First, in revealing the pervasiveness of großdeutsch ideas and symbols at this time, I point to the necessity of looking at both Germany and Austria when considering topics such as the redefinition of national identity and the creation of democracy in post-World War I Central Europe. Second, it highlights the need to move beyond the binary categorizations of civic and ethnic nationalisms, which place German nationalism in the latter category. As the republicans’ use of großdeutsch nationalism demonstrates, the creation of a transborder German community was not simply the work of the extreme political right. Third, it contributes to recent scholarship which seeks to move past the entrenched question of why interwar German and Austrian democracies failed. Instead of simply viewing the two republics as failures, it investigates the ways in which citizens engaged with the new form of government, as well as the prospects for the success of democracy in the wake of military defeat. In drawing attention to the differences between the German and Austrian experiments with democracy, this dissertation points to the relative strengths of the Weimar Republic when compared to the First Austrian Republic.
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Lastly, I would like to thank my family, especially my parents, for their love and unfailing support. Although my parents may have found my fascination with German history a bit puzzling, they have been my biggest cheerleaders along the way. It is to them that I dedicate this work.
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<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Auswärtige Angelegenheiten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AdR</td>
<td>Archiv der Republik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AdSD</td>
<td>Archiv der sozialen Demokratie der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Bonn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVA</td>
<td>Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAB</td>
<td>Bundesarchiv Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAK</td>
<td>Bundesarchiv Koblenz</td>
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<tr>
<td>BKA</td>
<td>Bundeskanzleramt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMfHW</td>
<td>Bundesministerium für Heereswesen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSP</td>
<td>Christlichsoziale Partei (Christian Social Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDP</td>
<td>Deutsche Demokratische Partei (German Democratic Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNVP</td>
<td>Deutschnationale Volkspartei (German National People’s Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVP</td>
<td>Deutsche Volkspartei (German People’s Party)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDVP</td>
<td>Großdeutsche Volkspartei (Greater German People’s Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRP</td>
<td>Ministerratsprotokolle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPA</td>
<td>Neues Politisches Archiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSDAP</td>
<td>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist Workers’ Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ÖStA</td>
<td>Österreichisches Staatsarchiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAAA</td>
<td>Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Präs.</td>
<td>Präsidium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PrK</td>
<td>Präsidentschaftskanzlei</td>
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<tr>
<td>RehrlBr</td>
<td>Rehrl-Brief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>Salzburger Landesarchiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDAP</td>
<td>Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei Österreichs (Social Democratic Workers’ Party of Austria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StLA</td>
<td>Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.Allg.</td>
<td>Unterricht Allgemein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VGA</td>
<td>Verein für die Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, Vienna</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZGS</td>
<td>Zeitgeschichtliche Sammlung</td>
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Introduction

The news was unexpected and unwelcome. On September 29, 1918, General Erich Ludendorff informed the German emperor, as well as the parliament, that the war was lost. Although there had been growing opposition to the war and demands for a negotiated peace among the Reichstag representatives of the Independent Social Democrats, Majority Social Democrats, Progressives, and the left-wing of the Catholic Centre Party, Ludendorff’s announcement still came as a shock to those on both the political left and right. “The delegates were completely shattered. Friedrich Ebert turned deathly pale, [Gustav] Stresemann looked as though he’d been stabbed. There were half stifled cries, and eyes welled up with tears,” reported the journalist Erich Dombrowski on the Reichstag’s reaction to the news.¹

Defeat was not the only upheaval that subjects of the Hohenzollern monarchy experienced that autumn. A little over a month after Ludendorff’s pronouncement, the very parliamentarians he had shocked with news of the military loss – Ebert and his fellow social democrats – would hold the reins of the government. Ludendorff, a man who detested parliamentary government and democratic practices, helped to usher in constitutional reforms to ensure that the Reichstag representatives, and not the military leaders, would have to sue for peace.² Political change in Germany, however, did not just come from above. Social unrest had been growing on the home front, as the inability of the imperial state to meet the material demands of the population caused the monarchy increasingly to lose legitimacy in

² As Roger Chickering notes, there was a “perverse irony of these developments,” for “the father of German democracy was Erich Ludendorff.” Roger Chickering, Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914-1918, New Approaches to European History, ed. William Beik and T.C.W. Blanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 188.
the eyes of its subjects.\textsuperscript{3} By the end of October, sailors stationed in Kiel had mutinied, consequently touching off widespread protest and the rapid formation of workers’ and soldiers’ councils throughout Germany. With revolution underway, the struggle to gain control of the state ensued. On November 9, events came to a head: Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated, Philipp Scheidemann of the majority social democrats (SPD) proclaimed a German Republic, and the Spartacist Karl Liebknecht announced the establishment of a soviet republic. Just as the news of the military loss had struck a nerve, so too did the creation of the republic and continuing political struggles. While a 10-year-old Sebastian Haffner “felt somehow surprised that were was so little fuss” over the end of the Hohenzollerns’ reign, he commented that the revolution greatly impacted his daily life. For him, it was a “contradictory and confusing” experience.\textsuperscript{4}

Like its wartime ally, Austria-Hungary was also experiencing convulsions brought about by the war. However, for those German speakers in the Austrian half of the dual monarchy, it was the collapse of the multinational empire that left the population disoriented and traumatized. Whereas the Reich would generally remain intact even after the Treaty of Versailles, the Habsburg Empire was dissolving in the fall of 1918 as various nationalist politicians declared their own sovereign states. While Czechoslovak activists, for example, saw this as a celebratory period due to Allied recognition of their claims for sovereignty, the German speakers were left to constitute their own government as quickly as possible. When the German Austrian representatives gathered on October 21 to begin the difficult task of


creating a possible state, they were facing inauspicious circumstances.\textsuperscript{5} Although the collapse of the empire appeared to be near, it was still unclear what would happen to the monarchy, leaving the shape and substance of the governmental system an open question. Moreover, it was unclear how a new state would be constituted geographically and legally. Not only were boundaries already being drawn on the ground by the movement of troops associated with the various national groups, but the German Austrians had stronger feelings of attachment to their provinces than to a future German Austrian state.\textsuperscript{6} Two days after the German Republic was declared, Karl I agreed to “renounce all participation in the affairs of state” without formally abdicating.\textsuperscript{7} The next day, the leaders of the Social Democrats, the Christian Socials, and the German Nationalists, who had put aside their intense political differences since October in an effort to form a state, declared “German-Austria is a democratic republic.” In the very next breath, however, they sought to dissolve the sovereignty of the new state by declaring, “German-Austria is a constitutive part of the German republic.”\textsuperscript{8}

Although the transfer of power and formation of the republic in Austria were less fraught with political violence than in Germany, the enormity of these changes was jarring for the new citizens of German-Austria. Stefan Zweig’s writings encapsulated the upheaval


\textsuperscript{6} Vorarlberg, for instance, had tried to join Switzerland. As the German ambassador to Austria reported in October 1918, “Der Tiroler fühlt sich als Tiroler, aber kaum als Oesterreicher, dem Kärntner und Steierer geht es ähnlich, der Salzburger und Oberösterreicher ist durch den regen Verkehr mit Bayern weniger national abgeschlossen, als Oesterreicher aber fühlt sich eigentlich nur der Niederösterreicher und die nach Wien gravitierenden deutschen Bewohner der Sudetenländer.” Letter from Count von Wedel to Seiner Großherzoglichen Hoheit dem Herrn Reichskanzler Prinzen Max von Baden, Vienna, 30 October 1918, in Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin (PAAA), R9006, A46471.

\textsuperscript{7} Quote is from the Emperor’s announcement on November 11\textsuperscript{th}. The full text can be found in Klemens von Klemperer, \textit{Ignaz Seipel: Christian Stateman in a Time of Crisis} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 89.

experienced by Austrians that autumn. Having spent the last year of the war in Switzerland, Zweig was in the process of returning to Austria upon the conclusion of hostilities. While customs officials were barely inspecting his papers, he noticed that a crowd was gathering on the train platform. Going over to see what the commotion was about, he saw a train arriving. “Then I recognized behind the plate glass window of the car,” Zweig wrote, “Emperor Karl, the last emperor of Austria standing with his black-clad wife, Empress Zita. I was startled; the last emperor of Austria, heir of the Habsburg dynasty which had ruled for seven hundred years, was forsaking his realm!” The sight of the emperor prompted Zweig to reminisce about the times he had seen the emperor in “legendary splendor” at various celebrations before the war. Abruptly he was confronted with the new reality of Austria when he transferred to an Austrian train to continue his journey to Salzburg. “One had but to enter them [the Austrian trains] to become aware beforehand of what had happened to the country. The guards who showed us our seats were haggard, starved and tatterdemalion; they crawled about with torn and shabby uniforms hanging loosely over their stooped shoulders,” Zweig remarked. In those few moments, Zweig had witnessed the transformation of Austria from a great empire to a rump state in a precarious economic situation, which left him, like many other Austrians, feeling profoundly shocked.

Consequently, the idea of an Anschluss garnered support in the newly formed German-Austria. With the new state cut off from important resources and transportation networks, many Austrians saw their country as unviable and therefore turned to Germany for salvation. Confronting their own defeat, Reich Germans from across the political spectrum also supported a political union. They saw the Anschluss as a new path to achieve national unity and recovery in face of the disastrous outcome of the war (although it should be noted

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that the government was hesitant to make any bold moves with regard to the *Anschluss* due to fears of upsetting the Entente). However, the Entente was unwilling to see Germany benefit from the war. For the arbiters at the Paris Peace Conference, an enlarged Germany did not appear to be the bastion of democracy; rather, it raised fears of renewed German imperialism. In the spring of 1919, before either of the treaties was handed to the Germans and Austrians, the Allies announced that an *Anschluss* would not be permitted. Included in both the Treaties of Versailles (June 1919) and St. Germain (September 1919) was a clause that forbade an *Anschluss* unless the Council of the League of Nations decided to give its approval at a later date.10

The prohibition of an *Anschluss* was only one among many terms of the Paris peace settlement that heightened the profound sense of despair for Reich Germans and Austrians. Both countries had believed that the institution of democratic regimes would enable them to secure a peace based on Wilson’s Fourteen Points. In particular, they were taken aback and outraged by the Allies’ uneven application of the principle of national self-determination. The Austrians not only decried the prohibition of an *Anschluss*, but they were also distressed by the decision to award South Tyrol to Italy, the confirmation that the Sudetenland would become part of the new Czechoslovak state, and the requirement that the country’s name “German-Austria” be changed to the “Republic of Austria.” Likewise, the Reich Germans felt aggrieved by the Treaty of Versailles. Although historians have subsequently shown that the treaty was not a “Carthaginian peace,” Germans across the political spectrum viewed it as

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such.\textsuperscript{11} The “war guilt” clause, reparations, the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine for 15 years, a significant reduction of the military and navy, the creation of the Polish Corridor, and the loss of Danzig and Alsace-Lorraine generated profound dissatisfaction. The Germans’ sense of injustice was enhanced by the fact that the treaty was non-negotiable.\textsuperscript{12}

Hence, although the precise dimensions of the trauma in 1918-1919 differed, both Reich Germans and Austrians experienced military defeat, the collapse of their monarchies, the creation of democratic republics, and the redrawing of the map of East Central Europe. Against this backdrop of previously unimaginable geopolitical transformations, Reich Germans and Austrians were forced to reconceptualize the relationships between nation, state, and politics. Not only did they feel compelled to redefine the boundaries of what constituted Germanness and Austrianess, but they also had to grapple with their newfound role as citizens living in full-fledged democracies.

This dissertation investigates the multiple and conflicting ways that Reich Germans and Austrians sought to (re)define the concepts of nation, state, citizenship, and democracy from the end of the Great War until the takeover of Nazism and Austrofascism. To analyze how Reich Germans and Austrians tried to fill these terms with new meanings, this dissertation looks at debates about state symbols, the attempts to create and stage holidays for the new republics, and the celebration of cultural figures. As Margarete Myers Feinstein has pointed out in her study of the attempts to find appropriate symbols in West and East Germany, governments use state symbols in an effort “to shape national-identity construction


in order to legitimate their rule." In order to successfully gain legitimacy in the eyes of its population, the state must ensure that “its vision of the society’s past, present, and future approximates the vision held by the public.” The ascription of meaning for a particular political symbol therefore comes from both above and below, both from the state and from its citizens. Alongside symbols such as the state flag or national anthem, the ritual found in commemorative practices serves as an equally important way to cement existing power relations and to create a meaningful sense of community. Yet, as numerous scholars have indicated, commemorations also risk becoming occasions that highlight divisions and unrest. Ritual can, according to anthropologist David Kertzer, “provide a weapon in political struggle, a weapon used both by those who seek to protect or to overthrow unstable systems.” Hence, for the study of the Weimar and First Austrian Republics, the terrain of symbols and commemorations is particularly useful for investigating how government officials, party leaders, associations, and individual citizens attempted to forge a particular form of a national community in order to support or undermine democracy in a time of turmoil.

The remainder of this introduction addresses the three central issues examined in this dissertation: the varieties of German nationalisms after the First World War, the entangled

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histories of Germany and Austria during the Weimar period, and the comparative histories of the Weimar and First Austrian Republics. It concludes with a discussion of the structure of the overall dissertation.

**German Nationalisms in the Weimar and First Austrian Republics**

In the democratized political culture that emerged out of the war, Reich Germans and Austrians competed to speak for a German national community. They did this in an effort to win popular support, and hence political power, in the new and unstable republics.\(^6\) For the political right in both countries, nationalism was mobilized in an effort to discredit the new regimes. The republics and the supporters of democracy, according to conservative and right-wing parties and associations, were un-German.\(^7\) Although comprised of a diverse group of conservatives and radicals, those on the right of the political spectrum were united in their efforts to use an exclusionary, antisemitic, antimarxist, and antidemocratic form of German nationalism as a way to repudiate the republics. In their eyes, the new parliamentary republics were foreign impositions, and republicans, especially the Social Democrats, were traitors to the nation due to their internationalist and cosmopolitan leanings.

Yet, republicans did not stand idly by while the right attacked the republics. As this dissertation argues, republicans – primarily comprising the German and Austrian Social Democratic Parties, the German Democratic Party, the Catholic Center Party, and independent liberal democrats\(^8\) – went to great lengths to refute the claims of the political

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\(^6\) Rogers Brubaker’s idea that “nationhood is not an ethnodemographic or ethnocultural fact” but “a political claim” is useful in this regard. Nationhood, he continues, “is used […] to change the world, to change the way people see themselves, to mobilize loyalties, kindle energies, and articulate demands.” Rogers Brubaker, “In the Name of the Nation: Reflections on Nationalism and Patriotism,” *Citizenship Studies* 8, no. 2 (June 2004): 115-127, here 116.

\(^7\) The political right in both countries will be addressed in more detail in Chapter One.

\(^8\) I use the term “republicans” as a way to categorize the most consistent supporters of democracy in both countries. It is, of course, not entirely satisfactory. The right-wing of the Catholic Centre Party, for example,
right by demonstrating what they saw as the deep connections between German nationalism and democracy.19 I demonstrate that großdeutsch nationalism – the idea that a German nation-state should include Austria – was central to the republicans’ persistent and imaginative attempts to win over their skeptics, discredit their right-wing opponents, and prove a German commitment to democracy and peace to foreign audiences. They cited historical manifestations of großdeutsch nationalism, particularly the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848-1849, to argue that a democratic, national tradition existed in German-speaking Europe. Correspondingly, in directing their attention to the postwar situation, they loudly advocated for an Anschluss as a way to prove their national convictions to their domestic opponents.

They also lobbied the Allied powers to allow an Anschluss by maintaining that the

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19 In this regard, I am contributing to a growing body of literature on this topic within the confines of the Weimar Republic. See Jürgen Heß, ‘Das ganze Deutschland soll es sein’: Demokratischer Nationalismus in der Weimarer Republik am Beispiel der Deutschen Demokratischen Partei (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1978); Karl Rohe, Das Reichsbanner Schwarz Rot Gold: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Struktur der politischen Kampfverbände zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik, ed. Kommission für Geschichte des Parlamentarismus und der politischen Parteien (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1966); Bernd Buchner, Um nationale und republikanische Identität: Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und der Kampf um die politischen Symbole in der Weimarer Republik (Bonn: Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachf., 2001); Manuela Achilles, “Re-Forming the Reich: Symbolics of the Republican Nation in Weimar Germany” (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Michigan, 2005); Robert Gerwarth, “The Past in Weimar History,” Contemporary European History 15, no. 1 (2006): 1-22; Eric Bryden, “In Search of Founding Fathers: Republican Historical Narratives in Weimar Germany, 1918-1933” (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of California – Davis, 2008); Nadine Rossol, “Visualizing the Republic – Unifying the Nation: The Reichskunstwart and the Creation of Republican Representation and Identity in Weimar Germany” (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Limerick, 2006). This dissertation is not available, but the author allowed me to see two chapters in order to get a sense of her work. Her recently published book also makes mention of this issue, although its focus is on the continuities of mass festivities in the Weimar and Nazi periods. Nadine Rossol, Performing the Nation in Interwar Germany: Sport, Spectacle and Political Symbolism, 1926-1936 (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). Stanley Suval also addresses this issue in the Weimar and First Austrian Republics, noting that nationalism at the time was “pluralistic” and that the Anschluss question was linked to democratic politics. Stanley Suval, The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era: A Study of Nationalism in Germany and Austria, 1918-1932 (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).
unification of Germany and Austria would be achieved through peaceful means and would secure international cooperation on the continent. The Allied powers’ violation of the Austrian right to self-determination proved, the republicans asserted, that Germany and Austria had become, after 1918, the true defenders of democracy. Contrasting their peaceful goals with an alleged imperialism on the part of the west, republicans argued that there existed different, national types, of democracy.

Although republicans defined the basis of the Volk in various ways – history, culture, language, common descent, choice – they did aim consciously to develop a form of nationalism that stood in direct contrast to conservative and right-wing nationalism. “Our national convictions are far removed from the nationalist convictions of our opponents,” proclaimed Scheidemann, the very man who had declared the German Republic on November 9, 1918.20 Even though republicans were certainly capable of displaying chauvinistic ways of thinking, their großdeutsch nationalism generally supported democratic rights and practices, reconciled international and national allegiances, and favored the equality of nations. They had limited revisionist aims, which they contrasted with the imperialism of Wilhelmine Germany and the postwar political right. Although they challenged the postwar settlement with regard to Austria, they still supported the fundamental basis of the new international order.

In exploring the uses of transborder nationalism to support a democratic body politic, this dissertation contributes to a growing literature that challenges the binary categorizations

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of “good” and “bad” nationalisms, which tend to place German nationalism in the latter category.\textsuperscript{21} The experience of National Socialism has colored the lens through which scholars have viewed German nationalism. In this regard, German nationalism has been labeled as ethnic and exclusionary from the start. Typical of this teleology is Liah Greenfeld’s assertion that “[t]he possibility of the Final Solution was inherent in German national consciousness.”\textsuperscript{22} She therefore reproduces an older typology of nationalism first originated by Hans Kohn which distinguished between western and eastern, civic and ethnic, liberal and illiberal forms of nationalism.\textsuperscript{23} This dissertation shows, in contrast, that there was no single form of German nationalism during the Weimar era. Rather, competing political groups in both countries used German nationalism to both support and malign democracy. Moreover, they heavily contested the meaning of such terms as \textit{Volk}, \textit{Volksgemeinschaft}, \textit{Stamm}, and \textit{Heimat}, all of which are central concepts in a German tradition of social and political thought. As scholars such as Till van Rahden and Celia

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} For example, Brian Vick and Manuela Achilles both directly address the need to move beyond this older dichotomy. Brian Vick, \textit{Defining Germany: The 1848 Frankfurt Parliamentarians and National Identity} (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2002). Vick demonstrates that such a binary opposition does not hold up during the revolution of 1848-1848 due to the mutability of concepts of nationhood at the time. Moreover, he makes the case that for the delegates at St. Paul’s Church, there was no clear distinction between cultural and political understandings of nationhood; the two were intertwined. Manuela Achilles’s “Re-Forming the Reich: Symbolics of the Republican Nation in Weimar Germany” (Ph.D., diss.: University of Michigan, 2005) discusses the existence of a constitutional Weimar patriotism that combined republican and national ideals. She argues the republicans in the Weimar Republic created an inclusive democratic political culture, as well as an inclusive version of the nation.
\end{itemize}
Applegate have shown, attachments to *Stamm* and *Heimat* in the imperial period and into the 1920s were not yet solely predicated on a belief in *Blut und Boden*. These ideas were ambiguous and flexible, allowing historical actors to fill them with different meanings. With regard to the mobilization of German nationalism, this dissertation argues that there was no straight line from 1918 to the Nazi takeover in 1933, the Austrofascist takeover in 1934, or the Nazi-orchestrated *Anschluss* in 1938.

The ambiguity and elasticity of these terms becomes even more apparent when considering the issue of Austrian identity during the Weimar era. Austrians used these same terms in an attempt to negotiate between dual identifications: membership in a greater German nation and citizenship in an Austrian state. Using studies by van Rahden, Applegate, and Alon Confino, which demonstrate the capacity of national identity “to represent the nation without excluding a host of other identities” as Confino puts it, this dissertation argues that identifications with Austrianness amounted to a regional, not a national, identity. For citizens of the First Republic, their relationship to the German *Volk* and Reich became a fundamental aspect of being Austrian after the Great War, even for those who wished to create a stronger Austrian identity and to maintain Austria’s independence from Germany. Unlike the examples studied by Applegate and Confino, however, the region in this case – Austria – lay outside of the borders of the nation-state and even constituted its own country.

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Indeed, the First Republic and its citizenry were a peculiarity in the interwar period. In the period following the First World War, there was a widespread sense that there was a disjuncture between nation and state in the territorially reorganized East Central Europe. The arbiters at the Paris Peace Conference enshrined this notion in the creation of Minorities Treaties. To explain this situation in both the interwar and post-Cold War eras, Rogers Brubaker developed the notion of a “triadic nexus” of “three distinct and mutually antagonistic nationalisms”: “‘nationalizing’ nationalisms of newly independent (or newly reconfigured) states,” “transborder nationalisms of […] ‘external national homelands,’” and the nationalism of national minorities.\textsuperscript{26} While this model may be valid for most of the countries in East Central Europe created by the peace settlement at the end of the Great War, it does not apply to Austrians, who possessed their own state. This particular situation added a layer of complexity to Austrians’ attempts to rethink the relationship between nation, state, and politics. As this dissertation shows, the almost universal belief among Austrians that they were part of a German nation coupled with the widespread desire for an Anschluss complicated the task of creating a loyal citizenry not only to the republic, but to the state itself.

Writing an Entangled History of the Weimar and First Austrian Republics

In revealing the pervasiveness of großdeutsch ideas and symbols in the Weimar era, this dissertation points to the necessity of looking at both Germany and Austria when considering the redefinition of national identity and the creation of democracy in Central Europe after the Great War. Surprisingly, the topic of cross-border connections and points of

contact between citizens of the two states remains an under-researched one. Beginning with
the nineteenth-century historian Heinrich von Treitschke’s view that German history was the
story of Prussia’s inevitable, triumphant march to lead a German nation-state, the writing of
German history has often remained entrenched within the boundaries of the nation-state
created by Bismarck. Almost thirty years ago, the historian James Sheehan prompted
historians to think outside of this box when he asked, “What is German history?” He urged
scholars to conceive of a German “history of cultural richness and regional diversity, of
economic activities and social institutions without national configuration, of relationships
which stretch across legally-defined frontiers.”\textsuperscript{27} Within the past fifteen years, historians
have enthusiastically taken up Sheehan’s challenge and made a concerted effort to move
beyond narratives bounded by the nation and state. Scholars have embraced transnational
approaches to history and produced important work which addresses a range of topics
including German imperialism and colonialism, the involvement of Reich Germans in
international movements (socialism and pacifism for example), the impact of migration and
immigration on Germany, and the relationships between the Reich and German-speaking
communities in East Central Europe and abroad.\textsuperscript{28}

Yet, Austria remains largely absent from the purview of those writing “German”
history. Sheehan lamented “that the defeat of Austria in 1866 resulted in her extrusion from
German historiography.” Since his suggestion that “[a] good deal might be learned if these
various histories were brought together again,”\textsuperscript{29} few historians of Germany have pursued a
cross-border study of Austria and Germany. In 1996, the German historian Thomas

\textsuperscript{27} James J. Sheehan, “What is German History? Reflections on the Role of the Nation in German History and
\textsuperscript{28} For a general discussion of the impact of transnationalism on German studies, see H-German Forum,
\textsuperscript{29} Sheehan, “What is German History?”, 18.
Brechenmacher again raised the point that many of his fellow colleagues continued to limit their understanding of German history to the territorial boundaries of 1871. He contended that “[w]hoever goes about writing German history must find an answer to the question of the ‘Austria factor’ […].” And, as recently as 2003, when this project was in its infancy, Philipp Ther noted that practitioners of “German” history had mostly disregarded Sheehan’s suggestion and were continuing to ignore what he called the historical “mutual influences” between Germany and Austria. Taking up the recent challenge of Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer to “shif[t] the narrative frame from a history of Germany as a state to the histories of Germans as a people” by reconceptualizing twentieth-century German history as the formation and breaking of communal bonds, this project seeks to fruitfully complicate the standard narratives of German history by looking at the transborder interactions and transfer of ideas between Reich Germans and Austrians.

In the field of Austrian studies, the situation looks quite different. Here, the connections between Austrian and German history have not only been more thoroughly addressed, but they have also been the subject of heated debate. The greater interest in the topic by historians of Austria has much to do with the postwar attempt to create the idea of an Austrian nation. For much of the postwar period, one of the central features of Austrian national identity was the myth, in part propagated by the Allies, that Austria was Hitler’s first victim in his drive to conquer Europe. Such a claim was predicated on the idea that the German and Austrian nations had always been separate, as had their histories. Historians in


the Second Austrian Republic therefore played a role in seeking to define a separate Austrian nation; they supported the notion that an Austrian nation had been in existence for hundreds of years. This idea, in turn, was based on “the denial of every historical, linguistic, and cultural connection to the German past.”

While this separation of Austria from German history was the subject of some discussion, the debate came to a head in the late 1980s with the publication of two essays by the West German historian Karl Dietrich Erdmann: “The Trace of Austria in German History” and “Three States, Two Nations, One Volk?” As the title of the second essay indicates, Erdmann argued that West Germany, East Germany, and the Second Austrian Republic could be seen as three states, two nations, and one Volk. The ensuing controversy came to be known the “Austrian Historikerstreit”. To complicate matters, for a younger, postwar generation of scholars, the Austrians have always constituted a separate nation and attempts to construct Austrian history differently were denounced as a revival of a “‘pan-German [gesamtdeutsch]’ version of German nationalism” that is historically related to “völkisch and racial concepts.” However, Fritz Fellner, Harry Ritter and Peter Thaler have

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37 Margarete Gradner, Gernot Heiss, and Oliver Rathkolb, “Österreich und seine deutsche Identität,” 519.
convincingly countered these arguments on the grounds that the “Austrian nation” is a geopolitically and strategic creation of the post-1945 period. Indeed, despite the debate about whether Austria should be included in “German” history, many historians of the First Republic recognize that most Austrians experienced dual identities during this time, namely that they felt themselves to be both German and Austrian.38

Notwithstanding these omissions and disputes, several studies have researched cross-border connections,39 or at the very least have acknowledged the presence of the großdeutsch idea in both countries during the interwar period. In his far-ranging but disjointed study, The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era, Stanley Suval recognized that großdeutsch nationalism was not confined to the realm of ideas. He investigates the intersection points of the Anschluss movement with different forms of German nationalism, as well as with foreign policy, economics and politics in both the Weimar and First Austrian Republics,40 making the vital point that the Anschluss movement was most closely tied to “democratic politics.”41 The political scientist Peter Katzenstein also proposed to look at the relationship between Germany and Austria in his book, Disjoined Partners. He developed a model to explain “the persistence of political autonomy […] where states are culturally united.”42 Investigating

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38 This is quite a large body of literature. References to different works can be found throughout the body of the dissertation.
39 For edited collections that cover a range of topics (relations between governments, German and Austrian views of topics such as religion or the Anschluss) during various time periods, see Robert A. Kann and Friedrich E. Prinz (eds.), Deutschland und Österreich. Ein bilaterales Geschichtsbuch (Vienna and Munich: Jugend und Volk Verlagsgesellschaft, 1980); Michael Gehler, et. al. (eds.), Uneinheitliche Partner?: Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik, Deutschland-Österreich. Verbrengte Nachbarn: Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung im Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, 19. Mai bis 23. Oktober 2005, im Zeitgeschichtlichen Forum Leipzig, 2. Juni bis 9. Oktober 2005, in Wien 2006 (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2005). It should be noted that while the exhibition and its catalogue cover the period from 1806 to the present, they barely make mention of the years from 1918-1938.
40 Suval, The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era.
41 Suval, 24.
42 Peter J. Katzenstein, Disjoined Partners: Austria and Germany since 1815 (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1976), 32.
how forces of integration and disintegration operated from 1815 until 1970, he argues that the period from 1918-1938 displayed a decided tendency towards integration. Problematically, however, he makes this conclusion by mainly looking at the actions of the Austrian government and interest groups. By focusing primarily on Austria, he concludes that the Austrians were more interested and committed to an Anschluss than were the Reich Germans and their government.43 Although this argument would hold for the two governments’ foreign policies, this dissertation demonstrates that the imagining of a transborder German community was not simply the work of unhappy Austrians trying to rise above dissatisfactory postwar conditions. Rather, citizens on both sides of the Austro-German border actively engaged in the project of a Greater Germany.

Displaying a similar propensity to national narrowness are historians of the Weimar Republic who have acknowledged that republicans in Germany seized upon the großdeutsch idea primarily as a weapon in a domestic political struggle, namely in their attempts to gain legitimacy in the eyes of their right-wing opponents.44 These works tend to reference the großdeutsch rhetoric of the republicans in the Reich only and do not seek to explore the relationships between German and Austrian proponents of the großdeutsch idea.45 In Robert Gerwarth’s “The Past in Weimar History,” for example, this oversight causes him to be dismissive of the complexity of the republicans’ großdeutsch nationalism. From his point of

43 Katzenstein, Disjoined Partners, Chapter 6.
45 The exception among these is Rohe, Das Reichsbanner Schwarz Rot Gold, 237-240. He does discuss the problematic relationship between the Reichsbanner (the Reich republican paramilitary organization of the SPD, DDP, and less so the Center Party) and the Republikanische Schutzbund (the Austrian republican paramilitary organization solely populated by social democrats). As I note in the next chapter, I do not agree with all of his conclusions about the nature of the SDAP’s support of an Anschluss.
view, the Weimar republicans’ initially used support for an Anschluss as a way to rescue the republic from the stigma of defeat. The Allied prohibition of the Anschluss was “a disaster for the republicans’ struggle for legitimacy,” according to Gerwarth because it opened them up to attacks from the political right. He then criticized the republicans for continuing to make statements in favor of the großdeutsch idea given “[t]hat the promise of Anschluss was utterly unrealistic in the face of international opposition.”46 Such a limited approach to the varied manifestations of republican nationalism ignores the republicans’ genuine commitment to the großdeutsch idea. As this dissertation shows, they were not solely paying lip service to this idea to appease their political opponents. Rather, the großdeutsch idea was a powerful incentive to action in both Germany and Austria during the entire existence of the two republics. It informed republicans’ choice of symbols for the fledgling democracies; it became a recurring trope in the celebrations for the republics; and it motivated them to travel across the Austro-German border to participate in Anschluss rallies and pro-democracy demonstrations.

Comparing the German and Austrian Experiments with Democracy

Although Reich Germans and Austrians turned to transborder ideas of the nation and travelled across the legal boundary between their countries, they were still trying to legitimize or contest democracy within the confines of their respective republics. It is therefore necessary to compare the German and Austrian experiences with democracy. In approaching the republics, this dissertation contributes to scholarship which seeks to move

past the entrenched question of why interwar German and Austrian democracies failed.\textsuperscript{47}

Just as we should avoid a teleological view of interwar German nationalism, we also need to move beyond simply viewing the Weimar and First Austrian Republics as failures. This dissertation therefore investigates the ways in which citizens engaged with the new form of government and explores the prospects for the success of democracy in the wake of military defeat.

In attempting to explain the rise of the Nazis and Austrofascists during the two republics, historians frequently cite political fragmentation as a primary cause.\textsuperscript{48} This dissertation reappraises some of the oft named signposts of this fragmentation: the intensive


\textsuperscript{48} Peukert identifies a number of cleavages in German society, including generational, gender, class, and religious differences. Peukert, \textit{The Weimar Republic}. The following cite the fragmentation of the middle class constituencies in Germany as a defining aspect in a reorganization of politics on the right of the political spectrum that ultimately benefitted the Nazis: Larry Eugene Jones, \textit{German Liberalism and the Dissolution of the Weimar Party System, 1918-1933} (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Larry Eugene Jones, “Hindenburg and the Conservative Dilemma in the 1932 Presidential Elections,” \textit{German Studies Review} 20, no. 2 (1997): 235-259; Detlef Lehner and Klaus Megerle, “Problems of Identity and Consensus in a Fragmented Society: The Weimar Republic” in \textit{Political Culture in Germany}, ed. Dirk Berg-Schlosser and Ralf Rytlewski (Houndsmills and London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1993), 43-59; Richard Bessel, “The Formation and Dissolution of a German National Electorate from Kaiserreich to Third Reich,” in \textit{Elections, Mass Politics, and Social Change in Modern Germany: New Perspectives}, ed. Larry Eugene Jones and James Retallack (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 399-418. In the Austrian case, the notion of political fragmentation took on a different character. Rather than leading to the “dissolution” of the established bourgeois parties, as was the case in Germany, political fragmentation in Austria resulted in fairly static ideological camps. This topic will be addressed in more detail below. Also see Ernst Hanisch, \textit{Der lange Schatten des Staates}; Leser, “Austria between the Wars"

Although the struggles over state symbols and holidays do point to the many fractures within German and Austrian political cultures, they also illuminate the various ways in which Germans and Austrians conceptualized their roles as citizens living in a democracy.\footnote{In a keynote address at the 2008 German Studies Association conference, Gary Cohen says that more historians of Central Europe need to take up the new approach of investigating “how citizens’ relationships with the state, in all its aspects and layers, developed and changed” (30). Cohen, “Reinventing Austrian and Central European History,” \textit{German Studies Association Newsletter}, 33, no. 2 (2008-2009)’’ 28-38. A recent article by Nadine Rossol also notes the importance of looking at the role of the population in the flag debate. Rossol, “Flaggenkrieg am Badestrand: Lokale Möglichkeiten repräsentativer Mitgestaltung in der Weimarer Republik,” \textit{Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft} 7/8 (2008): 617-637. While reinscribing the republicans’ actions in terms of their civic engagement, she overlooks the notion that the opponents of black-red-gold were also envisioning their actions as citizens.}

Hence, this dissertation does not look at citizenship solely in legal terms or in the distinction between assimilationist and differentialist citizenship, i.e. a citizenship awarded by \textit{jus soli} versus \textit{jus sanguinis}.\footnote{The body of literature that examines citizenship as a subjective experience and set of practices is particularly useful for this new approach to the debates about symbols. See Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski (eds.), \textit{Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany} (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); Kathleen Canning, “Class vs. Citizenship: Keywords in German History,” \textit{Central European History} 37, no. 2 (2004): 225-244; Geoff Eley, “Making a Place in the Nation: Meanings of ‘Citizenship’ in Wilhelmine Germany” in \textit{Wilhelminism and Its Legacies: German Modernities, Imperialism, and the Meanings of Reform, 1890-1930}, ed. Geoff Eley and James Retallack (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2003); Maureen} Rather, it connects to recent scholarship that views citizenship as a practice and subjective experience.\footnote{On the latter, see Rogers Brubaker, \textit{Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany} (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1992).} In their studies of wartime Vienna and Berlin, Maureen
Healy and Belinda Davis have pointed to the ways in which the First World War expanded the possibilities for political participation and agency – particularly with regard to women – and brought the citizenry into a more intimate relationship with the state.\textsuperscript{53} With the establishment of democratic state systems after the war, citizens took advantage of new democratic practices to both the benefit and detriment of the parliamentary republics.\textsuperscript{54} Availing themselves to a language of rights and responsibilities, citizens asked their government to listen to their opinions and believed that their ideas would be taken seriously by officials.\textsuperscript{55}

By comparing the interactions between citizens, political parties and the state in the Weimar Republic and First Austrian Republic, this study adds a new dimension to recent findings that stress the possibility for a democratic consensus in Germany. As Manuela Achilles has argued with regard to Germany, there was a “republican attempt to mend fences and build bridges, so as to work out a basis for common consent […].”\textsuperscript{56} A comparison of the political cultures and constellations in the Weimar and First Austrian Republics confirms her findings: there was a greater willingness on the part of citizens in Germany to work across sociopolitical lines than in Austria. However, an examination of the differences between the two republics also challenges Achilles’s conclusion that “[t]he openness of republican ideology [in the Weimar Republic] towards the political Right was an important

\textsuperscript{53} Belinda Davis, \textit{Homes Fires Burning}; Maureen Healy, \textit{Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire}.

\textsuperscript{54} On the latter, see Peter Fritzche, \textit{Germans into Nazis} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

\textsuperscript{55} Some studies have looked at elections in the Weimar Republic as a practice of citizenship, although they come to a negative conclusion and argue that Germans lacked a sense of responsibility when they went to the polls. See for instance, Stanley Suval, \textit{Electoral Politics in Wilhelmine Germany} (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), especially Chapter 11; Bessel, “The Formation and Dissolution of a German National Electorate from Kaiserreich to Third Reich”.

\textsuperscript{56} Achilles, “Re-Forming the Reich,” 14. She also makes the point that “[t]he legally-coded minimal consensus of the republican parties was both democratic and highly inclusive” (12).
factor in the disintegration of Weimar democracy.”\textsuperscript{57} As will be seen in this dissertation, openness was more effective than the vilification of one’s political opponents in creating a democratic culture.

The best example of this cross-party cooperation is the Weimar Coalition, which brought together the Social Democrats, the German Democratic Party, and the Center Party. Mirroring this collaboration was the \textit{Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold}, the pro-republican paramilitary organization in the Weimar Republic, which included members from the Weimar Coalition parties.\textsuperscript{58} Furthermore, as this dissertation shows, an inclination to compromise was not just confined to those three parties. Individual citizens in Germany were also willing to find common ground over such a divisive issue as the state’s flag. In Austria, on the other hand, the early cooperation of the Social Democrats, Christian Socials, and the German nationalists in orchestrating a peaceful transition from the monarchy to a republic quickly fell apart and gave way to intractable divisions. The research conducted for this dissertation affirms the notion that most Austrians were divided into three Lager, to use Adam Wandruszka’s description of the ideological camps in interwar Austrian society.\textsuperscript{59} Superseding parties and milieu, these “camps” meant that either a socialist, Catholic-conservative, or German nationalist worldview governed the way people lived almost every facet of their lives “from birth until death.”\textsuperscript{60} These Lager promoted an us-versus-them

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{57} Achilles, “Re-Forming the Reich,” 348.
    \item \textsuperscript{58} As scholars have pointed out, the majority of members were sympathetic to the Social Democrats. However, it did manage to bring together republicans from the three major parties. The most reluctant partner was the Center Party, with the right-wing of the party rejecting affiliation with the association and the Social Democrats more generally. Rohe, \textit{Das Reichsbanner Schwarz Rot Gold}, especially 266-354; Knapp, “The German Center Party and the Reichsbanner.”
    \item \textsuperscript{60} Hanisch, \textit{Der Lange Schatten des Staates}, 117.
\end{itemize}
mentality, making political compromise exceedingly difficult. In contrast to Germany as well, citizens’ participation in the anthem and holiday debates over the course of the First Austrian Republic became increasingly limited to acting on behalf of one of the three camps.

The question remains how these differences affected the attempts to support or challenge democracy in both countries. According to Geoff Eley, “the banner of democracy [in modern Europe] was held up most consistently by the socialist tradition.”61 Such a statement rings true for the Social Democratic Parties in the Weimar and First Austrian Republics. Both parties were the most reliable and constant defenders of democracy throughout the Weimar period. Yet, a closer look at the two parties reveals significant differences in the ways in which they sought to support democracy. Whereas the SPD reached across the aisle to work with the DDP and the Center Party, the SDAP pulled out of a coalition with the CSP in 1920 and went into opposition for the remainder of the republic. Moreover, the SDAP contributed to the Lager mentality in the First Republic by using revolutionary rhetoric even though it, like its German counterpart, was a reformist party intent on preventing a repeat of the Bolshevik Revolution in Central Europe. The Austromarxists were, in the estimation of the political scientist and historian Norbert Leser, “sheep clad in wolves’ clothing.”62 By using the radical rhetoric, the Austrian Social Democrats avoided a detrimental split in the political left like that seen in Germany. However, the denunciation of the bourgeoisie and the Christian Socials as the enemies of democracy, the proclamations of the desire to establish a socialist republic, and the use of the

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62 Leser, “Austria between the Wars,” 132.
term “proletarian dictatorship” in the party’s 1926 Linz Program only hardened the divisions between the camps.63

The Austrian Social Democrats were not alone in creating a hostile environment among the parties in Austria. The Christian Socials – who, after initial support for the republic, would ultimately use their control of the federal government to undermine it – also denounced the Social Democrats as opponents of the republic and accused the SDAP of wanting to orchestrate a Russian-style revolution in Austria. As Ernst Hanisch has pointed out, there was no Austrian liberal party, or “buffer zone,” to perform the function of the DDP and bring together the socialists and Catholics in Austria.64 The Republikanische Schutzbund, the pro-republican paramilitary organization in Austria, for example, was merely an arm of the SDAP. Hence, there was no Austrian equivalent of the Weimar Coalition or Reichsbanner, in which citizens of different class and political backgrounds would work together to buttress the republic.65 By exploring both the differences and points of connection between the Weimar and First Austrian Republics, this dissertation contributes a

64 Hanisch, Der Lange Schatten des Staates, 126.
65 Whereas historians of the First Austrian Republic often mention the Weimar Republic as a point of comparison, historians of Germany once again overlook Austria. Historians of Germany have often compared Germany to France and Britain. For example, the work on the Sonderweg used normative ideas about France and Britain as a foil to Germany. See for instance, Jürgen Kocka, “Assymetrial Historical Comparison: The Case of the Germany Sonderweg,” History and Theory 38, no. 1 (1999): 40-50. In both cases sustained comparative analyses are wanting. An exception in this case is Francis L. Carsten’s political history about the successes and failures of the German and Austrian revolutions. See Francis L. Carsten, Revolution in Central Europe, 1918-1919 (London: Temple Smith, 1972).
fresh approach to the questions of nation- and state-building in post-World War I Germany and Austria.66

Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized thematically. It opens with an analysis of what I term “the nationalization of democracy.” Whereas the political right in both countries characterized democracy as a foreign import, socialists and liberal democrats went to great lengths to show that democracy and German nationalism were compatible. In particular, they turned to großdeutsch nationalism in an effort to win over skeptics and to attack their political opponents. On the one hand, they sought to create a historical narrative that would prove the existence of a democratic, national tradition in German-speaking Central Europe. They argued that the German national movement had been tied to demands for greater political freedom and rights from its early nineteenth-century beginnings. The climax of their story was the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848-1849, for the gathering in St. Paul’s Church had not only included Austrian representatives and attempted to form a großdeutsch state, but had also sought to create a German nation-state with a parliamentary system. On the other hand, they called attention to the postwar obstruction of Austrian self-determination. They highlighted the contradiction between France’s heritage of “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity” with French resistance to an Anschluss in order to demonstrate that a specifically German form of democracy existed.

66 Although practitioners of transnational history often criticize comparative history for reifying the nation as a category of analysis and for ignoring cross-border connections between countries, Jürgen Kocka has suggested, “It is not necessary to choose between histoire comparée and histoire croisée. The aim is to combine them.”66 This dissertation seeks to do precisely that. Jürgen Kocka, “Comparison and Beyond,” History and Theory 42 (February 2003): 39-44, here 44. Philipp Ther puts forward a similar proposal. Ther, “Beyond the Nation”.

As a correlate to the debates about the legitimacy of the republics, a passionate struggle over state symbols emerged. The debate about the flag in Germany and the conflict over the official anthem in Austria are the subject of Chapters Two and Three respectively. These chapters highlight the importance of großdeutsch nationalism in the republicans’ attempts to popularize and defend the republics: republicans in the Reich chose the colors black-red-gold, the colors of the Frankfurt Parliament, as a suitable national democratic symbol, while Austrian socialists advocated singing the Deutschlandlied, the Weimar Republic’s anthem, as a way to protest the Christian Social government in 1930.

Furthermore, these chapters move beyond simply viewing these debates as symptoms of political fragmentation in the two countries. Through an investigation of letters sent by individuals and associations to the governments, court case transcripts, and press coverage, these chapters also explore how contemporaries began self-consciously to practice what they saw as the rights and responsibilities of citizens living in democratic republics. By setting these two debates side-by-side, these chapters also highlight an important difference between German and Austrian political cultures: whereas many Germans sought to find a compromise with the creation of a Unity-Flag, Austrians became increasingly hardened in their opposition to their adversaries’ anthem preferences.

Continuing this comparative approach, Chapter Four examines the efforts to create a republican holiday in each state. In Germany, republicans coalesced around August 11, the date on which Friedrich Ebert signed the Weimar Constitution in 1919, as the best option for a holiday. Although never legally established, Constitution Day became the de facto state holiday. Government officials, the Weimar Coalition parties, and private organizations made a concerted attempt to stage participatory forms of commemoration that they believed would
help to forge a democratic national community. In Austria, the situation regarding a legal holiday presented the opposite scenario. The Austrian National Assembly easily passed a law declaring November 12, the day on which the republic was proclaimed, to be an official holiday. Yet, after the fall of the Social Democratic-Christian Social coalition in 1920, these commemorations did not become a site for the creation of consensus. With half-hearted festivities organized by the Christian Social-controlled federal government coming into conflict with the socialist celebrations, this holiday reinforced the division of Austrian society into sociopolitical camps. By highlighting the relative success of Constitution Day when compared to the Austrian holiday, this chapter provides a corrective to older histories of the Weimar Republic, which argued that the inability to establish a legal holiday signaled a failure to find a resonant democratic consensus. Furthermore, although this chapter is mostly comparative in format, it also examines how the separate state holidays serves as an opportunity to discuss and show the connections between citizens on both sides of the border. The allusions to Anschluss made in the speeches and performances for August 11 and November 12 once again highlight the importance of the großdeutsch idea in republican attempts to popularize democracy.

Whereas the previous chapter pointed to the successes and failures of political commemorations, Chapter Five looks at the cultural commemorations for Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Walther von der Vogelweide, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The first part of the chapter addresses how Austrians used these celebrations to renegotiate their identity in the wake of the Habsburg Empire’s collapse. Austrians sought to connect renowned cultural figures with the natural landscape and an alleged Austrian character in order to find positive attributes for their rump state. Simultaneously, they used the focus on a
commonly accepted German-speaking cultural canon to affirm their membership in the German nation. I argue, therefore, that these identifications with Austrianness amounted to a regional, not a national, identity. However, this German cultural canon was not mobilized only by Austrians seeking to redefine their particular identity. This chapter also examines how Germans and Austrians of various political persuasions used these festivals to stage a großdeutsch community in the interwar period. These celebrations demonstrate that the desire for greater German unity went beyond the realm of culture, as socialists, liberals and conservatives alike called for an Anschluss. These festivals, together with the events explored in this dissertation as a whole, provide a wealth of evidence to illustrate that support for transborder German nationalism was not simply the prerogative of the radical right after 1918. Rather, there were numerous understandings of Germanness.
Almost two hundred years ago, Goethe and Schiller famously asked, “Germany? But where is it? I don’t know how to find such a country.” Of course at the time of their writing, no politically consolidated territory existed by such a name. Rather, German speakers lived scattered throughout hundreds of principalities, kingdoms, duchies, empires, and free cities of Central and Eastern Europe. In the nineteenth century, many contemporaries spoke of the existence of a “German question” that needed to be resolved. The “German question” historically encompassed a multitude of issues related to geography, politics, and population: Where should the boundaries of a German nation-state be drawn? What form of government would be best suited to a German nation-state? Who could be considered to be members of a German nation?

The delegates of the Frankfurt Parliament in 1848-1849 took up these questions as they tried to form the first German nation-state. Although they agreed to grant rights to Jews and linguistic minorities, the precise boundaries of the state and its constitutional arrangement were heavily debated. Should the new Germany be kleindeutsch (excluding the Austrian Empire), großdeutsch (including the federal lands of the Habsburg monarchy), or the “Reich of 70 million” (including all of the Habsburg lands)? The delegates could not find a satisfactory answer to this question due to the inability to reach an agreement on the relationship between the new German state and the Habsburg Empire.2

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2 For an excellent study of the ambiguous conception of nationhood used by delegates of the Frankfurt Parliament, see Vick, Defining Germany.
With the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and Bismarck’s creation of the Second Reich in 1871, the questions of boundaries and belonging appeared to be solved: Austria was to be excluded from a future German state. However, the Prussian-led solution failed to provide a conclusive answer to all aspects of the “German Question” prior to the First World War. Within the Kaiserreich, the biggest remaining question centered on the (im)possibility of Jews, Poles, and linguistic minorities being considered German. Additionally, the purported “unification” of Germany in reality led to the exclusion of German-speakers living in Austria who had historically been (and remained) connected to larger German-speaking cultural, economic and political realms. A transborder German Kulturnation continued to exist despite the creation of a Kleindeutschland. The “German Question” took on a different dimension in the Habsburg monarchy, where nationalist activists were increasingly seeking to turn nationally indifferent populations “into Czechs and Germans” in an effort to claim greater state resources and political power. Despite these unresolved aspects of the “German Question,” the idea that the kleindeutsch solution should or could be overturned was held by just a fringe minority in the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires.

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War and its consequences, however, would reopen the very aspects of the “German Question” that Bismarck had appeared to resolve.

This chapter focuses on the varied responses that Germans and Austrians had to military defeat, the collapse of the Hohenzollern and Habsburg Empires, the creation of democratic republics, and the redrawing of the boundaries of East Central Europe. Although many on the political right viewed the military defeat and establishment of democracies as a time of national shame, German and Austrian republicans saw this moment as pregnant with possibility. In order to prove that democracy was not antithetical to the national good, republicans turned to nineteenth-century history and the present-day violation of Austrian self-determination. To discredit the monarchies, they argued that the Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns had privileged dynastic interests over national ones, which led to the exclusion of Austria from a German nation-state in 1866. Furthermore, republicans turned to the events of 1848 to prove the existence of a national, democratic tradition in German-speaking Central Europe.

In addition to citing these historical events, German and Austrian supporters of democracy used their postwar support for an Anschluss in the hopes of not only strengthening democracy in Germany and Austria, but also proving their national credentials. As the leaders of the Anschluss movement in the Weimar era, they sought to refute the political right’s claim that they lacked national feeling. By supporting a großdeutsch national community linked to democratic values, they argued that they were in fact exhibiting a different type of nationalism than those on the right of the political spectrum. Unlike right-wing foreign policy goals, republicans emphasized that they wished the Anschluss to be achieved through peaceful means. Moreover, they contended that an Anschluss would in

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7 Suval, The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era.
reality lead to the strengthening of peace in postwar Europe and provide an essential step for creating a united Europe along the lines of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi’s Pan-Europe. Although republicans espoused internationalist views and had pragmatic reasons for supporting an *Anschluss*, they also expressed a sincere belief in the German national cause. This chapter therefore shows that the attempt to form a transborder German community was not simply the work of the extreme political right. Consequently, it points to the necessity of recognizing that there existed numerous understandings of who, what and where could be categorized as German during the Weimar era.

**Debating Democracy and Deutschum**

The reactions of Reich Germans and Austrians to the monumental changes brought about by the Great War were numerous. For many conservatives and those on the radical right, democracy and parliamentary government did not provide satisfactory answers to the political aspects of the “German question.” In their eyes, the new democratic state systems were a foreign imposition and therefore un-German or un-Austrian. Mixing a sinister brew of anti-democratic, antisemitic, and anti-marxist ideas, they viewed the supporters of democracy as adversaries of the national good. Those on the political right especially attacked the socialists in both countries, thereby continuing to advance the prewar idea that the Social Democratic parties were unpatriotic due to their internationalist outlook and connections. Their critiques of the Social Democrats took on a new urgency in light of the successful Russian Revolution, leading conservatives and the radical right to stir the fears of the middle classes and elites by equating the socialists with the Bolsheviks.
Over the course of the Weimar Republic, the German political right comprised a diverse set of political parties, patriotic associations, and paramilitary organizations: the Free Corps, the German National People’s Party (DNVP), the Stahlhelm, the National Socialist Workers’ Party (NSDAP), the United Patriotic Associations of Germany, the Bavarian People’s Party, and others. Although there was internecine struggle amongst these groups, they agreed that democracy was foreign to Germany. In their eyes, democracy had come to Germany due to Allied intervention and, according to the “stab in the back” myth, through the alleged betrayal of socialists and Jews during the First World War. For these groups the Reichstag was the “gravedigger of the German nation and the German Reich,” the Weimar Constitution was really “the constitution from Versailles,” the Social Democrats were “the source of every catastrophe and German suffering, of every humiliation and debasement,” and Jews were leading to the “corruption of the German people.” They railed against the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, or the “Diktat” as they preferred to call it, decrying the “war-guilt clause,” reparations, and territorial adjustments. The main concern for the more conservative of these right-wing organizations was for “the German territories that were ripped away,” the loss of overseas colonies, and the French-Belgian occupation of the Rhineland, Ruhr, and Saar. Radicals on the right, such as the Nazis, did not merely want to

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9 Robert Gerwarth mentions that the right-wing in Germany attacked the republic on the grounds that the republic was disconnected from Germans’ history. Gerwarth, “The Past in Weimar History,” 7-10.
10 This statement from Hitler refers to the parliament during the imperial period, but this viewpoint was relevant for the postwar period. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971), 271.
12 The phrase is from a 1924 election advertisement created by the United Patriotic Associations of Germany. Quoted in Rohe, *Das Reichsbanner Schwarz Rot Gold*, 194.
13 The DNVP spoke of a “Jewish world conspiracy,” the “Jewish republic,” and the “Jewish corruption of the German people.” Quoted in Erich Weitz, *Weimar Germany*, 98.
14 Quote is from the DNVP’s 1920 statement of principles. Quoted in Weitz, *Weimar Germany*, 94.
return to the pre-war boundaries, which for Hitler “were neither complete in the sense of embracing the people of German nationality, nor sensible with regard to geo-military expediency.” Rather, he advocated German expansion to the East in order “to secure for the German people the land and soil to which they are entitled on this earth.”

Then there was the German People’s Party (DVP), a liberal party on the right of the political spectrum, which wavered between support of and opposition to the republic. Under the leadership of Gustav Stresemann, who as foreign minister from 1923-1929 did much to restore Germany’s position on the world stage, the party reluctantly worked within the boundaries of the republic. This period reflected Stresemann’s shift from an avowed monarchist to a supporter of the republic in the period from 1920-22. However, at both the beginning and the end phases of the Weimar Republic, the party opposed the new democratic order. Therefore, in 1919 it voted against the Weimar Constitution, proclaimed its loyalty to “the empire” as the “most appropriate form of state,” and vowed to fight “against every destructive effort that seeks to replace the devotion to the national-state and the German people with cosmopolitanism.” As the party swung to the right in the later years of the republic, it denounced Marxism for “breeding a sickly international and pacifist romanticism in the place of a resolute will devoted to the fatherland,” called for “an organically structured state,” and demanded that “everything in constitutional life that is un-German and alien to our nature, everything that places the rule of the masses in the place of the rule of achievement, must be overcome.” With regard to the last point, the party was essentially

15 Hitler, Mein Kampf, 649.
16 Hitler, Mein Kampf, 652.
18 Statement from the party’s program. Quoted in Langewiesche, Liberalism in Germany, 277.
19 Statement from the party’s “Basic Principles.” Quoted in Weitz, Weimar Germany, 92.
calling for the end of the democratic republic, insisting on an end to the “exaggeration of parliamentarism” and calling for “the strengthening of the power of the president of the Reich.”

In Austria, the attitudes of conservatives and the radical right to the questions regarding democracy and nationalism were more complicated. The actors on the right of the Austrian political spectrum were also a diverse group: the Austrian Nazis, the Austrofascist Heimwehr, the Christian Social Party (CSP), the Greater German People’s Party (GDVP), and the Landbund. As in Germany, there were outright opponents of parliamentary rule and equal rights. The Austrian Nazis made the same demands as their German counterparts, railing against democracy, the socialists, and Jews. With the Nazi electoral success in Germany in the early 1930s and Hitler’s appointment to chancellor in January 1933, the group became emboldened to achieve their principle goal of an Anschluss with Germany in order to create and then join the Third Reich. They tried to destabilize and even overthrow the Austrian government through violent means, the most infamous being their assassination of Engelbert Dollfuss, the Austrofascist dictator, in the summer of 1934.

Also seeking to use force to topple the republic was the Heimwehr. Although divided by regional factionalism, this paramilitary group aimed at the destruction of the Social Democrats and democracy – a goal it finally achieved in the brief civil war of February 1934 – with the financial support of the Italian Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, the authoritarian Regent of Hungary Miklós Horthy, Austrian industrialists, and the Christian Social Party.  

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21 Heimwehr groups were formed at the end of the First World War as a means to protect Austria’s borders. They lost their potency in the years from 1923 until 1927, when the July riots led to a resurgence of the Heimwehr. That summer workers set the Palace of Justice on fire after disagreeing with the not-guilty verdict in a trial of right-wing paramilitary members. In total, approximately 90 people, mostly protesters or passersby,
In its Korneuburg oath of 1931, the *Heimwehr* declared, “We fight against the disintegration […] of our people by the Marxist class struggle and the liberal economic order.” It also announced the *Heimwehr’s* desire to form a corporatist state. “We reject western democratic parliamentarism and the party state,” the oath read. “Every comrade should feel and confess himself to be a bearer of the new German conception of the State *[Staatsgesinnung]*: he should be prepared to risk possessions and life; he should recognize […] three powers: faith in God, his own hard will, and the command of his leaders!”

Although in many respects the *Heimwehr* made similar pronouncements as the Nazis, these statements point to a number of key differences. The two groups were by-and-large competitors on the radical right, thereby leading most of the members of the *Heimwehr* to fight in favor of an independent authoritarian Austrian state.

When the *Heimwehr* spoke of Germanness, it often connected the idea with Catholic overtones in an effort to define Austrian specificities within the German nation.

A number of the leaders of the Christian Social Party, a key architect of the republic alongside the Social Democrats and the German nationalists, would come to back the *Heimwehr* beginning in mid-1920s. Indeed, there was a marked shift among many members of the CSP from support, or at least toleration, of the republic to demands for a more

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23 As Bruce Pauley notes, “The Austrian Heimwehr had the unique distinction of being the only anti-Nazi fascist organization in Europe.” However, he also points out that a pan-German wing of the organization did ally with the Nazis. Pauley, “A Case Study in Fascism,” 251.
authoritarian regime. The epicenter of this changing attitude toward democracy was Prelate Ignaz Seipel, who served as the leader of the CSP and the chancellor for much of the republic’s existence. By the late 1920s, he was espousing the idea of “true democracy,” which amounted to authoritarianism, corporatism and collaboration with the *Heimwehr.*\(^{24}\) For Seipel, a parliamentary system based on parties no longer represented the interests of the *Volk.* In conjunction with this turn to an anti-democratic position, Seipel and his circle embarked on a process to create a stronger Austrian identity based on imperial and Catholic traditions in an effort to strengthen their hand within the state. Like the *Heimwehr,* they did not reject membership in a German nation, but wished to maintain an independent Austrian state.\(^{25}\) “For us, the nation [*Nation*], independent of citizenship, is the great cultural community [*Kulturgemeinschaft*]; it stands higher for us Germans than the state,” remarked Seipel in a 1926 anti-*Anschluss* speech.\(^{26}\) Yet, the CSP had an extremely diverse base, and not all members agreed with Seipel’s course. The Christian Social Workers’ Association, for example, opposed Seipel’s alliance with the *Heimwehr* and wished to see democracy maintained. Many Christian Socials in the provinces also disputed Seipel’s position on the *Anschluss,* and openly supported it. Although divided on the issues of democracy and the

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25 It should be noted that early on that Seipel and others around him desire to form a Danubian confederation based on the old Habsburg Empire; however, the opposition of the other successor states prevented this from coming to pass.

26 Quoted in “Vortrag Dr. Seipels über das Anschlußproblem,” *Neue Freie Presse,* 13 February 1926, in PAAA, R73296, II Oe 283.
Anschluss, the party was united in its espousal of anti-Marxist and antisemitic sentiments, seeing both the socialists and Jews as threats to Austria.

As with the CSP, the eventual members of the Greater German People’s Party (the party was founded in 1920) initially supported democracy. Even though the Greater Germans joined the Christian Socialists in a coalition for much of the republic, the GDVP did not see eye-to-eye with its partners on issues of religion and nationalism. As the heir to the defunct liberal movement in Austria, the GDVP was anti-clerical. It was also, as its name suggests, a supporter of the Anschluss and an opponent of the CSP’s Austrian identity project. Despite these significant points of disagreement, the GDVP seemed willing to work with the CSP due to their shared anti-marxism and antisemitism. The party, which never garnered more than 10 percent of the vote in federal elections, began to lose a steady stream of its members to the Heimwehr and the Nazis. Eventually in the spring of 1933, the party joined the Nazis to form the Kampfgemeinschaft.27 Hence, although the parties on the right in both Austria and Germany came to see socialists, Jews, and democracy as foreign influences threatening the German Volk, they were a heterogeneous group.

Welcoming the establishment of democracy in Germany and Austria, socialists and liberal democrats in both countries went to great lengths to counter these right-wing attacks. Unlike those on the right, republicans in Germany and Austria did not see democracy and nationalism as incompatible. As Gerhard Anschütz, the rector of the University of Heidelberg and renowned legal scholar, explained on the fourth anniversary of the Weimar constitution in 1923, “the democratic and the national ideas are not opposites, but siblings.”

He continued, “Nationalism and democracy belong together; they herald the great idea of the united Volk which governs itself.” According to this point of view, democracy and nationalism were well-suited to one another precisely because power in a democratic state was derived from the people. While Anschütz’s statement provides a general defense of a democratic form of government on national grounds, republicans in both Germany and Austria were especially interested in demonstrating that their republics were inherently and intimately connected to the German nation and German history. In their attempts to make democracy German, republicans on both sides of the Austro-German border relied heavily on an historical tradition of großdeutsch nationalism and their postwar support of an Anschluss.

It is important to note that the individuals brought together under the heading of “republicans” were a diverse group. The majority of backers of democracy came from four different political parties in two different countries: the German Democratic Party, the Catholic Centre Party, the German Social Democrats, and the more doctrinaire Austrian Social Democrats. Additionally, there were individuals who did not belong to any party but supported democracy in official and private capacities. Although republicans consequently did not speak in a monolithic voice, the emphasis on großdeutsch nationalism united all of these groups. They sounded a number of common themes regarding the relationship between democracy and a großdeutsch idea of the German nation. Furthermore, großdeutsch nationalism served myriad purposes for the diverse group of German and Austrian republicans. Republicans employed großdeutsch nationalism to argue not only that democracy was a part of Germans’ heritage, but that it was also the best form of government to serve German national interests. Moreover, republicans used großdeutsch nationalism as

the basis for a concerted attack on the claims of their right-wing and conservative political opponents. In doing so, they aimed to demonstrate that various German nationalisms existed. It was not that republicans were un-German, but that they possessed a version of German nationalism that was democratic, inclusive, and peaceful.

Due to the political right’s claims that democracy was a foreign imposition, republicans of all stripes turned to the past. In the Reich, the cross-section of left liberals, Social Democrats, and members of the Catholic Centre Party produced numerous historical narratives with a common goal: to prove that democratic ideas and practices could be found throughout German history. “It is also inherently incorrect that the new Germany can possibly reject the past,” Carl Severing, a leading figure of the SPD and Minister of the Interior, argued.29 With some republican historical narratives referencing a nascent republicanism among ancient Germanic tribes, the majority focused on events from the previous century.30

In concentrating on the nineteenth century, republicans in Germany emphasized that the German national movement was tied to demands for greater political freedom and rights from its early nineteenth-century beginnings. To make their case, republicans cited such seminal events as the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon, the Wartburg festival, the Hambach Festival, the revolution of 1848-49, and the Schiller festival of 1859. Furthermore, they highlighted how a pantheon of national heroes and martyrs had fought for the twin goals of national unity and liberal political reform. Among those “heroes” named were Ernst

29 “Feier der Reichsregierung,” Westfälische Neueste Nachrichten, 12 August 1929, in AdSD, Nachlass Carl Severing, Mappe 15.
30 For a detailed study of the various republican historical narratives created in the Weimar Republic, see Eric Bryden, “In Search of Founding Fathers: Republican Historical Narratives in Weimar Germany, 1918-1933” (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of California – Davis, 2008), especially the introduction and chapters 3-5. Also see Gerwarth, “The Past in Weimar History,” especially 10-17.
Moritz Arndt, Karl Schurz, Hoffmann von Fallersleben, Ferdinand Freiligrath, the Lützower Freikorps, the Vormärz Burschenschaften, Turnvater Jahn, Jacob Grimm, and Ludwig Uhland. For example, to disprove the claims that the Weimar Constitution was “un-German,” its chief architect, Hugo Preuss, explained that Freiherr vom Stein, Arndt, and the Burschenschaften, and the representatives at the Frankfurt National Assembly all sought to create a “German Volksstaat [people’s state]” through either word or deed. By including such figures as Arndt, Jahn, and members of the Burschenschaften, who were also admired by the political right, republicans aimed to show the deep roots of democratic thinking in German history.

31 This was a widespread phenomenon among republicans. For a few examples, see the mention of Arndt, Schurz and Freiligrath by Walter Kolb (SPD) in “Frei Heil!”, Verfassungsfeier 1926 des Reichsbanners Schwarz-Rot-Gold Gau Oberrhein in Bonn, in AdSD, Bestand Reichsbanner, Exponate 19. Joseph Joos, a member of the Centre Party and a representative in the Reichstag, talked about Freiherr vom Stein, Arndt, and the Frankfurt Parliament to demonstrate the Germanness of the constitution. Jos. Joos, M.d.R., “Vom Werden Weimarer Verfassung,” in Festschrift des Reichsbanners Schwarz-Rot-Gold, Gau Hessen Cassel zur Feier des Verfassungstages 1926, am 11. Und 14. Bis 16. August, ed. Gauleitung Hessen-Cassel des Reichsbanners Schwarz-Rot-Gold (Cassel: Drukerei Volksblatt, 1926), 18-21, here 19-20, in AdSD, Nachlass Franz Osterroth, Box 53, Fsz. 140. In a booklet published on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Weimar Constitution, the Reichszentrale Dienst für Heimat provided speeches and quotations to use for the celebration. It included quotes from the likes of Stein, Görres, Schiller, Hoffmann von Fallersleben, Grimm, Arndt, Fichte, Freiligrath, Jahn, the Jenenser Burschenschaft. See “Worte zum Verfassungstag” in Reichszentrale für Heimatdienst, Zum zehnten Verfassungstag: Eine Materialsammlung (Berlin: Zentralverlag, 1929), 36-58. Another publication by the Reichsbanner Black-Red-Gold also included a selection of statements by nineteenth-century figures, including Arnt, Hoffmann von Fallersleben, Freiligrath, Turnvater Jahn, the Lützower Freicorps, Ludwig Uhland, Heine, and Schiller. “Vorkämpfer deutscher Einheit und Freiheit unter ‘Schwarz-Rot-Gold’,” in Das Reichsbanner und Potsdam, ed. Dr. Mischler and Ortsgruppe Potsdam des Reichsbanners Schwarz-Rot-Gold (Berlin: Buchdruckerei Hiehhold und Co., undated), 28-30, in AdSD, Bestand Reichsbanner, Exponate 30. 32 “Die ‘undeutsche’ Reichsverfassung” (1924), in Hugo Preuss, Staat, Recht und Freiheit: Aus 40 Jahren Politik und Geschichte (Tübingen: Verlag von J.C.B. Mohr, 1926), 473-481, here 477-478. 33 As supporters of conservative and right-wing politics, members of fraternities in the Weimar era contested the inclusion of their historical predecessors in republican historical narratives. Rohe, Das Reichsbanner Schwarz Rot Gold, 230-231. 34 The republicans’ intensive efforts to create a past based on national heroes challenges Peter Gay’s claim that “[i]n the battle of historical symbols the republicans were at a disadvantage from the start.” Gay sees republicans in the Weimar Republic as only turning to the representatives of the Weimar spirit, such as Goethe, who would be unsatisfactory due to their cosmopolitan outlook. Gay, Weimar Culture, Chapter 4, here 87.
Of all the events in the nineteenth century, the republicans concentrated most on the revolution of 1848-1849. Although the SPD, DDP, and KPD came into conflict over the memory of the Märzgefallenen, members of all three of the Weimar Coalition parties and the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold held the Frankfurt Parliament in high esteem. Due to its attempts to create a parliamentary state system and national unity, the gathering of the National Assembly at St. Paul’s Church in Frankfurt enabled republicans to argue that democracy was part of a historically justified and authentic German tradition. “Republic and tradition are not opposites,” proclaimed Rudolf Oeser at a 1923 ceremony to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Frankfurt Parliament. Oeser, the Minister of the Interior at the time and a member of the DDP, continued:

The republic also possesses its tradition, as today shows, and the history surrounding St. Paul’s Church. But we may go further. As republicans, we have no reason not to recognize as our own spiritual property something great, noble, and beautiful, which has emerged in early epochs. (Applause.) A Volk without history is an uprooted Volk. We will not allow the threads of history to break off. We also want to place the state, which the Volk has built for itself in the most difficult of times and in a hard struggle, in the development of history.

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35 Bryden also argues that the events of 1848-49 were central to republican historical narratives. Bryden, “In Search of Founding Fathers,” especially 166-179 and 225-232.

36 The other main event drawing the attention of republicans was the uprising of March 18, 1848. For more information on the treatment of these two events during the early Weimar years, see Bussenius, “Eine ungeliebte Tradition: Die Weimarer Linke und die 48er Revolution 1918-1925,” in Der Griff nach der Deutungsmacht: Zur Geschichte der Geschichtspolitik in Deutschland, ed. Heinrich August Winkler (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004), 90-114. Bussenius begins his examination of 1848 by looking at the imperial period. He explains that March 18th represented the violent side of the revolution, while May 18th represented the parliamentary side of the revolution. During the Kaiserreich, the socialists viewed March 18th in a positive light, while denouncing the Frankfurt Parliament as the source of the failure of the revolution. The National Liberals at the time held the opposite view. In the Weimar era this evaluation changed somewhat; however, new conflicts arose. The SPD, KPD, and DDP all had competing interpretations of the March 18th events. Furthermore, the SPD began to see the Frankfurt Parliament more favorably, although Bussenius contends a complete reevaluation did not occur. In this regard, I think he overstates his case, as many of the pronouncements made by members of the SPD that I found were positive. For a fuller treatment of the March and May celebrations held in 1923, see Claudia Klemm, Erinnert – umstritten – gefeiert: Die Revolution von 1848/49 in der deutschen Gedenkkultur (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2007), chapter 4. She points out that the celebration of the Frankfurt Parliament enabled more unity among the Weimar parties than the March celebrations. For a discussion of socialist memory and commemoration of 1848 in Germany, see Buchner, Um nationale und republikanische Identität, chapter 2.
And, all great men of the past are a constituitive part of ourselves, a national property, which we do not want to give up. (Applause.)37

In emphasizing the Weimar Republic’s roots in the parliamentary gathering of 1848-1849, the supporters of democracy in Germany emphasized that the republic was linked to a longer-standing tradition that was both democratic and national.

With regard to the national dimension of this 1848 tradition, the overwhelming majority of republicans in the Reich underlined that the Frankfurt Parliament had represented a großdeutsch solution to the “German Question.” Alongside their repeated refrains regarding the democratic precedent set by the parliamentarians at the St. Paul’s Church, they stressed that the parliamentary gathering in Frankfurt included Austrian representatives and sought to form a großdeutsch state. In doing so, the republicans in the Weimar Republic were attempting to show that democratic ideas were the cornerstone of historic efforts to achieve a comprehensive German national unity.38 As Otto Hörsing, the head of the Reichsbanner Black-Red-Gold and a member of the SPD, explained, “In the Frankfurt National Assembly the großdeutsch idea was alive, the feeling that the German Volksstaat must include all Germans. An adverse fate has excluded our Austrian sisters and brothers from their fatherland. [...] We will not stop nor rest until the obstacles, which still today oppose their return home, are cleared away. Thus, we want to create what the men from St.

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38 Karl Rohe stresses the importance of the 1848 tradition of the Frankfurt Parliament for the “left nationalism” of the Reichsbanner because it satisfied their desire to be “national, freiheitlich-demokratisch und großdeutsch.” Rohe, Das Reichsbanner Schwarz Rot Gold, chapter 5. The quote is from p. 229. Daniel Bussenius also points to the importance of the großdeutsch idea in the memory of the 1848 revolution in the Weimar period in that it provided common ground among the SPD, DDP, and Centre Party. However, I disagree with his assertion that the Reich republicans only capitalized on the legacy of an Einheitsgedanke, and not a Freiheitsgedanke, of the 1848 revolution. Bussenius, “Eine ungeliebte Tradition,” 110-112. I argue that for the supporters of democracy in the Reich, the two ideas were intertwined. Robert Gerwarth also indicates that the großdeutsch idea, and the events of 1848-49, enabled the Weimar parties to find common ground on which to attempt the construction of a democratic tradition. Gerwarth, “The Past in Weimar History,” 13-16.
Paul’s Church already had in mind: the social and democratic großdeutsch Volksstaat
[...].”39 By drawing a direct connection between the Frankfurt parliamentarians and
themselves, the supporters of democracy in the Weimar Republic hoped to prove their
national credentials and again demonstrate that democracy was a German value. Indeed, the
uses of the word Volksstaat by Hörsing and Preuss attest to the proximity between
nationalism and democracy: Volk was understood in both a civic sense (the people as the
source of the state’s power) and in a national sense.

Not only did all three parties of the Weimar coalition seize upon the democratic and
großdeutsch legacy of 1848, but so too did the Austrian socialists. Members of the Austrian
Social Democratic Party, like the socialists in Germany, interpreted the events of March 18th
from a socialist point of view and celebrated the March days solely as a party affair.40 And,
just like their German sister organization, many of the Austrian socialists viewed the legacy
of the Frankfurt Parliament in national and democratic terms. In an article chastising the
allegedly nationalist student associations for their absence from the First Austrian Republic’s
one-year anniversary celebrations, the Arbeiter-Zeitung pointed out, “Since 1848 the
republican idea is already linked with that of German unity.”41 And, in interpreting the
revolution of 1918 as not simply a social one but also a national one, Otto Bauer, the leader
of the left wing of the Austrian Social Democrats, drew a direct line between the revolutions
of 1848 and 1918. “If the revolution of 1848 has given birth to the idea of German unity, the
revolution of 1918 has reawakened it. The next wave of European revolutions will therefore

August 1928, Frankfurt am Main, 1848-1928, 80 Jahre, p. 17, in Archiv der sozialen Demokratie der Friedrich-
Ebert-Stiftung Bonn (AdsD), Nachlass Franz Osterroth, Box 53, Fasz. 140. Emphasis in original.
40 For two programs from Austrian socialist ceremonies to commemorate the March revolution, see Verein für
die Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung (VGA), Sacharchiv, Lade 8, Mappe 15.
41 “Das Bürgertum und die Republik,” Arbeiter-Zeitung, 14 November 1919, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt
realize it,” Bauer explained in a piece defending his position that an *Anschluss* could only be achieved through another round of revolution that would upset the French bourgeoisie’s and the Italian fascists’ control of the European state system.\(^\text{42}\) Thus, all of the major parties which most consistently supported democracy in Germany and Austria tried to make a connection between their present-day republics and the story of the struggle for German national unity.

For Austrians, the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848-1849 also became a symbol of their membership in a greater German nation. Ludo Moritz Hartmann – the son of the famed 1848 poet Moritz Hartmann, a Social Democrat, historian, educator, the First Austrian Republic’s first ambassador to Germany, and one of two Austrian representatives in the Weimar National Assembly – used the occasion of the 75\(^{\text{th}}\) anniversary celebrations of the Frankfurt Parliament to proclaim Austro-German togetherness. In a speech in the Kaisersaal of the Römer, Hartmann proclaimed, “We Austrians would have under all circumstances attended this gathering because it would be very important for us to revive the beautiful memories of the year 1848 and to commemorate the day, when the national comrades \([Volksgenossen]\) of the Reich and the German Austrians felt one.”\(^\text{43}\) Indeed, members of almost all of Austria’s

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\(^{42}\) Otto Bauer, “Drei Gruppen im Anschlußlager,” *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 7 July 1927, in Archiv des Vogelsanginstituts, Kt. 55, Anschluß, Zeitungsausschnitte, 1927. Bauer’s initial remarks on this matter in the publication *Der Kampf* caused an uproar in the press of the other parties. See the other articles in this file for a fuller scope of the debate. It should also be noted that although Bauer spoke of the need for a further revolution to take place, the Social Democratic party in Austria was a reformist party. Unlike the Majority Socialists in Germany, the SDAP often advocated revolution in its rhetoric, but in reality pursued a reformist agenda and sought at all costs to avoid violence. A good summary of Bauer’s views can be found in Peter Loewenberg, “Otto Bauer as an Ambivalent Party Leader,” in *The Austrian Socialist Experiment: Social Democracy and Austromarxism, 1918-1934*, ed. Anson Rabinbach (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1985), 71-79. The SDAP’s party program of 1926 also saw 1918 as a national revolution: “The Social Democrats regard the accession of German-Austria to Germany as the necessary completion of the national revolution of 1918. They desire, by peaceful means, the accession to the German republic.” Quoted in Thaler, *The Ambivalence of Identity*, 71.

major parties, except the Bauernbund, chose to attend the 75th anniversary celebrations of the National Assembly organized by the city of Frankfurt precisely for this reason. Due to the involvement of Austrian parliamentarians in the Frankfurt Parliament and its attempt at a großdeutsch solution to the “German Question,” the evoking of the events of 1848-49 spoke to the widespread desire among Austrians to join the Reich after the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy. Hence, in their speeches, both Hartmann and Franz Dinghofer, the chairman of the Greater German People’s Party (GDVP) and a prominent figure in the federal government until 1938, emphatically stated that they wished to see the work of the Frankfurt Parliament completed through the union of Austria with Germany.

The ultimate failure of the 1848 attempt to create a greater German nation-state did not weaken German and Austrian republicans’ argument regarding nationalism and democracy. In fact, the failure enabled them to contend that democracy was the form of government most compatible with realizing true national unity. According to this viewpoint, the numerous royal houses within German-speaking Central Europe had destroyed not only the Frankfurt Parliament, but also the attempt to achieve German unity. A number of republicans asserted that the Hohenzollerns and the Habsburgs had in

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44 Klemm, Erinnernt – umstritten – gefeiert, 262-271. Upon realization that the DNVP and very few members of the DVP were participating, Ernst Schönauer withdrew his participation because the festivities appeared to be more democratic than großdeutsch in nature. The GDVP was also not please to learn about the DNVP and DVP, but still sent representatives.


46 Here again, Peter Gay is completely dismissive of republicans’ attempt to use 1848. According to him, the “decisive failure” of the 1848 revolutionaries could not serve as inspirational figures. Gay, Weimar Culture, 88.

47 It should be noted that republicans of various backgrounds did not solely blame the monarchies. Other arguments blaming reactionaries, the bourgeoisie, and the inability of the left in the parliament to maintain a common will were also advanced. However, the assignation of guilt to the royal houses was a prominent trope among republicans.

48 Also see discussion of this theme in Bryden, “The Search for Founding Fathers,” Chapter 5.
fact divided the German nation: the rivalry between the two dynasties led to the exclusion of Austria from a German nation-state following the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. In an especially damning indictment of the two royal houses, an essay in a booklet of speeches to be used for “republican occasions and for Reichsbanner events” stated that Austria and Prussia had undermined the Frankfurt parliament. “Austria and Prussia, as the strongest German states, worked together to defeat all liberal movements, during which time they otherwise found themselves in a steadily growing rivalry,” it read. “Prussia developed more and more under Bismarck into the leading state of Germany until 1866, when it finally, in league with Italy – in betrayal of the much vaunted Nibelung loyalty – defeated the Austrian brothers and pushed them out of Germany.”49 Or, as Karl Renner, the leader of the pragmatic branch of the Austrian Social Democrats, concisely summed up this outlook while in attendance at a Reichsbanner rally, “The principalities have been our national misfortune.”50

Due to the monarchies’ betrayal of the national movement, this particular republican argument maintained that only a democratic state system could create the environment for the German national movement to succeed. “[T]he transition from monarchy to republic in the German lands has now established the political prerequisite for the greater German nation-state [großdeutschen Nationalstaat],” wrote Adolf Merkl, a professor of law at the


University of Vienna, on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of the Republic of Austria.

“One does not throw unjust stones at the monarchical state if one attributed to it a good part of the complicity in the calamity of German particularism.” Only a democratic state form could pave the way for Großdeutschland, according to this argument, because representative government placed national interests above particularistic ones.

Not all republicans were willing to eschew a connection with the imperial past. In his work on republican Geschichtspolitik in the Weimar Republic, Eric Bryden has argued that republicans were split into two groups over the legacy of figures and events associated with the Kaisereich: moderates, who found a place for the imperial past in their narratives, and militants, who rejected any attempt to include the imperial past in the republican historical narrative. Consequently, not all republicans decried Bismarck or saw January 18, 1871 as cementing the division of Germany. For moderate republicans, Bismarck and his accomplishments were seen as important stepping stones to the achievement of German national unity and even democracy. As Wilhelm Marx of the Centre Party explained, the “ideal solution” to the so-called German Question – one that was großdeutsch and democratic – had yet to be found. Yet, Bismarck had managed to create a German Reich, even though “it remained a torso.” Moreover, Bismarck had, according to Marx, understood that the most important “cement” for maintaining a united Reich was “more than the dynasties, the Volk,” as evidenced by the implementation of universal male suffrage for

51 Dr. Adolf Merkl, “Der Tag der Republik,” Wiener Neueste Nachrichten, 12 November 1925. Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), Parteiarchive, Großdeutsche Volkspartei (GDVP), Zeitungsausschnitte, Materie 1918-1936, Mappe 1, 0 Innere Politik. For another example, see “Das Bürgertum und die Republik,” Arbeiter-Zeitung, 14 November 1919, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalfeiertag (12. November).

52 Bryden, “In Search of Founding Fathers.” He notes that the division of the two camps did not fall along party lines.
Reichstag elections. The hope was that by honoring the imperial past, republicans could win over those conservatives who still felt an emotional attachment to the achievements of imperial Germany.

The federal government likewise put out two publications that explicitly sought to redeem the imperial past during the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Weimar Constitution in 1929. According to a government publication containing speeches to use for the tenth anniversary celebrations, “Across the stages from 1848, 1867 and 1870/71, the idea of national unity has advanced step by step.” The federal government’s official memorial book for the same commemoration similarly constructed a more comprehensive history of “German Unity, German Freedom.” Beginning with the “Awakening of the Nation” in 1807, the book traced the German struggle for unity and freedom by providing quotes from and illustrations of major historical figures and events. Among those people and events included were Fichte, Stein, Josef Görres, the Wartburg and Hambach festivals, Goethe, Jahn, Freiligrath, the Frankfurt Parliament, Heinrich von Gagern, Robert Blum, Ferdinand Lassalle, Heinrich von Treitschke, Bismarck, the proclamation of the German Empire, Paul de Lagarde, Max Weber, August Bebel, Friedrich Naumann, Theodor von Bethmann Hollweg, Hugo Preuss, Friedrich Ebert, the opening of the Weimar National Assembly, Walther Rathenau, and Paul von Hindenburg. All of these figures and events were interpreted as providing historical precedents for the republic. In this instance, Bismarck not

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only helped to achieve a German nation-state, however incomplete, but also to implement universal male suffrage in elections for the Reichstag.55

Even these mentions of imperial achievements were reinscribed to the großdeutsch outlook shared by practically all republicans. Marx, while admiring Bismarck’s accomplishments, did not view Kleindeutschland as the end goal and advocated for an Anschluss. The speech in the first government booklet mentioned went on to say that one could “not forget that many millions of Germans live in the East and West, North and South beyond the boundaries of the Reich, separated from German native soil [Mutterboden].” It only mentioned one of these groups by name, “the Austrian Brudervolk.”56 And, the official commemorative book included an essay on “Austria’s Right and the Weimar National Assembly” by Paul Löbe, the President of the Reichstag and a member of the SPD, as well as a piece by Michael Hainisch, the former Austrian president from 1920-1928, entitled “Austria and Germany.”57

One of the most striking examples of the republican attempt to reevaluate the imperial past occurred in commemorations for the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Reich on January 18, 1871. Although the Austrians had been excluded from the Germany formed that historic day, Reich President Friedrich Ebert and Chancellor Constantin Fehrenbach addressed the plight of Austria in an announcement on the anniversary of the Reichsgründung. They mentioned their sorrow not only for the territories lost at the Paris Peace Conference, but also for “especially heavily suffering Austria, which with its heart

57 Paul Löbe, “Österreichs Recht und die Weimarer Nationalversammlung” and Michael Hainisch, “Österreich und Deutschland,” in Deutsche Einheit, Deutsche Freiheit, 197-200 and 201-203 respectively.
strives toward us as we strive toward it.” They concluded, “It must be all of our firm will to continue to hold on to and to strengthen our inner state unity [staatliche Einheit]. If political and economic views divide us more than they should, in one thing we are all united: Borders shall not divide us. The unity of our German Fatherland [Die Einheitlichkeit unseres deutschen Vaterlandes] is for all of us a part of our beliefs, our love and our hope.”58 The inclusion of Austria in an official, republican message concerning the formation of a state from which German-speakers living in the Habsburg Empire had been specifically excluded demonstrates how the past was reinterpreted after the war from a großdeutsch standpoint.59

Residents of the Reich were not alone in finding a place for Austria in the celebration of Bismarck’s Kleindeutschland. As a sign of the widespread desire for an Anschluss in the early years of the First Austrian Republic, Austrians from across the political spectrum also held their own celebrations to commemorate January 18th. Not only did the Greater German People’s Party and Pan-German League organize festivities for the founding of the Reich, but both chambers of the Austrian parliament also recognized the anniversary as a way to express the bonds linking Germany and Austria after the war.60 In the Bundesrat, for example, Jakob Reumann, the president of the council and the first Social Democratic mayor of Vienna, garnered unanimous approval of a statement for January 18th and sent it to President Ebert. “With wistful nostalgia and yet with confidence have our tribal brothers [Stammesbrüder] in the Reich met the 18th of January, and we are one with them in the feeling of pain, as well as

58 Draft of a newspaper announcement signed by Ebert and Fehrenbach, 18 January 1921, in BAB, R43I/566 Reichskanzlei, Bl. 79.
59 Also see Stanley Suval’s discussion of the attempt by professional historians to rewrite the previously kleindeutsch-focused German history to include Austria. Suval, “Overcoming Kleindeutschland: The Politics of Mythmaking in the Weimar Republic,” Central European History 2, no. 4 (1969): 312-330 and The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era, Chapter 4.
60 See relevant documents in PAAA, R73287.
in the hope for a happy future of the entire German Volk,” part of the statement read.\textsuperscript{61} Rather than being a date that represented the final exclusion of Austria from Germany, the 50\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the founding of the Reich became a date to proclaim membership in a greater German nation.

In addition to demonstrating the connection of a parliamentary government with the historical struggles for German national unity, German and Austrian supporters of democracy used their postwar support for an Anschluss to further prove their national credentials. The republicans advocated for a political union between the two countries, and in doing so, were demonstrating their commitment to a national cause. Indeed, republicans in both Germany and Austria were at the forefront of the Anschluss movement during the Weimar era.\textsuperscript{62} In the immediate aftermath of defeat, German and Austrian republicans had hoped to win the republic supporters by achieving an even greater German unity than that created by Bismarck.\textsuperscript{63} Even after the Allies made it clear in 1919 that an Anschluss would not be foreseeable in the near future, republicans continued to energetically support an Anschluss in efforts to refute the political right’s claim that they lacked national feeling. Moreover, by promoting a großdeutsch variety of German nationalism, they argued that they did support German nationalism, just a German nationalism that looked wholly different from that espoused by the right of the political spectrum. This notion of opposing German nationalisms was best articulated by Richart Mischler, who was the chairman of the Potsdam branch of the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold and the business director of the Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund.

\textsuperscript{61} [Untitled] enclosed in Letter from Der Vorsitzende des Bundesrates der Republik Österreich (Jakob Reumann) to the Reichspräsident, Vienna, 1 February 1921, in PAAA, R73287, II Oe 492.
\textsuperscript{62} Stanley Suval, \textit{The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era}.
Countering claims by the right that the Reichsbanner was “the traditional troops of the deserters and the mutinying sailors” and the “protection force of the French,” Mischler rhetorically asked “Are we not national?” His answer was that “our nationalism is of a completely different type from that of the opponents.”

He contrasted a right-wing nationalism based on “Alldeutschtum [pan-Germanness]” with a republican nationalism based on “Großdeutschum [greater-Germanness].” As he explained these two ideas were “not only not identical, but opposites.” So what were the differences between the often conflated terms and why were they significant? Alldeutschtum, according to Mischler, was based on militarism and imperialism. It was “that nationalism, which through German capital conquers the world from the Flemish coast all the way to the Ganges and which wanted to see it controlled by German weapons.” In contrast, Großdeutschum was “outwardly peaceful” and was based on “the philosophy of justice, of the right to national self-determination.”

Mischler also proceeded to dismiss “conservative nationalism,” which he labeled as the “spiritual heritage of the Kleindeutschen.” Picking up on the historical arguments made by the supporters of democracy, he contended that the republicans’ großdeutsch nationalism was “older” – dating back to the Frankfurt Parliament – and more all-embracing than “conservative nationalism.” Whereas the “conservative nationalism” had excluded “10

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66 Statement is from “Das Reichsbanner und Grossdeutschland,” 19.
67 He outlines the differences between the two types of nationalism in both pieces. The quote is from “Das Reichsbanner und Potsdam,” 17.
million Germans” in Austria from the German nation-state, “[o]ur nationalism,” Mischler explained, “feels the heartbeat of the entire German Volk, not only Prussia’s.”

Thus, republicans went to great lengths to refute the claim trumpeted by the political right that democracy was an unsuitable form of government for the German nation and that republicans were traitors to the German national cause. In rooting democratic ideals and practices in a longer history of the German national movement, republicans sought to make democracy German and thereby legitimize the new republics. Furthermore, they relied on historical narratives and the postwar situation to help define a republican version of German nationalism. As Mischler’s statements suggest, foreign policy methods and goals would be central to republican attempts not only to demonstrate their national convictions but also to challenge the national credentials of their right-wing opponents.

**Foreign Affairs, the Politics of Peace, and Internationalist Associations**

Although the precise foreign policy goals differed among the republican groups, all agreed that Germans’ right to self-determination had been violated by the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain. At the top of their list of grievances, as demonstrated by their active involvement in the Anschluss movement, was the Entente’s refusal to allow an Anschluss in 1919. Alongside the desire to revise the peace settlement with regard to the Anschluss, they also sought to challenge the occupation of the Rhineland, Ruhr, and Saar, as

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68 Quotations are from “Das Reichsbanner und Potsdam,”17-18.
69 In the immediate postwar period, the SPD and USPD wanted a referendum to be held over Alsace-Lorraine. Although they were willing to let North Schleswig go, they were upset about the Polish Corridor, West Prussia, and Danzig. Eventually, however, they reconciled themselves to establishing cordial relations as a priority. See Dieter Groh and Peter Brandt, “Vaterlandlose Gesellen”: Sozialdemokratie, 1860-1990 (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1992), 180-184. The DDP at different points in the interwar period expressed the wish to regain Germany’s colonies and revising Germany’s borders to include territories as diverse as Schleswig, Danzig, West Prussia, Upper Silesia, South Tyrol, and the Sudetenland. Heß, ‘Das ganze Deutschland soll es sein’.
70 Suval, The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era.
well as the awarding of South Tyrol to Italy and the partition of Upper Silesia. Yet, as Mischler’s quotes suggest, the revisionism advocated by the republicans looked wholly different from that of the German and Austrian conservatives and radical right. Republicans pursued “democratic revisionism” – to use Jürgen Heß’s term – whereby German self-determination was to be achieved through peaceful means.

Whereas the French and Czechoslovak governments saw even the mere mention of Anschluss as a symbol of German imperialism and a call for war, republicans repeatedly stressed that they aimed to maintain and actually strengthen European peace. To make their point, republicans emphasized that the Anschluss was not an annexationist maneuver on the part of Germany. Rather, it was a matter of national self-determination and would only occur if Austrians desired it. Moreover, the supporters of democracy emphasized that they would work through the League of Nations to achieve it. After all, although the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain had prohibited an Anschluss from taking place in 1919, the peace settlement did not completely rule out an Anschluss occurring in the future and indeed provided that a political union could happen with the approval of Council of the League of

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71 Republicans also saw these areas as fitting within their democratic framework. The occupation of the Rhine, Ruhr, and Saar was seen as examples of French imperialism, the abuse of Germans’ rights in Tyrol was interpreted as a crime of Fascism, and the partition of Upper Silesia was seen as a violation of a popular referendum.

72 Indeed, Mischler went so far as to say that republicans were only interested in Austria, and would not concern themselves with the other German-speaking minorities living beyond the boundaries of the Reich. In contrasting Alldeutschdum with the großdeutsch idea, he claimed, the latter was “outwardly peaceful. It is based on the philosophy of rights, the right to national self-determination.” “Austria’s Anschluss is possible,” he continued, “without war being necessary with other successor states of the former Habsburg monarchy, as would be unavoidable, for example, in the case of the Sudeten Germans.” By limiting his focus to the cause of Austrian self-determination, Mischler sought to prove that the republican brand of German nationalism would not threaten European peace and independence of other nationalities. Dr. Richart Mischler (Potsdam), “Das Reichsbanner und Grossdeutschland,” Festschrift zur Verfassungsfeier 1925, Berlin, 8. und 9. August (Berlin: Wrenvertrieb des Reichsbanners Schwarz-Rot-Gold, 1925), 18-19, in AdsD, Nachlass Willy Müller, Abteilung V, Box 8, Fsz. 249.

73 Jürgen Heß, ‘Das ganze Deutschland soll es sein’, especially 336-350. Although Heß is only addressing the DDP, I think his term is useful for thinking of the republicans’ foreign policy goals and methods as a whole.
Nations. In creating a more peaceful climate in Europe and a larger economic and political unit in the heart of Europe, the Anschluss would also be an important step to the creation of a Pan-Europe, according to republicans. At a 1925 Anschluss rally of the Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund in Vienna, Löbe fleshed out this line of thinking:

We hear the objection from Italy and from the circles of France aligned with the right that our endeavors [for an Anschluss] are a revival of imperialism and annexationism, in which a Volk or part of a Volk is violently incorporated against its will. This is not the same as what we are demanding. On the contrary, if parts of a Volk, which speak the same language and possess the same culture as a large nation, if these parts of a Volk want to go to the motherland, then it has nothing to do with annexationism. That is our very first human right. Only he who forcibly prevents the free will of a Volk practices violent politics. […] We explain before the general public that we expect the fulfillment of our wishes and of our national right from a peaceful Europe, from a Europe, whose integration under international law is so fervently pursued in these very days. We know no other way for fulfillment than through the League of Nations, which is expressly appointed by the Treaty of St. Germain to decide about Austria’s future state form. Certainly, even more, we believe that the fulfillment of our German wishes, of our valid national claims, will be the principal contribution that brings peace to Europe.

As this statement suggests, in advocating for an Anschluss, republicans sought to reassure foreign government of their goodwill in hopes of winning support for the Anschluss in the League.

Yet, as Löbe’s remarks intimate, republicans also used their emphasis on German peaceful intentions to attack foreign governments for their violation of the principle of national self-determination. By underlining the Germans’ commitment to peace and “human

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74 Many historians of the Weimar Republic who mention the republicans’ use of großdeutsch nationalism often overlook this point and therefore too strongly criticize the republicans as being unrealistic in their campaigns to win support for the republic. For example, see Gerwarth, “The Past in Weimar History,” 15-16.
75 Also see Suval’s discussion of the foreign policies of different actors primarily within Germany with regard to the Anschluss. Suval, The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era, Chapter 5.
76 Quoted in “Große Kundgebung für den Anschluß an Deutschland: Alle Parteien vertreten,” Neue Freie Presse, 31 August 1925, in PAAA, R73295, IIOe1356.
rights,” republicans argued that the adversaries of the Anschluss were militaristic and imperialistic. Republicans identified the Entente powers, especially the French government, as enemies of national self-determination and consequently of democracy. In a speech filled with Marxist denounciations of imperialism and capitalism, Robert Preußler, a member of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, decried the peace settlement and its impact on Europe. “So the peace treaties are not the realization of the idea – War against war! War against reaction! Furthering of international peace! – but the opposite,” he proclaimed. “The victors have rearmed, ready anytime to set out to rob. France is an advocates’ republic, which has become unfaithful to the postulates of 1789.” If the supposedly democratic countries of the west were in reality the opposite, so the republican thinking went, then the German and Austrian republicans were the only genuine democrats due to their championing of peace and the democratic idea of self-determination.

According to the republicans in Germany and Austria, the Entente’s imperialism and militarism increased the already numerous difficulties of the infant republics in Germany and Austria. By saddling the Weimar and First Austrian Republics with the widely unpopular peace treaties, the Entente had impeded Wilson’s hope to create a more democratic Europe. As Ludwig Haas of the DDP put it, “The republic would have more strongly captured the hearts of German men and women if there would have been more democracy present in the west, in France, in England and in America.” Instead, the Allied powers had aided the cause of the opponents of democracy in Germany and Austria. The denial of Germans’ right


to self-determination had negatively affected the “fate of German democracy” by strengthening the appeal of the “lie that the democratic and national ideas are opposites.”

Again, the republicans were attempting to demonstrate that the true postwar democrats were not the countries normally associated with representative government. In pointing to the Entente’s hypocrisy, the German and Austrian republicans set out to prove that their commitment to peace and democracy was genuine. They thereby hoped that they would be able to convince world public opinion that the peace settlement needed to be revised.

Furthermore, these different manifestations of democracy – a peaceful German one versus a violent French one – enabled republicans to imply that there existed different, national types, of democracy. A proposed (though never staged) performance for the 1931 Constitution Day emphasized that the French Revolution had led to the Terror and Napoleon. In the script, the French characters cry out for violence and blood, whereas the German characters emphasize “Unity, Justice and Freedom [Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit].”

By contrasting a German form of democracy with an “other,” namely French democracy, republicans once again hoped to counter right-wing arguments that democracy was a foreign imposition.

Social Democrats in Austria did not just see foreign powers as responsible for preventing the creation of a Großdeutschland; they also identified domestic collaborators: bourgeois, clerical conservatives and the radical right. This trope of blaming domestic social

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79 “Nationale Demokratie,” in Hugo Preuss, Staat, Recht und Freiheit, 430.

and political opponents for hindering the Anschluss was largely confined to the Austrian socialists. The Reich German socialists’ rhetoric eschewed more doctrinaire Marxist sayings regarding class warfare, and as members of a democratic coalition composed of bourgeois left liberals and Catholics, they emphasized their willingness to work across class and party lines to achieve their national goals. Austrian socialists, however, used the issue of the Anschluss in an attempt to undermine the credibility of their enemies at home. For instance, they criticized the Christian Socials, especially Seipel, for signing the Geneva Protocols, which enabled the economically faltering Austrian state to receive loans from the West in exchange for a guarantee of Austrian independence. This situation prompted the Arbeiter-Zeitung to accuse Seipel of being “far more Francophile than German-friendly.”

Moreover, as Seipel’s wing of the party began to turn against democratic principles in favor of authoritarian ones, the Austrian Social Democrats interpreted his increasing friendliness with Mussolini and the Austrofascist Heimwehr as a national betrayal. According to the same article in the Arbeiter-Zeitung, Seipel’s desire to befriend Mussolini “certainly proves not only that Prelate Seipel’s national feelings cannot be very developed, but that he also lacks a feeling for democracy. The consideration for the Germans in South Tyrol, who are exposed to brutal oppression by the Fascists, alone would have already had to stop Prelate Seipel from his solidarity with the fascistic regime.”

Despite their differences, republicans saw großdeutsch nationalism as a common cause. The desire for an Anschluss united the republicans in both countries and provided

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81 For instance, see Severing’s remark regarding resistance to the French occupation of the Rhine, Ruhr and Saar: “So haben sich mit den Bauern, mit den Handwerken, mit den Beamten auch die Arbeiter im Osten, im Norden und auch noch im Jahre 1923 im Westen Deutschlands dafür eingesetzt, dass deutscher Boden deutschen blieb und dass deutsche Kultur ungeschmälert dem deutschen Volkszarten erhalten blieb.” Typed manuscript of “Feier der Reichsregierung,” Westfälische Neueste Nachrichten, 12 August 1929, in AdSD, Nachlass Carl Severing, Mappe 15.

82 “Reichsbanner und Schutzbund,” Arbeiter-Zeitung, 10 November 1926, in PAAA, R73298, II Oe 1946.

83 “Reichsbanner und Schutzbund,” Arbeiter-Zeitung, 10 November 1926, in PAAA, R73298, II Oe 1946.
them with a way to define democracy as integral to the German national tradition. In other words, the republicans’ großdeutsch and Anschluss politics enabled them to nationalize democracy. By calling for a political union between Germany and Austria, republicans – socialists and liberals alike – hoped to prove their national credentials and convince skeptics that democracy was compatible with Germanness. Indeed, as both the historical narratives and postwar concern for national self-determination show, republicans went so far as to argue that the fate of German national unity was dependent on a democratic form of government.

“The Reich as the German nation-state can only maintain its life in the present and can only hope for its development in the future,” Preuss contended, “by reconnecting to the ideals and the national will of the old großdeutsch democracy, which, suited to the change of the times, leads to the national republic.”84 The reverse was also true for republicans. They hoped that a future Anschluss would help to stabilize and strengthen the republican form of government in both countries. As Heinrich Hiertsiefer of the Catholic Centre Party explained, “The new [democratic] Germany will truly be formed when German-Austria is incorporated.”85

Although großdeutsch nationalism thus served the pragmatic goals of strengthening support for democracy and undercutting the political right’s attacks on the republic, it is important to note that these republican expressions of großdeutsch nationalism were not simply rhetorical devices. Many members of the German Democratic Party, the Catholic Centre Party, and the German and Austrian Social Democratic parties held a sincere belief in the German national cause. However, as these various republican groups emphasized, their transborder German nationalism looked radically different from that of the conservatives and

84 “Parlamentarische Regierungsbildung” (1921) in Hugo Preuss, Staat, Recht und Freiheit, 473.
radical right. During the Weimar era, there existed, alongside “democratic revisionism,” the idea of “democratic nationalism” – to use another of Jürgen Heß’s terms. Its adherents sought peacefully to unite members of the German nation into a single state based on the Weimar constitution.

Rather than relying on antisemitic and racial definitions of the German nation, republicans’ ideas about the German Volk were more tolerant and inclusive. This is not to say that republicans never included unsavoury elements in their brand of nationalism or that they never used the language of blood. Carl Petersen of the DDP, Cologne Mayor Meerfeld and Adolf Köster of the SPD, for instance, all listed blood as one of the elements unifying Germans and Austrians. However, most used ethnocultural ideas related to the terms Heimat and Stamm as a way to stress the inclusiveness and diversity of the German nation.

They emphasized that Jews, Protestants, and Catholics, as well as workers, farmers, and the middle classes, could all be part of the German Volk. Some republicans went even further and stressed that a German nation was nothing more than an individual choice. For example, Wilhelm Külz, a member of the German Democratic Party, answered the question of “Who is German?” in the following way: “A German is anyone who feels the German experience to be one’s own and feels oneself to be jointly responsible for the fate of the German Volk.”

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86 Heß, “Das Ganze Deutschland soll es sein,” especially 351-357. Again, although his study pertains to the DDP, I think the basic idea can be revised and extended to all supporters of democracy. While pointing out the differences between democratic and right-wing nationalism, he acknowledges that democratic nationalists also occasionally included unsavory elements.

87 See Adolf Koester, “Rede zur Begrüssung oesterreichischer Sänger,” undated, in AdSD, Nachlass Adolf Köster, Mappe 27, Nummer 563; Meerfeld is quoted in “Die Anschlußkundgebung ‘Rhein-Donau’,” Neue Freie Presse, 17 May 1926, in PAAA, R73297, II Oe 891; Petersen is quoted in “Die Verfassungsfeier im Reichstag,” in Der Fünfte Jahrestag der Deutschen Reichsverfassung: Aufmarsch des Reichsbanners Schwarz-Rot-Gold am Verfassungstage 1924, in BAB, R431/570, Bl. rs. of 277.

88 See Chapter Five for a further discussion of the use of these concepts.

89 Quoted in Dr. Wolfgang Madjera, “Wer ist deutsch?”, Volks-Zeitung, 16 March 1926, in ÖStA, AdR, Parteiarchive, GDVP, Zeitungsausschnitte, Mappe 266/63. Both Otto Bauer and Karl Renner had expressed similar ideas in their Habsburg-era writings on the nationality question. They insisted that nationality was a choice, although Bauer, who was of Jewish heritage, qualified his answer with regard to Jews. And despite
Just as the republicans’ conceptions of the nation differed from those of the political right, so too did their project of a Greater Germany. In advocating for an *Anschluss*, republicans argued that the political union of Germany and Austria would actually strengthen the foundations of the postwar European peace and provide an important step in the formation of a Pan-Europe. For the supporters of German and Austrian democracy, therefore, the commitment to a German national cause did not preclude the commitment to international and pacifist causes. To illustrate this point, it is useful to look at the web of interwar organizations that Paul Löbe was involved in. Löbe was president of the Reichstag for most of the Weimar Republic and a prominent member of the German Social Democratic Party. In addition to these political roles within the Reich, Löbe also served in leadership positions in a number of organizations whose reach extended beyond the borders of Germany. He participated in Count Coudenhove-Kalergi’s Pan Europe and international socialist organizations. At the same time, he also served as the chairman of the Berlin branch of the *Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund*, an organization that promoted *Anschluss* but not on socialist or even democratic grounds. It underlined its “non-partisan” nature and brought together leading personalities of all political persuasions, including members of fiercely antidemocratic parties.  

their numerous pronouncements about the equality of nationalities, Bauer and Renner could also at times express mild forms of German chauvinism. For a discussion of their views, see Ian Reifowitz, “Otto Bauer and Karl Renner on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Jews,” *Journal of Jewish Identities* 2, no. 2 (2009): 1-19.

For a man like Löbe, internationalist aims could easily be reconciled with nationalist ones. At a 1925 Anschluss rally in Vienna organized by the Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund, for instance, he announced to the crowd that an Anschluss did not mean a “breach of peace.” To prove this point, he explained that “[a]s a party man, I come at present from Marseilles, where workers have expressed their desire for peace, and tomorrow I travel to Paris for a rally for German-French understanding in order explicitly to highlight that this understanding is the basis of European peace.” Löbe’s involvement in these various organizations shows that a wholehearted belief in the causes of international socialism and international peace did not rule out a genuine belief in großdeutsch nationalism. The ability to reconcile these seemingly conflicting aims was due once again to the existence of various forms of interwar German nationalism. In a memoir written after the Second World War, Löbe explained that many proponents of the Anschluss movement in the period from 1918 to 1933 had possessed a “healthy national feeling,” which contrasted with the “bullish nationalism” of the Nazis.

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91 Buchner speaks more generally about the German Social Democrats’ “specific national understanding,” which differed from “Wilhelmine hurrah-patriotism” in that it combined “national sentiments on the one hand” and “international understanding and international proletariat solidarity on the other hand.” Buchner, *Um nationale und republikanische Identität*, 12. Also see Groh and Brandt, “Vaterlandslose Gesellen”, Chapter 17. With regard to the DDP, Heß states that there was a “blend of national and supranational aims, although the national aims were clearly more predominant.” Like the SPD and the Center Party, the DDP supported international reconciliation and the League of Nations. Heß, ‘Das Ganze Deutschland soll es sein’, here 113.

92 Quoted in “Große Kundgebung für den Anschluss an Deutschland,” *Neue Freie Presse*, 31 August 1925, in PAAA, R73295, II Oe 1356.

93 Philipp Scheidemann makes this argument in Scheidemann, “Zwei notwendige Aufklärungen,” in *Das Reichsbanner Schwarz Rot Gold* (Berlin: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaft, undated), 8-10, here 8, in AdSD, Nachlass Franz Osterroth, Box 53, Fsz. 140. Originally from Scheidemann’s speech to thousands of workers regarding Rathenau’s murder.

Nor was Löbe alone among the socialists in expressing a sincere commitment to German nationalism. As Carl Severing remarked, the republic’s inclusion of workers in political life, meant that “[t]hey felt that the fight for German land was their own, that the fight for German culture, for their own culture, was a fight for their own ideals.” Or, in an even more dramatic statement, he concluded, “[…] we do not come into the world first and foremost as Social Democrats or as German Nationals [members of the DNVP], but as German national comrades [Volksgenossen].” Hence, while some historians have asserted that socialists were cool to the national idea or that they merely supported the Anschluss due to their desire to strengthen the cause of socialism on the European continent, such claims are overstated. Undoubtedly, both Social Democratic parties hoped that an Anschluss would strengthen their hand and lead to further gains for the working classes in Germany and Austria. However, they also enthusiastically advocated for an Anschluss on cultural and economic grounds. Even the Austrian socialists, who used uncompromising Marxist rhetoric to attack the other sociopolitical groups in Austria, made a case for the Anschluss

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95 Stefan Berger recognizes the commitment of the SPD to nationalism; however, he views this occurrence as having a solely negative impact on German politics. In Berger’s eyes, “At several major junctures in its history, important strands of spd [sic] thinking opted for nationalist solutions in an effort to answer specific contextual questions, thereby shifting the meaning of nationalism further to one dominated by the political Right.” I think he overstates his case and falls into the trap of only seeing interwar German nationalism as a right-wing phenomenon. Stefan Berger, “Nationalism and the Left in Germany,” *New Left Review* 206 (July-August 1994): 55-70, here 59.

96 Typed Manuscript of “Feier der Reichsregierung,” *Westfälische Neueste Nachrichten*, 12 August 1929, in AdSD, Nachlass Carl Severing, Mappe 15.


99 German Social Democrats’ admiration of culture and national heroes in the interwar years was not a new phenomenon. As Vernon Lidtke has pointed out, working class organizations and the SPD were already doing this in Imperial Germany. They were, according to Lidtke, especially enamored with Turnvater Jahn. Vernon Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).
due to their belief that they were members of a German national community.\textsuperscript{100} While Karl Renner characterized an \textit{Anschluss} as the “return [of Austrians] in the thousand-year-old community [\textit{Gemeinschaft}].”\textsuperscript{101} Vice-Mayor of Vienna, Georg Emmerling, announced, “We want it [the \textit{Anschluss}], but not simply because it would benefit us economically. Above all, we want the \textit{Anschluss} because we feel ourselves one with you [Reich Germans] in cultural terms.”\textsuperscript{102} As this statement from the most internationally minded group suggests, the project of a Greater Germany was not simply the work of the political right. Rather, republicans of all political stripes saw \textit{großdeutsch} nationalism as central to their efforts to support and defend a democratic form of government.

\textsuperscript{100} Helmut Konrad, “Demokratieverständnis, Parlamentarische Haltung und Nationale Frage bei den Österreichischen Sozialdemokraten,” in \textit{Das Parteiwesen Österreichs und Ungarns in der Zwischenkriegszeit}, ed. Anna M. Drabek, Richard G. Plaschka and Helmut Rumpler (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), 118-122; Low, \textit{The Anschluss Movement}, especially Chapter 3. Low points out how the interwar Social Democrats seized on the support of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Ferdinand Lasalle, August Bebel, and Wilhelm Liebknecht. These men had supported a \textit{großdeutsch} point of view because they saw the goal of national unity tied to the improvement of the position of the working class.

\textsuperscript{101} Karl Renner, “Rundfunkvortrag: Österreichs vergangene und künftige Sendung” [typed manuscript], in PAAA, R73298, II Oe 1768/1926.

\textsuperscript{102} Quoted in “Große Kundgebung für den Anschluß an Deutschland: Alle Parteien vertreten,” \textit{Neue Freie Presse}, 31 August 1925, in PAAA, R73295, II Oe 1356. Although there were speakers from conservative parties, both the article and the report from the German Embassy in Vienna state that workers were particularly well represented among the 13,000 in attendance. The report from the embassy went further, concluding that many from the political right did not turn out in large numbers because they saw it as a Social Democratic event. Letter from the Deutsche Gesandtschaft Wien to the Auswärtige Amt Berlin, Vienna, 31 August 1925, in PAAA, R73295, II Oe 1356.
Chapter 2

The Search for a German Standard:
The Flag Debate in the Weimar Republic

In his famed collection of short stories, *Goodbye to Berlin*, Christopher Isherwood not only immortalized the heady atmosphere of Weimar-era Berlin’s night life, but he also chronicled the growing political tensions during the republic’s last years. During a trip to the island of Rügen in the summer of 1931, the protagonist strolls along the beach, noting, “Each family has its own enormous hooded wicker beach-chair, and each flies a little flag. There are the German city-flags – Hamburg, Hanover, Dresden, Rostock and Berlin, as well as the National, Republican and Nazi colors. Each chair is encircled by a low sand bulwark upon which the occupants have set inscriptions in fircones: Waldesruh. Familie Walter. Stahlhelm. Heil Hitler!”¹

As Isherwood highlights, symbols, both visual and auditory, served as an important way for the population to express its attitudes toward the state, political system and nation. Furthermore, the vision of “sand bulwark[s]” marked by the flags points to the divisiveness caused and represented by symbolic forms during the Weimar era. This chapter explores the parameters of the struggle over the state colors and flag in the Weimar Republic. The clash of symbols emerged alongside intensive debates about the new democratic form of government introduced to Germany after the First World War. With the change in political systems came the search for new symbols to represent the Weimar Republic.

The decision by the National Assembly in 1919 to make black-red-gold the official colors of the new state led to the so-called *Flaggenstreit*, a debate between supporters of the new democratic tricolor and proponents of the imperial black-white-red tricolor. Even a

compromise reached by the assembly, which made the merchant flag black-white-red with a small black-red-gold jack in the corner, failed to appease the supporters of the imperial colors. During the ensuing struggle, politicians loyal to the republic pursued different strategies both to limit the exhibition of black-white-red banners and enforce and protect the display of black-red-gold flags. The cornerstone of federal legislation was the Law for the Protection of the Republic, which was in effect from July 1922 to July 1929 and from March 1930 to December 1932. Passed in response to the assassination of Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau in 1922, the law made it illegal to insult both the republic and its flag. Democratic authorities at the local and provincial levels also issued a number of decrees that sought to govern the flying of flags on a wide range of objects, ranging from Reichswehr members’ private homes, to sailboats, to hotels, and to associations’ gatherings.

The Official Colors of Germany

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Imperial Germany" /></td>
<td>Imperial Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Weimar Republic" /></td>
<td>Weimar Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Merchant Flag" /></td>
<td>Merchant Flag (Weimar Republic)</td>
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The debate about the flag was not simply legislated or dictated from above. As Isherwood’s story reveals, ordinary members of society, both as individuals and through associations, actively participated in and shaped the contestation and legitimization of symbols through their use and support of them. This chapter therefore moves beyond simply investigating the debates about symbols as a symptom of the fragmentation of German
political culture.\(^2\) It demonstrates that the *Flaggenstreit* is useful for exploring how Germans conceptualized their political agency now that they were citizens of a democracy, a topic that scholars are just beginning to analyze.\(^3\) Moreover, a careful examination of the flag debate also reveals the willingness of many Germans to reach a compromise over the divisive issue.

What Isherwood’s observation does not take into account are the complex relationships between various political viewpoints and nationalism. As this chapter shows, black-white-red flags should not be labeled the “national” colors. To counter skeptics and outright opponents of the republics, committed republicans turned to symbols that they believed would illustrate a historical link between Germanness and democracy. Most importantly, socialists and liberal democrats utilized symbols that drew upon a *großdeutsch* vocabulary and visual discourse.

### The Two Sides of the Debate

Throughout the entirety of the Weimar Republic’s existence, the issue of the state’s colors aroused the political passions of large parts of the German population. This heated debate was not surprising as the flag served as both a marker of one’s opinion about the imperial past and as a barometer for one’s feelings on the current form of government. From the moment the press began reporting that the National Assembly in Weimar was debating a

\(^{2}\) For works emphasizing fragmentation, see Detlef Lehnert und Klaus Megerle (eds.), *Politische Identität und nationale Gedenktagе*; Detlef Lehnert and Klaus Megerle, “Problems of Identity and Consensus in a Fragmented Society: The Weimar Republic”; Alois Friedel, *Deutsche Staatssymbole*, 31-36.

\(^{3}\) A recent article by Nadine Rossol also notes the importance of looking at the role of the population in the flag debate. Rossol, “Flaggenkrieg am Badestrand: Lokale Möglichkeiten repräsentativer Mitgestaltung in der Weimarer Republik,” *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 7/8 (2008): 617-637. While reinscribing the republicans’ actions in terms of their civic engagement, she overlooks the notion that the opponents of black-red-gold were also envisioning their actions as citizens. More generally, see Gary Cohen, “Reinventing Austrian and Central European History;” Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski (eds.), *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany*; Canning, “Class vs. Citizenship: Keywords in German History”; Geoff Eley, “Making a Place in the Nation: Meanings of ‘Citizenship’ in Wilhelmine Germany”; Maureen Healy, “Becoming Austrian: Women, the State, and Citizenship in World War I”.

change in Germany’s official colors, men and women of various social backgrounds, political viewpoints, and generations began to voice their opinions in the pages of the press, messages sent to the government, and rallies. Louise Modersohn-Breling, a painter living in the artist colony of Worpswede, was one such (newly enfranchised) citizen who felt compelled to make her views on the flag issue known to the government. Writing in March 1919, while the National Assembly was still drafting the constitution, she began by saying, “Please excuse an altogether unpolitical woman, who dares to write to you in order to also raise her little voice for once.” While recognizing that some “heroic deeds” were carried out under the colors black-white-red, she argued that these colors were also reminders of the war and its consequent hardship. She therefore supported the move in the National Assembly to make black-red-gold the official colors, for as she wrote, “The new Germany needs new colors!”

Although somewhat hesitant in its appropriation of the voice of new citizen activity, Modersohn-Breling’s letter exemplified the expanded possibilities for political participation and the new forms of agency brought about by the First World War and its political consequences. The letter, one of many received by the government, shows how larger numbers of Germans now exercised what they saw as the rights and responsibilities of a citizen living in a democracy.

Numerous Germans used these rights and the new relationship between the government and its citizenry in order to call for the maintenance of the imperial tricolor and challenge the new flag. Before the ratification of black-red-gold as the republic’s official colors, supporters of the black-white-red banner lobbied the government to maintain the imperial tricolor. After the passage of the flag change by the National Assembly, they

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4 Letter from Louise Modersohn-Breling to the Ministerpräsident, Fischerhude bei Bremen, 22 March 1919, in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 25.
continued to urge the government to reinstate the former flag and to conduct a national referendum on the matter, assuring the government that the majority of the population was unhappy with the Assembly’s decision. Utilizing the language and practices associated with “rule by the people, for the people,” the bearers of black-white-red pursued a number of different strategies in an effort to impact the government’s handling of the issue. During the republic’s early years, organizations and individuals attempted to communicate their opinions to officials. The Central Association of the Seamen’s Guild, the Association of German Maritime Clubs, members of the Freikorps, the North German *Hansabund*, and German communities living abroad were among the organizations who wrote letters of protest. Groups also tried to demonstrate their strength by organizing petition campaigns. Members of the conservative German People’s Party (DVP) in Görlitz, for example, collected over 4000 signatures in a petition campaign during May 1919 to protest any move to change Germany’s flag. A petition circulated among Germans residing in Rio de Janeiro, Petropolis, and Nova Friburgo contained the signatures of 967 men and women who asked for the Reichstag to reinstate the black-white-red flag.

To convince the government of the widespread popular support for black-white-red, political parties and associations backing the imperial flag organized public gatherings. In a telegram sent to the Social Democratic member of parliament Philipp Scheidemann in April 1919, a representative of the DVP reported that a gathering of 1,000 people in Zeitz

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5 For collections of letters received by the government, consult BAB, R1501/116480-116485 and PAAA, R98311-R98326.
7 Copy of a letter from Maximilian Falck to Präsidenten des deutschen Reichstages Dr. Paul Löbe, Rio de Janeiro, 20 June 1921, in BAB, R1501/116485, Bl. 48-52.
supported keeping the black-white-red colors due to “patriotic and economic reasons.”

Residents of Neustadtgödens also attended a rally to protest the recommendation by the constitutional committee in Weimar to discard the black-white-red flag. Additionally, in early October 1925, the German National Workers’ League organized rallies in Landsberg-Warthe, Blumenhagen, Osterode, Gallnow, Schneidemühl, Guben, Dortmund, and Stettin to show that its organization, alongside the extreme right German National People’s Party (DNVP) and “patriotic associations,” would “do everything to ensure that the black-white-red flag, under which Germany experienced the greatest political, economic, social and cultural upturn, once again becomes the legally recognized flag of the Reich.”

Moreover, groups such as the Naval League of German Women, a German maritime shipping meeting, the German People’s Party, the German People’s League Black-White-Red, the Reich’s League ‘Black-White-Red’ appealed to federal officials for a popular referendum to be held on the matter, an act highlighting the democratization of political culture in postwar Germany. Demonstrating particular political savvy for the new democratic system, the last two organizations joined forces to achieve “in common their goal, which wants to reestablish the black-white-red flag as the Reich’s flag through legal means according to article 73 of the Reich’s constitution.” According to article 73 of the Weimar Constitution, the president could call for a plebiscite to alter an existing law. Already having gained the support of 1.2 million people, they called on “[a]ll German men and women” to send their votes in order to convince President Ebert to pursue this course of action. These associations explained to readers of the Deutsche Zeitung in the spring of

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8 They did so after hearing a speech by Gustav Stresemann, whose views will be addressed later in the section. Telegram from Dr. Duering to Ministerpraesident Scheidemann, 25 April 1919, in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 43.
9 Telegram from Hoefker to the Reichsregierung in Weimar, 18 June 1919, in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 73.
10 See letters in BAB, R1501/116485, Bl. 160-172; 201-202.
11 See BAB, R1501/116480-116485.
1925, “it is the duty of every German citizen eligible to vote to give his vote to our leagues, so that the black-white-red flag waves over us once again [...].” They concluded their request by assuring readers “that every vote is important – also yours.”

As this example and further ones below demonstrate, the groups aligned with the black-white-red flag possessed an understanding of how to utilize democratic conceptions and practices of citizenship for their own benefit.

Among this diverse group backing the imperial standard, a few central arguments about the historical and contemporary importance of the colors black-white-red emerged as a means to substantiate the appeals to the government. The proponents of the imperial standard pointed to the achievements that the black-white-red standard had come to symbolize not only domestically, but also throughout the world. A statement put forth by the German People’s Party in Gruben on the 104th anniversary of Bismarck’s birth nicely sums up this aspect of the black-white-red supporters’ case. “Under the colors black-white-red,” the local branch of the party declared, “the new German Reich has been founded and has grown into a world power, German trade and the German navy have achieved their international reputation.”

About a month later, Adolf von Trotha, the chief of the admiralty who would later participate in the Kapp Putsch and support the Nazis, voiced similar points in an appeal to the government, writing, “For 50 years, black-white-red is the symbol of the unity, industry, and the blossoming of the German people. […] It is the banner under which we have achieved an international standing and reputation for ourselves. Under this flag, we have acquired our colonies. This flag has represented our blossoming

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13 Deutsche Volkspartei, Ortsgruppe Guben, 31 March 1919, in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 28.
trade and is esteemed and respected throughout the entire world.”14 This association of Bismarck’s unification and Germany’s attainment of world power status with the imperial tricolor was cited repeatedly by the various organizations listed above that lobbied the government to maintain the flag after 1918.

The champions of black-white-red were not simply concerned with the reputation of Germany throughout the world; they also pointed to the meaning these colors had for Germans living abroad. Communities of German citizens living overseas were vocal proponents of the imperial standard in the flag debate. In a referendum organized by the Association of German Citizens in Mexico, for example, only 2 people affirmed support for the republic’s new flag, while 1,800 voted in favor of the imperial flag. Some of those in the majority even threatened not to set foot in the German embassy if it flew the black-red-gold flag.15 Those Germans residing abroad expressed dismay and disbelief that “our only flag is ostracized, ridiculed and attacked.” An anonymous German living outside of the Reich explained that “we shake our heads and do not want to believe it.” “For me,” he exclaimed, “there is only one!”16 As a number of petitions sent from Germans living abroad stated, “These colors [black-white-red] still symbolize today that which was and has remained our strength: the unification of the German tribes!”17

Residents in the Reich also stressed the significance of the imperial banner for supporting Germans who inhabited areas beyond the borders of Germany. The attendees of the rally in Neustadtgödens explained, “black-white-red alone is the bond that connects all

15 Copy of Report 29 from the Deutsche Gesandtschaft in Mexico to the Auswärtige Amt Berlin, Mexico, 23 January 1922, in BAB, R1501/116483, Bl. 50.
16 “Volk ohne Flagge” von einem Auslandsdeutschen, clipping from an untitled and undated newspaper, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 3.
17 “Deutsche Männer! Deutsche Frauen!” appears twice in PAAA, R98311, fiche 3.
Germans abroad with the homeland [Heimat].”18 And Admiral von Trotha warned, “These Germans in the diaspora will probably never get a black-red-gold flag for themselves, and the danger exists that they will lose their Germanness and will again simply become cultural fertilizer for other states.”19 Furthermore, in the eyes of the black-white-red supporters in the Reich, the imperial flag had become important to the struggles over Schleswig and East Prussia, as well as the occupied territories of the Rhine, Ruhr and Saar.20 For its supporters, black-white-red had become a way to unite, strengthen and therefore protect Germans and their interests around the world.

The groups aligned behind the imperial banner also highlighted the importance this flag had already played in defending Germany during the First World War. Right-wing veterans and soldiers echoed refrains that were popular among this political sector during and after the war. With these colors, the army “has fought victoriously against a world of enemies,” as the officers and officials of the 1st Saxon Foot Artillery Regiment Nr. 12 put in a letter to the Prussian War Minister. They “consider it an ignominy” to disregard this flag.21 Members of the Freikorps went even further, and added to this sentiment, “We are still ready to fight and to die under the same flag if the enemy should try to violently take away German land […].”22 Regardless of whether individuals wanted to use these colors to continue the war, the black-white-red devotees argued that this flag was closely connected to the sacrifice

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18 Telegram from Hoefker to the Reichsregierung in Weimar, 18 June 1919, in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 73.
22 Copy of a letter from Freikorps Faupel-Görlitz to the Kriegsminister Berlin, Liegnitz, 16 June 1919 (relayed to the Minister of the Interior and from the Interior Minister to the Verfassungs-Komission der Nationalversammlung), in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 51.
of the fallen soldiers during the Great War. To properly honor their courage and memory, according to them, the imperial flag should be preserved. Additionally, the promoters of the black-white-red tricolor, argued that a change in the flag would be an admission of guilt and thereby validate the Treaty of Versailles and the “war guilt clause.” When people saw the black-red-gold flag, it “is a constant reminder of our national misfortune.”

Although a number of protest letters to the republican government stated that “black-white-red is neither monarchical nor republican,” political loyalties played a role in the defense of the imperial colors. Many of those on the right of the political spectrum used the black-white-red flag as a way to protest the new system and/or proclaim allegiance to the imperial government. An anonymous card from “a German,” linked the dislike of the black-red-gold tricolor with praise for the monarchy. “Against Black-Red-Yellow (Gold): Black is the future; Red is the present; Gold was the past,” a verse on the card read. It continued, “In spite of everything and nevertheless: With God for King and Fatherland: So we want to live and die!!!” Likewise, at a children’s festival organized by the chairman of the German-National Regional Association of Central Silesia, little black-white-red flags were distributed, and the speaker told the children “to become industrious German men and

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23 See for instance, Dr. Jügler, “Die Schuld am Flaggenkrieg,” Berliner Börsenzeitung, 23 September 1927, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 145 and rs; Telegram from Hoefker to the Reichsregierung in Weimar, 18 June 1919, in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 73; Letter from the Hauptgeschäftsstelle des Flottenbundes Deutscher Frauen E.V. to Reichskanzler Dr. Wirth, Leipzig, 1 August 1921, in BAB, R1501/116485, Bl. 1.
26 “Kundgebung für die Wiedereinführung der schwarz-weiss-roten Reichsflagge,” located in letter from the Deutsches Konsulat in Tegucigalpa to Kanzler Fechenbach, 30 March 1921, in PAAA, R98311, fiche 4. See similar statements by Franz Brüninghaus (DVP in the Reichstag, 59. Sitzung, 28 January 1921, p 2216, in PAAA, R98311, fiche 2; Translated excerpt from Diario de Galicia (Santiago, Spain), 8 January 1921, enclosed in letter from the Kriegsaußfuhr des Deutschen Reederei to the Auswärtige Amt, Hamburg, 1 February 1921, in PAAA, R98311, fiche 2; letter from the Gesandtschaft des Deutschen Reiches (A. Pauli) to the Auswärtige Amt, Buenos Aires, 29 January 1921, in PAAA, R98311, fiche 3.
27 Handwritten card from “ein Deutscher” with black-white-red ribbon flag pasted on it, 29 July 1922, in BAB, R1501/116485, Bl. 117.
women who live and act for the fatherland. The black-white-red flags should remind them of
the great, proud time that Germany experienced under these colors and the benedictory
government of the Hohenzollerns. The German people may never forget its glorious
history.”28 Other bearers of the imperial flag went beyond simply praising the monarchy
and sought to destroy the republic. The participants in the Kapp Putsch, in which von Trotha
played a part, used these colors as their symbol in their attempt to overthrow the democratic
government, as did the right-wing paramilitary groups of the Freikorps and the Stahlhelm.29

Not all black-white-red proponents came to similar conclusions about how the use of
these symbols related to the change in political system in 1918. For those like Gustav
Stresemann and his party, the German People’s Party (DVP), the desire to maintain the
imperial flag did not entail a rejection of democracy.30 While claiming “that not only the
politics of blood and iron, but also the connections of the ideas of the Frankfurt Parliament
[of 1848] with Bismarck’s Realpolitik, have enabled the building of the Reich,” Stresemann,
in a 1921 article, pushed for a referendum to be held to reinstate the black-white-red flag. He
stressed that the socialists were overreaching in their interpretation of the imperial flag as a
“symbol of the reaction and monarchist backlash.”31 The support of the DVP for black-
white-red was not centered on the desire to return the monarchy. Rather, “Black-white red is
our pride in the past and our hope for the future.”32 Even the liberal German Democratic

28 “Aus Stadt und Land: Der Kampf gegen Schwarz-Weiß-Rot,” Deutsche Tageszeitung, 12 June 1927, in BAB,
R72/1316, Bl. 127.
29 Friedel, Deutsche Staatssymbole, 34.
30 For more on the complexity of Stresemann’s views, see Stephen G. Fritz, “The Search for
Volksgemeinschaft: Gustav Stresemann and the Baden DVP, 1926-1930,” German Studies Review 7, no. 2
31 Gustav Stresemann, “Flaggenfrage und Volksentschied,” Tägliche Rundschau, 22 January 1921
(Morgenausgabe), in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 112; “Für Schwarz-Weiβ-Rot,” Deutsche Zeitung, May 1923,
Nr. 232, in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 144.
32 Letter from the Deutsche Volkspartei to the Reichsregierung Berlin, Wilhelmshaven, 20 June 1919, in BAB,
R1501/116480, Bl. 82.
Party, which became a staunch defender of the republican flag, briefly lent its support to the black-white-red banner in response to the Treaty of Versailles, a point which the advocates of the imperial tricolor used to substantiate their case.33

Despite these differences in attitude toward the Weimar Republic, the black-white-red supporters maintained that only these colors could represent the German nation. Indeed, much of the debate between the two sides of the Flaggenstreit revolved around which color scheme truly embodied the Volk. For those opposing the republic’s new flag, not only did the black-white-red combination symbolize all the best characteristics of Germans, but black-red-gold was also considered to be un-German. Black-white-red was the “symbol for everything that is efficient and fundamentally German” and “the emblem of German industriousness and German loyalty” for its bearers.34 Or, as a 1924 German National People’s Party (DNVP) campaign poster for impending elections exclaimed, “We fight for black-white-red,” which entailed a battle for all that was “Christian, völkisch, national, social.”35 On the other hand, the black-red-gold flag was portrayed as “essentially foreign and unloved” with “colors that no one in the fatherland understands.”36

34 First quote is from copy of a letter from Maximilian Falck to Präsidenten des deutschen Reichstages Dr. Paul Löbe, Rio de Janeiro, 20 June 1921, in BAB, R1501/116485, Bl. 48-52. The second quote is from telegram from Hoefker to the Reichsregierung in Weimar, 18 June 1919, in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 73.
35 Deutschevolkspartei, “Gegen den Marxismus und seine Schleppenträger!: Schwarz-weiß-rot gegen schwarz-rot-gelb!” (without publication information, [1924].
36 First quote is from Letter from the Hauptgeschäftsstelle des Flottenbundes Deutscher Frauen E.V. to Reichskanzler Dr. Wirth, Leipzig, 1 August 1921, in BAB, R1501/116485, Bl. 1. Second quote is from letter from the Deutscher See-Verein, Ortsgruppe Berlin-Friedenau to the Deutsche Reichsregierung, 2 September 1921, in BAB, R1501/116485, Bl. 35. Emphasis in the original.
Proponents of the black-red-gold flag went to great lengths to counter their opponents’ claims that the new flag was an unsuitable national symbol. As part of their attempt to legitimate the republic’s flag, republicans turned to nineteenth-century history, just as they had done with regard to the democratic form of government, in order to show that the black-red-gold tricolor was intimately and authentically connected to German nationalism. Pointing to the use of black-red-gold in such seminal events as the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon, the Wartburgfest, the Hambacher Fest, the National Assembly of 1848, and the Schiller festival of 1859, the bearers of the Weimar Republic’s flag emphasized that these colors had been used by the heroes and “martyrs” of the national movement. Among the national figures who displayed and spoke in favor of black-red-gold, the Lützow Free Corps, Turnvater Jahn and his gymnastics movement, the early nineteenth-century student dueling societies, Ferdinand Freiligrath, Freiherr vom Stein, Theodor Körner, and Fritz Reuter were cited. In a publication with the illustrative title, *Black-Red-Gold in German History*, Ernst Jäger explained to his readers, “The ideals of black-red-gold have found their expression in history of the nineteenth century. The symbol of the three colors is indelibly imprinted with the German national spirit [*Volksgeist*]. Poets and politicians have sung and suffered for black-red-gold. Black-red-gold was the emblem of the best men of their time.”37 These colors, according to their backers, were therefore neither foreign nor distant. Rather, they were at the center of valiant efforts to form a united Germany.

Also of importance for the proponents of black-red-gold were the efforts of many of these national heroes to achieve a more democratic system of government. The previous chapter illustrated how republicans emphasized that the German national movement had been

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tied to demands for greater political freedom and rights from its early nineteenth-century
beginning. In the context of the Flaggenstreit, champions of the republican tricolor once
again emphasized this link in their histories and defense of black-red-gold. On the occasion
of a Republican Day hosted by the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold in 1926, the writer and
historian Ricarda Huch pointed to this connection in her affirmation of the republic’s flag. “I
love the black-red-gold colors,” she stated, “as did the German dueling societies and the first
German National Assembly [in 1848-49], which first voiced a patriotic [vaterländisch]
attitude, an appreciation of freedom and public life, and compassion for the weak and needy
and which knew to suffer and die for these ideas.” 38 And, according to Wilhelm Erman, the
former head librarian at the University of Bonn, the initial fighters for the German national
cause such as Jahn and the members of the student movement, saw black-red-gold as the
“emblem of the unity of the whole of Germany, as far as the German tongue sounds, based
on a liberal form of state.” 39 Such statements aimed to defend democracy and its historical
and contemporary symbol against the attacks by the political right.

Furthermore, as Erman’s quote suggests, black-red-gold supporters looked beyond
the borders of the Reich in their attempt to stand up for and draw support to the republic’s
colors. Indeed, I would argue that the großdeutsch idea – the idea that a German nation-state
should include Austria – was the cornerstone of their contention that black, red and gold were
the authentic German national colors. According to Hiertsiefer of the Center Party, this was
precisely the case. In a piece on how successful the “republicanization” of Germany was, he
contended, “Our most important argument in the flag conflict lies in the großdeutsch

38 Ricarda Huch, “Ich liebe die demokratische Republik,” Festschrift zum republikanischen Tag am 6. Juni
p. 20, in AdSD, Reichsbanner, Exponate 24.
R1501/116480, Bl. 178.
meaning of the colors black-red-gold.”\textsuperscript{40} As with the narratives discussed in Chapter One, the revolutions of 1848-1849 figured prominently in the justifications of the republican tricolor. The symbol chosen by the members of the Frankfurt Parliament was the black-red-gold banner. Adorning St. Paul’s Church, the meeting location of the representatives, these three colors came to represent a \textit{großdeutsch} and democratic solution to the so-called “German Question.” After all, the gathering at St. Paul’s Church in Frankfurt not only included Austrian representatives and voted to form a \textit{großdeutsch} state in October 1848, but also sought to create a German nation-state with a parliamentary system.\textsuperscript{41} In the Weimar period, therefore, republicans pointed to this legacy in order to illustrate that the republic’s colors were part of an authentic and historically justified national tradition.\textsuperscript{42} Hence, in a telegram to the chancellor on the occasion of the 1925 Constitution Day, the branch of the \textit{Reichsbanner} in Neustadt-Ostholstein voiced its support for the black-red-gold flag because it “is the expression of the historical \textit{großdeutsch} people’s state [\textit{Volksstaat}].”\textsuperscript{43}

While the nineteenth-century attempt at forming a \textit{großdeutsch} democratic state was central to the defense of the black-red-gold flag, republicans also looked to a \textit{großdeutsch},


\textsuperscript{41} Austrian officials opposed this plan for they did not want to divide up the empire. The representatives at the parliament therefore reopened the topic of boundaries with the delegates mainly dividing along \textit{großdeutsch} and \textit{kleindeutsch} lines before Austrian officials definitively ruled out a \textit{großdeutsch} solution with the Kremsier Constitution in March 1849. It was at this point that the delegates proposed that the Prussian monarch, Frederick William, have the imperial crown. For a brief description of the events of 1848-49, see David Blackbourn, \textit{History of Germany: The Long Nineteenth Century, 1780-1918} (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003 [2nd edition]), 104-131.

\textsuperscript{42} For example see the illustration from 1848 included in a commemorative publication for the 75th anniversary of the Frankfurt Parliament. The clip reads, “\textit{Decorations in the Streets of Frankfurt}. In all parts of the city, triumphal arches and banners were raised. Some of the inscriptions read: Justice, you German tradition, / Lives evermore in our midst. / No Prussia, no Austria / A united, free Germany! / I invite you to the freedom festivals / There is good apple-wine here. “Decorations in the Streets of Frankfurt,” in \textit{Gedenkschrift zur Erinnerung an das erste deutsche Parlament} (Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurt Societäts-Druckerei, G.m.b.H., [1923]), in BAB, R1501/116869, Bl. rs. of 51.

\textsuperscript{43} Telegram from Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold in Neustadt-Ostholstein to the Herrn Reichskanzler, 10 August 1925, in BAB, R1501/116485, Bl. 214.
democratic state of the future. Other telegrams from local groups of the Reichsbanner in Flensburg and Schleswig on Constitution Day 1925 urged the government to maintain black-red-gold as the official colors because they were an “expression of the coming Grossdeutschland.”  

Although the Allies had forbidden an Anschluss in the Treaty of St. Germain, enthusiasm for a political union remained strong on both sides of the Austro-German border, especially among socialists and democratic liberals. On these grounds, black-red-gold devotees argued that the black-white-red flag, the symbol of Kleindeutschland, would alienate Austrians when the political union finally happened. In a 1928 speech to Reichsbanner members in Potsdam, Otto Baumgarten, the theologian at the University of Kiel, raised this point in explaining why, after an initial reluctance to see the black-white-red flag replaced, he came to “love” the colors black-red-gold. Claiming that under black-white-red neither political freedom nor unity occurred, he added, “Our German-Austrian brothers, who belong to us, could never find themselves together with us under the colors black-white-red, which are foreign to them, while black-red-gold is dear and familiar to them as the colors of German unity.”

Baumgarten’s statement touches upon another important piece of the larger republican project to demonstrate connections between democracy, the republican standard and Germanness. Black-white-red represented the narrow dynastic interests of the Hohenzollerns, whose rivalry with the Habsburgs, had led to the exclusion of Austria from a

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44 Telegram from the reichsbanner schwarz rot gold und der republikanischen „kriegsteilnehmer“ to the Herrn Reichskanzler, Flensburg, 12 August 1925, in BAB, R1501/116485, Bl. 205; Telegram from versammelte republikaner to the Reichskanzler, Schleswig, 12 August 1925, in BAB, R1501/116485, Bl. 211.

45 As the leaders of the Anschluss movement throughout the Weimar period, republicans hoped to demonstrate their national convictions and convince skeptics that democracy was compatible with Germanness. In turn, they hoped that a future Anschluss would help to stabilize and strengthen the republican form of government in both countries. Suval, The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era.

German nation-state in 1866. As an essay in an undated pamphlet of the Reichsbanner stated, “The unification of both brother-republics can only be accomplished by republicans, only by the black-red-gold movement.”

National unity, according to this standpoint, could only happen under the colors black-red-gold because they represented a democratic form of government, which put national interests above particularistic ones. Hugo Preuss, father of the Weimar Constitution, member of the German Democratic Party, and a target of antisemites due to his Jewish heritage, nicely tied together all of these various points of the black-red-gold supporters’ arguments in a 1925 speech to commemorate the signing of the Weimar Constitution:

With the colors black-red-gold connects the heartfelt and firm conviction that in the great, German, free system of government, all German national comrades [Volksgenossen] must and will find themselves together. The separation of the German brothers in Austria from the shared fatherland, which was caused by the Habsburg and Hohenzollern dynasties, must and will again be overcome through the collapse of these dynasties. The colors black-red-gold symbolize for entire generations the dream of unity and freedom. And, today, […], it is downright absurd when these colors are ostracized by the so-called national side. The true Reich’s banner of national unity is thereby ostracized.

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47 Senator Gerth, “Schwarz-Rot-Gold und Schwarz-Weiß-Rot,” Das Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold (Berlin: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaft, undated), 32, in AdsD, Nachlass Franz Osterroth, Box 53, Fasz. 140. Also see a discussion of this point in Rohe, Das Reichsbanner Schwarz Rot Gold, 240-245. Rohe contends that this particular argument on the part of the Reichsbanner was ultimately unsuccessful. According to him, many supporters of the black-white-red flag did not choose this color combination due to monarchical leanings, but because they saw black-white-red as a symbol of the German nation and its greatness. While Rohe’s point is valid, I think it is still important to take seriously the ways in which the republican side attempted to link democracy to a history of German nationalism.

48 “Professor Dr. Hugo Preuß in seiner Rede im deutschen Nationaltheater in Weimar am 11. August 1924,” Großdeutscher republikanischer Volkstag für Südwestdeutschland in Frankfurt a.M., Samstag, den 8., Sonntag, den 9. u. Dienstag (Verfassungstag), den 11. August 1925, Programm und Liedertexte, p. 16, in AdsD, Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, Nummer 145. As Lehner and Mueller have pointed out, Preuss was thoroughly engaged in the attempt to create a German democratic tradition. Furthermore, his refutation here of the political right appears to be in line with his general refutation of anti-Semitic propaganda. Anti-Semites cited his role in writing the constitution when they used the derogatory label of “Jew Republic” for the new democracy. Detlef Lehner and Christoph Mueller, “Perspectives and Problems of a Rediscovery of Hugo Preuss” (Hugo-Preuss-Gesellschaft e.V.): http://www2.hu-berlin.de/Hugo-Preuss-Gesellschaft/intro_e.pdf. The article originally appeared in their edited volume, Vom Untertanenverband zur Bürgergenossenschaft:
Preuss’s statement demonstrates once again that the national value of a particular color scheme was at the center of the *Flaggenstreit*. Significantly, he turned the question of who really represented the national interests of Germany against the radical right. The continued refusal by conservatives and the radical right in the Reich to support the *großdeutsch* colors led Preuss to challenge the nationalism of the black-red-gold opponents.

The importance of Austria to the black-red-gold movement was not simply rhetorical. Cross-border interactions and developments within Austria also factored into arguments in support of the Weimar Republic’s tricolor. Indeed, the inclusion of the *großdeutsch* colors in the third draft of the Weimar Constitution was due to the involvement of Austrian officials, particularly Ludo Moritz Hartmann. Because an *Anschluss* was still a possibility until the summer of 1919, two Austrian representatives were present at the negotiations of the States’ Committee and later in the National Assembly in Weimar. Hartmann was one of these representatives, as well as the Austrian envoy to Berlin, a member of the Austrian Social Democratic Party and the son of Moritz Hartmann, the famed poet and German-Bohemian representative to the 1848 National Assembly in Frankfurt. In debates about the Reich’s official colors, Hartmann stated, “Indeed, I believe that I may say that these colors [black-red-gold] are associated with the ideals, which we in Austria still pursue today. In contrast, the colors black-white-red cannot have the popularity in Austria like they have in Germany because the memory of Prussian hegemony is connected with the colors black-white-red.

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It was at Hartmann’s insistence that Austrians would not accept black-white-red as their colors that Preuss added article 3, which stated that the official colors of the Reich would be black, red, and gold.

Nor did the supporters of black-red-gold fail to notice the use of black-red-gold in Austria before and after the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy in affirming the importance of this color scheme to the German Volk. Citing a press notice that mentioned “in German-Austria, they have maintained the black-red-gold colors as the symbol of the großdeutsch idea,” the Reich Interior Ministry asked the Foreign Office in 1922 for more information about Austrian attitudes toward the black-red-gold flag due to the ministry’s need to “follow with greater attention the further progress of the continuing battle about the Reich’s colors in the population.” The German ambassador in Vienna, Dr. Pfeiffer, began his answer to the inquiry by explaining that “[e]ver since the fraternities’ colors black-red-gold appeared for the first time as a symbol of German national unity at the Wartburg festival for the celebration of the fatherland’s freedom in October 1817, they have for the Germans in Austria have acquired historical meaning as the symbol of the grossdeutsch idea.”

50 The details on this event are vague, but reference to the influence of Hartmann can be found in Bernd Buchner, Um nationale und republikanische Identität: Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und der Kampf um die politischen Symbole in der Weimarer Republik (Bonn: Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachf., 2001), 77-78; Karl Rohe, Das Reichsbanner Schwarz Rot Gold: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Struktur der politischen Kampfverbände zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1966), 237, fn. 4; Suval, The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era, 25.
51 The monarchy’s colors were black and yellow. The First Republic’s flag is the same as the present-day flag of Austria: red-white-red. It was suggested by the Christian Social Wilhelm Miklas and approved by the Staatsrat on 21 October 1918. The colors red and white stemmed from the Babenberg dynasty and were most likely a way to reference Austria’s imperial heritage without using Habsburg symbols. The colors red and white for more on the history of the republic’s flag, as well as Austrian support for black-red-gold, see Gustav Spann, “Zur Geschichte von Flagge und Wappen der Republik Österreich,” in Österreichs Politische Symbole: Historisch, ästhetisch und ideologiekritisch beleuchtet, ed. Norbert Leser and Manfred Wagner (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), 37-64.
52 Letter from the Reichsminister des Innern (Brecht) to the Auswärtige Amt, Berlin, 1 May 1922, in BAB, R1501/116483, Bl. 104. A better copy of the correspondence can be found in PAAA, R 98134, fiche 1.
while the significance of black-red-gold had diminished for Reich Germans after 1871, he continued, “these colors remain alive for all Germans in Austria, who carry the longing for a union [Zusammenschluss] in their hearts.”53 Two articles, one in the right-wing, nationalist Deutschösterreichische Tageszeitung and the other in a großdeutsch magazine entitled Deutsches Vaterland, included with his letter affirmed the role that these colors played for German-speakers in the Habsburg monarchy.

Indeed, as the Reich German observers of the situation in Austria noted, the bearers of the black-red-gold banner there occupied a wide range on the political spectrum. Echoing Preuss’s challenge to the political right, the chair of the Reichsbanner’s branch in Potsdam, Dr. Richart Mischler, stated, “Would those Prussian enthusiasts feel pan-German [gesamtdeutsch], then must they stop sulllying black-red-gold, the colors which since 1848 are holy for all Germans in Austria, all parties. Then they [Austrians], those national comrades [Volksgenossen] who at last want to return ‘home to the Reich,’ must have concerns for they expect the burden of a new monarchism and of a status as second-class citizens behind Prussia.”54 On the one end of the political spectrum in Austria were socialists, who joined the republicans in the Reich to support the republican flag. According to General Theodor Körner, a leading figure of the Austrian Republican Protection League who following the Second World War would serve as the mayor of Vienna and the first elected president of the Second Republic, black-red-gold was a symbol of Greater Germany,

53 Letter from Deutsche Gesandtschaft Wien (Dr. Pfeiffer) to the Auswärtige Amt, Vienna, 6 June 1922, in BAB, R1501/116483, Bl. 189, and in PAAA, R98314, fiche 3.
54 Dr. Richart Mischler, “Das Reichsbanner und Potsdam,” in Das Reichsbanner und Potsdam, pp. 15-18, here 17, in AdSD, Reichsbanner, Exponate 30.
“Unity, Freedom, Fatherland.” “Only under this symbol can peace return,” he continued during a speech he made at the fifth anniversary of the Weimar Constitution in Weimar.55

Unlike the situation in Germany, the proponents of these colors in Austria included the radical right, a point noted in the letter from the Reich Ministry of the Interior. Precisely because the radical German nationalists during the Habsburg period used this color combination as a signifier of Germanness in the multinational empire, those on the far right in the First Republic saw it as a viable national emblem. As a note with Pfeiffer’s letter explained, because this flag served “as a battle symbol against the un-German environment,” “the curious fact often arises that, while in the German Reich black-red-gold, although the constitutionally established colors, are dismissed by large sectors of the population, derided as ‘un-German’ and maligned, in the neighboring country, black-red-gold, although not the country’s colors, are honored and shown everywhere with pride as the noted symbol of Germanness.”56 Although the German nationalists in Austria acknowledged that they would support the use of black-white-red should the majority of Germans want this flag, they continued to value and use black-red-gold.57 In Austria, groups of differing political worldviews saw the black-red-gold banner as a meaningful German symbol.

Yet, these arguments concerning the großdeutsch significance of the republican standard failed to convince those in the Reich who firmly stood behind the black-white-red

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57 For examples of how Austrians on the right of the political spectrum used the colors, see the reports on the völkisch rallies against the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain, in Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), Neues Politisches Archiv (NPA), Bundeskanzleramt – Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (BKA – AA), Liaisse Oesterreich 2/4 Versammlungen und Demonstrationen, Kt. 224. One article contended that while the pro-black-red-gold lobby in Germany emphasized the support of Austrian nationalist circles for this tricolor, these nationalists really supported black-white-red and were against black-red-gold. See Dr. Jaeger, “Beiträge zur Flaggen-Frage: Schwarz-weiß-rot oder schwarz-rot-gold?,” Kieler Zeitung, May 15, in BAB, R32/304, Bl. 47.
banner. Stresemann, for instance, contended that had the Anschluss come to pass, black-red-gold could have legitimately served “as the symbol of the fallen boundary posts and as the symbol of the unification of Central Europe’s Germans.” However, due to the Allied prohibition of the political union, “black-red-gold is no longer the emblem of the completion of a new national community [Volksgemeinschaft].” Other opponents of the Reich’s new flag reasoned that Austria’s official colors were not black-red-gold, but red and white. Therefore, the imperial flag better represented Austria because it included the current Austrian colors. Still other black-white-red advocates displayed the chauvinism toward Austria that Mischler had decried above. A petition by Germans in Tegucigalpa, Honduras dismissed the contention regarding Austria, stating, “A change of colors out of respect for a possible admission of German-Austrians to the Reich? If they are German, then the German black-white-red as the Reich’s flag is also valid for them […].” In a similar haughty tone, von Trotha noted that “the Austrian businessman will travel better and more easily achieve status if he gathers around him black-white-red, the well-established banner and emblem for over 50 years.” The political right within the Reich showed a complete disregard for Austrian distinctiveness.

For supporters of black-white-red and black-red gold, the Flaggenstreit was not simply limited to this inconclusive rhetorical battle. Beyond the war of words, the two sides

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58 Gustav Stresemann, “Flaggenfrage und Volksentschied,” Tägliche Rundschau, 22 January 1921 (Morgenausgabe), in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 112
59 The Habsburg colors were black and gold. As the empire collapsed and its German speakers set out to create a new state, they adopted red and white as their new colors in late October 1918.
60 Letter from Präsident Dr. K Bälz to the deutschen Staatenausschuss in Weimar, Stuttgart, 4 March 1919, in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 7; Nr. 238, Verfassungsgebende deutsche Nationalversammlung. 8. Ausschuß, communication from von Trotha dated 9 May 1919, in BAB, R1501/116480, Bl. 47-49, here rs. of 48-49.
61 “Kundgebung für die Wiedereinführung der schwarz-weiss-roten Reichsflagge,” located in letter from the Deutsches Konsulat in Tegucigalpa to Kanzler Fehrenbach, 30 March 1921, in PAAA, R98311, fiche 4.
also took the battle to the streets, as the telegrams above originating at rallies already suggest. Each group pursued two main strategies: the demonstration of its strength and popularity by widely displaying its flag and various attempts to limit the opponents’ ability to show its colors. During the early years of the republic, the proponents of black-red-gold had to deal with a scarcity of their flags due to economic troubles and material shortages. To circumvent these limitations, a female employee of the left liberal *Vossische Zeitung* encouraged women to take their old imperial flags, disassemble them, dye the white piece yellow, and then sew the pieces back together to create the new republican flag. “With maximum savings and minimum effort,” she stated, “the new flag is made – if one wants!”

In this early period, even the government itself struggled to provide offices, ships and consulates with the appropriate flags and allowed institutions and ships to continue flying the old imperial flag until 1 January 1922. Once the production of flags no longer proved to be such a hurdle, republicans saw the flag as an important tool in demonstrating the vigor of the republic and protecting democracy from most of those forces arrayed behind black-white-red. The name and purpose of the *Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold* encapsulates these intertwined tasks. As an opening address included in a collection of speeches for republican occasions and *Reichsbanner* events explained, “The colors of our flag, the colors black-red-gold, speak an eloquent language. They tell of the battle for the people’s rights, for a timely constitution, for the freedom of the Volk. Whoever stands by these colors, adopts this task.”

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64 “Die Fahnenfrage,” *Vossische Zeitung*, 29 June 1922, in BAB, R1501/116483, Bl. 171. This piece was written in response to Sling’s article.
Republican organizations did not simply take a defensive posture when talking about the role of the flag. Shortly before an impending visit by Hindenburg, Severing and other Reich officials to celebrate the Ruhr’s liberation from French and Belgian troops in 1925, the socialist Volksblatt in Bochum warned, “They [right-wing organizations] would like to prove to the federal and provincial government that the majority of people in the Ruhr stand behind them; they expect to achieve this moral victory through a garish emphasis of black-white-red colors.” Calling on the “wide circles of republicans, socialist and bourgeois” to display doubly as many black-red-gold flags as the bearers of black-white-red, the paper declared that the right-wing associations must not be able to reach their goal. “If on the coming Thursday the republicans stand bravely by their colors,” the article continued, “then Hindenburg and Luther will recognize how little the people of the Ruhr think about supporting barren and idiotic nationalism, then the intended demonstration by the right will subside as so many before it. The moral success must be through the colors of the republic. Therefore: Bring out the flags for the demonstration for black-red-gold!”

Of course, as the proclamation from Bochum suggests, republican organizations were not alone in viewing the flag as a visual markers of power and support, or lack thereof. During the 1928 Constitution Day, an anonymous writer with clear anti-republican tendencies walked around Eisenach to gage support for the republic by counting the numbers of flags residents hung up for the celebrations. “After the countless attempts to teach the subjects [Untertanen] love for black-red-yellow with threats and violence, I was nevertheless

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66 “Zum Besuch Hindenburgs,” Volksblatt (Bochum), 15 September 1925, in AdSD, Nachlass Carl Severing, Abteilung 1, Mappe 127.
curious on Constitution Day how far the enthusiasm for black-red-yellow would have
progressed in our city,” the writer began his article. After the tour, the author concluded, “In
the some 30 streets and plazas that I wandered and looked at there were 7 small black-red-
yellow flags. In 24 streets there was not a single black-red-yellow flag. Poor ‘republic’!”67
In the opening line, the author suggested that the republican flag was not an organic symbol
arising from the people, but one that was imposed, unsuccessfully, by the government. By
pointing to the absence of the republican banners from businesses and homes, the writer
suggested that republic and it symbolic manifestations remained unpopular despite officials’
atttempts to force the population to feel affection for the flag.

In addition to signaling the weakness of the black-red-gold movement, the proponents
of black-white-red, like their adversaries, viewed the exhibition of their flag as a way to
highlight their dominance. During a 1926 anniversary celebration for the founding of the
Reich organized by the Stahlhelm in Magdeburg, the Magdeburger Tageszeitung reported,
“The entire city stood under the symbol of the black-white-red colors.” The black-white-red
decorations, alongside garlands and calls of support, illustrated “how much one likes to bid
welcome to the Stahlhelm in Magdeburg.”68 This claim to the popularity of black-white-red
organizations in Magdeburg takes on particular significance due to the fact that city was the
headquarters of the republican paramilitary group, the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold.
Such statements therefore assert that even a place central to the republican movement really
belonged to black-white-red supporters. Pro-black-white-red organizations also employed

67 Sd., “30 Straßen und 7 Fahnen: Schwarz-rot-gelbe Verfassungs’begeisterung’,” Eisenacher Zeitung, in BAB,
R1501/125653, Bl. 133. It should be noted that this article was sent to the Ministry of the Interior by the editors
of the Eisenacher Tagespost, who wished to see the other paper brought up on charges for violating the Law for
the Protection of the Republic.
78.
their flag to show that support for the reinstatement of the imperial standard had not wavered. On the occasion of Hindenburg’s 80th birthday, the German People’s Party (DVP) called for its members to fly the black-white-red flag for this precise reason, while also advising them to “show respect for the black-red-gold colors of the Reich, which every constitutional institution of the Reich and province is due.”⁶⁹ However, as will be seen below, many black-white-red proponents did not exhibit such a moderated response toward the republic’s colors.

The Rights and Responsibilities of Flag-Bearing

During the periods when the Law for the Protection of the Republic was in effect, interactions among opponents of the republican standard, individuals loyal to the republic and its symbols, and state organs reveal both the promise and challenges for the republic. Some adversaries of the republic and its flag expressed their opinions by making verbal and physical assaults on the black-red-gold banner and its bearers. Under the auspices of the law, republican organizations, and even more tellingly, individuals took it upon themselves, as a citizen’s duty, to inform the government and state’s attorney that the law had been broken.⁷⁰ State institutions, ranging from the Ministry of the Interior to the armed forces to the judicial system showed conflicting tendencies regarding the protection of the republic and its flag. In some instances, these governmental bodies defended the black-red-gold banner, and, in others, their response pointed to a commonly cited problem of the republic: the questionable

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⁶⁹ The statement comes from an article run in the Lokal-Anzeiger (Stresemann’s paper) and quoted in the *Vossische Zeitung*. The *Vossische Zeitung* interpreted the DVP’s actions as an affront against the republic’s flag and President Hindenburg, who had sworn loyalty to the republican standard. “Deutsche Volkspartei gegen Reichsflagge,” *Vossische Zeitung*, 20 September 1927, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 150.

⁷⁰ In this regard, I disagree with Alois Friedel’s narrow interpretation of the flag debate. He argues that the Law for the Protection of the Republic was not successful, and that the Reichsbanner was the only entity supportive of black-red-gold trying to popularize this color scheme. Friedel, *Deutsche Staatssymbole*, 35-36.
loyalty of the very institutions meant to serve and protect the fledgling democracy.\textsuperscript{71} A sampling of actions taken against the republican standard, reports of assaults against the black-red-gold flag, and court cases tried under this law are useful for highlighting practices associated with citizenship and democracy, as well as maneuvers used in attempts to undermine the republic. Of particular significance are the ways in which participants in the \textit{Flaggenstreit} often framed their actions within a discourse of rights and responsibilities.

A case from Marienburg highlights various sources of support for the republic and its colors from both officials and the population. In the planning for the 650\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Marienburg, a controversy broke out over the decorations to be hung throughout the city. Whereas the city planned to use the black-white Prussian flag to decorate the way between the train station and the market square, the merchants of the city disputed this decision and asked for black-red-gold flags to be used. Upon the city’s decision to use black-red-gold flags, right-wing, nationalist organizations threatened to pull out of the festivities. In light of these events, the conservative \textit{Kreuz-Zeitung} published an article, which the Reich Ministry of the Interior, under Wilhelm Külz of the German Democratic Party, saw as a violation of the Law for the Protection of the Republic. The controversial article, which was reprinted from the \textit{Ostpreussische Zeitung}, stated that the national circles and associations in Marienburg “view the decision to decorate with black-red-gold flags as a provocation.” It further stated:

\begin{quote}
Legitimate indignation has seized the national circles and the national associations of Marienburg and the surrounding areas have cancelled their participation in the celebration for the same reason. They rightfully view the decision to fly the black-red-gold flag as a challenge. It would be most regretful if, through the insertion of the \textit{Flaggenstreit}, a serious discordance would be created. One may hope that the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{71} Peukert, \textit{The Weimar Republic}, especially Chapter 12; Gay, \textit{Weimar Culture}, 19-22.
committee for the celebration, under the leadership of Mayor Dr. Pawelezik, allows for this decision, which would mean a shameful stain on the history of Marienburg, to be revoked [...].

From the point of view of the Interior Ministry, the article labeled the decision to fly the republic’s colors as a “shameful stain.” The Prussian State’s Attorney agreed with this interpretation and charged the editor of the *Kreuz-Zeitung*, Dr. Otto Bleck.

In the initial trial in Berlin, Bleck’s attorney argued that the charges should be dropped because “shameful stain” did not refer to the republican colors, but to the intrusion of the *Flaggenstreit* into the celebrations. The accused admitted “that he indeed personally is and remains a monarchist, but that he is also of the view that the colors of the Reich must be protected. He did not mean the Reich colors black-red-gold with the cross words ‘stain in the history of Marienburg,’ but the disunity of Marienburgers, [...].” The court, however, concluded that readers of the paper would quickly skim the article and come away with the impression that “shameful stain” referred to the republic’s flag. Because Bleck was an educated man and experienced editor he should have known this, and he was therefore found guilty of reproducing the article in the *Kreuz-Zeitung*. Furthermore, the court’s decision added, “a national German celebration could never be held without the official colors of the Reich.” Due to his lack of a criminal record and the court’s opinion that “[...] the ‘Kreuz-

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72 “Gefährdung der Marienburger Feier durch Flaggenstreit,” *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 29 May 1926, in BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 75.
73 “Im Zeichen des Republiksschutzgesetzes,” *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 7 April 1927, in BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 88 and rs.
74 “Um die Ehre der Reichsfarben,” *Germania*, 7 April 1927, in BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 89.
Zeitung’ is an organ which always strives to express its opinions in an objective form and to avoid the insulting words of the fight amongst the political parties,” the court fined him 280 Marks instead of two weeks jail time, a sentence considerably less than the two-month jail time or the 2,000 Mark fine requested by the prosecutor.77 Bleck filed an appeal, but a higher court in Berlin actually increased the severity of his sentence at the request of the state’s attorney. Agreeing with the first court’s decision that Bleck should have known better how the article would be interpreted by readers, this court raised his fine to 500 Marks because he had a monthly income of 1200 Marks.78 Upon a further appeal, the decision of the previous court was upheld.79

The defense of the republic’s colors garnered the admiration of republicans. “This trial was therefore not uninteresting,” stated an article in Germania, a newspaper associated with the Catholic Center Party, with reference to the first trial, “because it also offers an opportunity to become acquainted with the position of a ‘person responsible’ ['Verantwortlichen'] toward the well-known principles established by the Reichstag center.

As is generally well-known, these principles have established the responsibility [Verpflichtung] to protect the republic and its symbols.” Although the article seemed disappointed that Bleck’s initial sentence was much lower than the one requested by the public prosecutor, it found “welcome” the statement that a national celebration could not be

77 “Im Zeichen des Republikschutzgesetzes,” Kreuz-Zeitung, 7 April 1927, in BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 88 and rs. In a separate case, the editor of the Ostpreußische Zeitung was fined 100 Marks.
held without the official black-red-gold flag. The leading socialist newspaper, Vorwärts, also published an approving article. The colors black-red-gold once again found support within the establishment and among the parties of the Weimar Coalition.

Another set of cases underlines the importance of an ordinary individual taking action to defend the republic’s colors. On a field trip near the border with Holland in 1927, schoolchildren asked their teacher, Ludwig Sager, to bring along the new black-red-gold school flag. During the return journey, the student carrying the three-meter flag and two of his classmates got separated from the instructor and the rest of the class. While walking on a country road on the other side of a grove, one of the three students warned the bearer of the flag to ensure that it was not being dragged through the dirt. At this moment, a man, Harm Spaling, allegedly called out to the three, “Drag it through the dirt! Throw it in the ditch! The teacher is crazy with the snot rag! That is certainly not gold; that is yellow; that is shoddiness!” According to a court transcript, the children were frightened by the man and reported the insult of the flag to their teacher and classmates. The local court at Meppen found in the 1928 proceedings that the accused, a 27-year-old man who had attended agricultural school, was guilty of an “insult of the Reich flag and Reich colors” under article 8, paragraph 2 of the law, and sentenced him to one month in jail. Upon appeal, the Criminal Division of the Provincial Court in Osnabrück overturned the original sentence.

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80 “Um die Ehre der Reichsfarben,” Germania, 7 April 1927, in BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 89.
This verdict was not the end of legal proceedings stemming from the incident. In the wake of the incident on the field trip, Sager wrote a letter to Spaling asking him to apologize within two days for insulting the colors of the Reich, as well as the students and himself. After not hearing from Spaling, Sager reported the insult of the flag to the authorities which led to the initial proceedings against Spaling. However, Spaling, feeling insulted by the teacher’s letter, brought charges against Sager for libel. The court in Neuhaus found the instructor guilty and fined him 50 marks.84 The sentencing of Sager provoked the consternation of a couple of publications, which questioned the proceedings thus far.85 In the end, Sager’s sentence was overturned by a provincial court in Meppen, and this decision was upheld by a higher court in Celle.86

The most significant question regarding this episode concerns the motivations of the various actors in this case since they can reveal much about subjective notions of citizenship, the functioning of the judiciary, and loyalty to the republic (or lack thereof). In the explanation why he had written the controversial note to Spaling, the central figure defending the republican standard in this case, Sager, stated that he had not intended to insult Spalnik and that he had only written the letter because “he felt himself obligated [verpflichtet] to do

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84 Abschrift. Geschäftsnummer: B 2/28/24, Privatklagesache des Haussohnes Harm Spalnik gegen den Lehrer Ludwig Sager wegen Beleidigung. Das Amtsgericht in Neuenhaus, 13 February 1929, in BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 57-58. Although referring to the same case, the last name of the man who insulted the flag and accused Sager of libel appears both as Spaling and Spalnik in various proceedings and newspaper accounts.
so as a citizen [Staatsbürger] and teacher.”87 The newspapers’ reactions to the final ruling concerning Spalnik and the initial ruling against Sager demonstrate their dismay about both the treatment of the flag and the functioning of the judicial system. As a headline in the Morgenpost proclaimed, “The colors of the Reich are defenseless. The person who reports the offender is punished!” “Time and again,” the piece opened, “the courts have concerned themselves with people, who insult the colors of the Reich, and time and again, there are courts that manage to deny the colors of the Reich legal protection.” The article went on to accuse the judges of “shirk[ing] their duties.”88 Those interested in protecting the black-red-gold flag viewed the case in terms of one’s responsibility not just to the state, but to the republic. Sager took the initiative to pursue the matter because, as a citizen, he felt it was his duty to report the insult to the black-red-gold banner. The Morgenpost condemned the decisions of the judges in the rulings against the flag as having forfeited their duty to defend the republic’s symbol and its bearers.

Did the judges, as the Morgenpost alleges, shirk their responsibilities as authorities of the republic? With regard to the court that found Sager guilty of libel, the paper’s claim appears to be a bit overstated. The paper contended that this court had convicted Sager due to the fact that “he has not acted in the protection of valid interests because neither he nor his students were insulted by Spaling’s words; rather, the colors of the Reich [were insulted] and therefore only the Reich has interests in the incident.”89 In its decision, however, the court acknowledged that “[i]t is the good right and duty of every citizen [Staatsbürger] to act

87 Abschrift, 2 J 316/29 (247) 25, Strafsache gegen den Lehrer Ludwig Sager in Lage bei Neuenhaus wegen Beleidigung, 4 July 1929, in BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 68.
against an insult of the Reich colors and to call the offender to account [zur Verantwortung zu ziehen].” The court therefore did not challenge Sager’s decision to report the insult to the authorities because “[h]e had thereby adhered to his interest as a German citizen [Staatsbürger] in the appropriate manner.” Sager’s verdict and fine was due to the court’s ruling that he had slandered Spaling’s behavior, as well as made himself a judge by setting a two-day deadline. In overturning this verdict, the court in Meppen, which incidentally had the same presiding judge as the trial which convicted Spaling in the original case, stated that Sager had not meant to insult Spaling and had “as a citizen [Staatsbürger] and as a teacher of his students the right” to ask Spaling to apologize.

The most dubious of the rulings was the case that freed Spaling, which the newspaper articles protested. This court not only suggested that the students had perhaps misheard Spaling, but also concluded that it “could not definitely conclude that the insult had occurred ‘in public’ in the sense of § 8 paragraph 2 of the Law for the Protection of the Republic” because no one else in the area had heard the insult. It added, “Just as well, it is possible that the still young defendant knew that his words were limited to the circle of the three boys, and that he did not want for other people to hear his words […].” Amongst these five trials, there were courts that upheld the laws of the republic, as well as one that used a technicality to free a man who allegedly assaulted the republic flag and its bearers verbally.

90 BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 57-58.
91 BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 68.
93 Donald Neiwyk has also found that the courts were not as unfair as has often been argued. With regard to trials against antisemites in the Weimar Republic, he contends, “The record of the courts in prosecuting antisemites and Jews will not support the view that the Weimar years were ones ‘when justice was not done.’” Donald L. Niewyk, “Jews and the Courts in Weimar Germany,” Jewish Social Studies 37, no. 2 (1975): 99-113, here 111.
Nor was Sager the only individual to step forward and ask the authorities to defend the black-red-gold tricolor against attacks. One resident of Nuremberg was extremely upset by an article in the Nazi publication *Der Stürmer*. Laced with antisemitism, the article reprinted a Communist “congratulatory” letter on the occasion of a socialist publication’s anniversary. Displaying communist animosity toward the socialists, the letter was signed, “A jobless man in the glorious Republic Murky-Shit and Mustard.” The lead-in to the letter assured *Der Stürmer* readers that “we [are] no friends of the Communists,” but that “it amuses us to observe how the red brothers every now and then speak the truth.”94 Upon reading this article, the individual in Nuremberg sent a letter to the Reich Minister of the Interior in February 1930, declaring, “As a citizen of the German Reich [*deutscher Reichsangehöriger*], I can only express my deepest indignation over the disparagement of the colors of the German Reich.”95 Through language that invoked his understanding of citizenship, the man in Nuremberg expressed his dismay at the attacks on the republican symbol from both the extreme right and left.

In another letter sent to Reich Interior Minister Severing, as well as *Vorwärts* and the Republican Motorcycle Club of Germany, the socialist writer Franz Barwich related how the adornment of his motorcycle with a “small republican banner” led to a confrontation with a group of Nazis in December 1929. Riding along with his wife in a sidecar, Barwich encountered 200-300 young Nazis marching along one side of the road. Noting that there was enough room for him to pass, he drove slowly and opined that “a reciprocal disturbance was not necessary.” Upon seeing the black-red-gold symbol, the Nazis spat at and insulted him and the flag. Among the derogatory comments made were “Black-Red-Sh.., Vagabonds,

Swines.” One of the Nazis, according Barwich, also tried to throw a fellow marcher in front of the motorcycle’s wheels in order to create a conflict. Barwich, trying to avoid further trouble, drove off. He wrote that both he and his wife “are also at any time ready to testify about the facts of the case described by me.”96 One “[should] be able to ride a motorcycle and carry a German flag in the areas around Berlin without any hindrance,” he stated in a letter to Severing. And, in a sign of the increasing violence of this period, the actions he wished to take following the incident did not stop at an offer to testify. Ominously, he also wrote to Severing, “I will try to get a weapons permit in order by the next opportunity to be able personally to rebuff such rude remarks, but I call attention to the inevitable consequences if every man is personally forced to procure satisfaction.”97 As these reports suggest, the republican symbol faced more egregious attacks than those mounted by Spalnik and Bleck.98

Indeed, other incidents and rulings point to graver problems for the republic, its symbol, and its supporters. In 1926, an episode involving two soldiers and two high school students ripping down a black-red-gold flag during the Reichsbanner’s Republican Day in Konstanz had sharpened anew antagonisms among the parties in undesirable ways,” according to the Baden Interior Minister Remmele in Karlsruhe.99 On the evening of May 22, two policemen patrolling the streets heard yelling and laughing, and, after heading in the direction of the noise, found the four trying to tear down a black-red-gold flag. Once the two

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96 Letter from Franz Barwich to the Geschäftsstelle des Republikanischen Motorradclub Deutschlands E.V., Ortsgruppe Berlin, Berlin-Steglitz, 6 December 1929, in BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 203.
99 Letter from the Minister des Innern to the Reichsminister des Innern, Karlsruhe, 31 May 1926, in BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 36 and rs.
soldiers and two students were tracked down, they gave the arresting police officers conflicting statements. According to one of the soldiers, he and his comrade were singing “Proudly Waves the Flag Black-White-Red” when the two passing students asked if the soldiers did indeed support the imperial standard. Upon answering yes, one of the students proclaimed that the republican banner needed to be removed and proceeded to climb up the pole. After failing to loosen the flag from the post, the other student climbed up and cut it down, the soldier continued in his testimony. The second soldier maintained that he had not participated, and had only witnessed the occurrence.

The students presented a different, even more troubling, version of events. The student who had actually cut down the flag maintained that he only did so because the soldiers had prompted him. In his testimony, this student stated that the soldiers stopped him and his classmate and asked them if they were politically on the right. One of the soldiers then showed the students a swastika and said “come, we’re going to rip down the Jew-Flag.” Upon one of the soldiers unsuccessfully trying to take down the black-red-gold banner, the student confessed that he climbed up the pole and cut it down. His friend confirmed this account and said that he was only a witness. In the eyes of the arresting officers, all four should be held responsible.100

Regardless of whether the soldiers professed their loyalty to the imperial flag or the Nazis, the soldiers involved were not loyal to the democratic government that they were supposed to defend. As Remmele pointed out in his letter to the Reich Minister of the Interior, “The situation, that two of those involved are members of the Reichswehr [army], and that the act was committed on the occasion of a rally for the constitutional form of

government, has aroused indignation in the widest circles and has elicited mistrust of the impartial [unparteiisch] attitude of the Reichswehr in Konstanz.”\textsuperscript{101} Clearly a defender of the republic and its symbols, Remmele, in his capacity as the education minister, expelled the students from school until a trial or disciplinary proceedings took place.\textsuperscript{102} In a supportive article, the liberal Berliner Tageblatt praised Remmele’s actions, “The Baden Interior Minister Remmele earns thanks for permitting the culprits, even if they are only dumb youths, to be held accountable [Verantwortung ziehen].”\textsuperscript{103} Furthermore, in his letter to the Reich Interior Minister, Remmele stated that he hoped that the Reichswehr Minister would investigate the incident and prevent further ones.\textsuperscript{104} In the end, a trial resulted in the one student being found guilty of violating the Law for the Protection of the Republic and sentenced to 14 days in prison. The other accused were let off.\textsuperscript{105} Once again, this incident suggests the varying positions of officials within the Reich. On the one hand, the police officers and Remmele pursued the attack on the republic’s colors. On the other, the actions of the soldiers and lack of penalty for them indicates the harmful politicization of the army by those on the right of the political spectrum.

Pointing to the various verdicts handed down by courts for similar insults made about the republican colors, an article from January 1929 in Vorwärts stated that “[o]ften the republic and, above all else, its colors defenselessly are exposed to every crudeness.” It cited a case involving another antisemitic slur. The director of the Braunschweig Museum had the

\textsuperscript{101} Letter from the Minister des Innern to the Reichsminister des Innern, Karlsruhe, 31 May 1926, in BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 36 and rs.
\textsuperscript{102} “Der Flaggenzwischenfall in Konstanz: Eingreifen des badischen Innenministers,” Berliner Tageblatt, 1 June 1926, in BAB, R1501/125653 Bl. 34.
\textsuperscript{103} “Der Flaggenzwischenfall in Konstanz: Eingreifen des badischen Innenministers,” Berliner Tageblatt, 1 June 1926, in BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 34.
\textsuperscript{104} Letter from the Minister des Innern to the Reichsminister des Innern, Karlsruhe, 31 May 1926, in BAB, R1501/125653, Bl. 36 and rs.
\textsuperscript{105} “Aburteilung des Konstanzer Flaggen-Skandals,” Vossische Zeitung, 28 July 1926, Bl. 43.
previous summer planted a republican flag in the sand near where he was lounging on the beach. One day, two men approached him and his wife and said, “This is the only flag, the only Jew-Flag here!” and proceeded to ask whether he himself was a Jew. “The remark occurred in such a provocative tone that the occupier of the beach mound could not for a minute doubt its insulting character,” the article added. After asking a constable for the offender’s name, the museum director learned that it was a former army officer. The State’s Attorney filed charges against the officer and the case went to trial before a court in Aurich, where the major was found innocent. Vorwärts summed up the court’s decision as follows, “it is difficult to decide whether it is an insult of the Reich colors when one labels them ‘Jew-Flag’! Because Jews are citizens [Staatsbürger], who particularly revered the republic, and the creator of the constitution of the Reich, Preuß, is also supposed to have been a Jew.” The court only employed this favorable interpretation of a widespread insult used by antisemites in order to let off the officer.

In the face of such abuses, republican officials did not simply rely on the Law for the Protection of the Republic to defend the black-red-gold tricolor; they also passed a variety of ordinances to limit the display of black-white-red and enforce the flying of the republican flag. Among the actions taken, in 1925, Severing, acting as Reich Interior Minister, introduced an ordinance to prohibit official buildings from flying the old imperial flag. Vorwärts welcomed the move in light of an incident in which the administration of the national railroad had prevented the republican banner from being raised at the plaza in front of the train station. “The decree of Comrade Severing,” the paper wrote, “is the right answer to the outrageous intervention by the administration of the national railroad in Halle in the
right of the citizen [Staatsbürger] to show the colors of the Reich."\textsuperscript{106} And, following the lead of the Prussian government, federal authorities enacted a decree in 1929 that forced event planners to fly the black-red-gold flag if federal officials were in attendance. “The government of the Reich considers it as a national duty \textit{[Pflicht]} and a necessity of national policy,” the measure stated, “that at events in which representatives of the federal government or subordinate authorities take part, the idea of the unity of the Reich and loyalty to the Reich is given a clear expression through the dignified display of the constitutionally established Reich colors black-red-gold.”\textsuperscript{107} Additionally, the federal government enacted measures to force owners of private sailboats and renters of federally-owned apartments to fly the black-red-gold flag.\textsuperscript{108}

Army ministers also acted to ensure that the army maintained (the appearance of) an apolitical stance. Defense Minister Otto Geßler of the left liberal German Democratic Party passed an ordinance in 1927 which prevented soldiers in public and private from merely displaying the colors black-white-red. On wreaths and at home, soldiers had to include the republic’s colors if they wanted to use the old imperial colors. The decree also required all official army installations to use the official war ensign of the Reich, and if a second flagpole were available, it had to fly the black-red-gold tricolor. From the republican point of view, such a move was both welcome and worrisome. As the liberal \textit{Berliner Tageblatt} pointed out, “That the army, which is sworn in on the Weimar Constitution and also on its colors,\textsuperscript{106} “Schwarz-Rot-Gold ist Reichsfarbe! Scharfer Erlaß Severings gegen Schwarz-Weiß-Rot,” \textit{Vorwärts}, 6 August 1925, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 176.
\textsuperscript{107} “Stillgestanden – es wird gefeiert! Flaggen-Erlasse in Massen,” \textit{Deutsche Zeitung}, 5 April 1929, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 54. The language of the federal ordinance was almost identical to that of the Prussian one. See “Neue Flaggenverordnung des Staatsministeriums,” \textit{Vossische Zeitung}, 20 October 1927, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 133.
only through a special ordinance made aware of the special meaning of black-red-gold, is
certainly not pleasant.”

Because a garrison town in Bavaria refused to put up two flag
masts to avoid flying the black-red-gold flag, Geßler’s successor, Wilhelm Groener,
announced a new ordinance two years later requiring all military sites to have at least two
flag poles.

Provincial and local officials took steps as well to enforce the display of black-red-
gold and to prevent those aligned behind the imperial flag from showing their colors. The
Prussian government enacted emergency decrees to require provincial and local authorities,
as well as schools, to raise the black-red-gold flag on Constitution Day. After two courts
(the Staatsgerichtshof and the Oberverwaltungsgerichtshof) declared these decrees illegal, the
provincial assembly created a law to provide a legal basis for these measures. On a local
level, municipal authorities in Berlin called for a boycott of those Berlin hotels which had
neglected to fly the black-red-gold flag during the 1927 Constitution Day; the city
administration in Cologne and the superintendent of Rauscha both forbade wreaths with
black-white-red ribbons at commemorations for fallen soldiers in 1927; the police in

109 “Reichswehr und Schwarz-Rot-Gold,” Berliner Tageblatt, 18 August 1927, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 172. For
other coverage of Geßler’s orders, see “Einen Flaggenerlaß für die Reichswehr: Schwarz-weiß-rot und
Schwarz-rot-gold,” Berliner-Börsenzeitung, 18 August 1927, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 171; “Die alte Reichsfahne
verboten,” Der Tag, 18 August 1927, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 173; “Der ‘erfreuliche Flaggenerlaß: Eine
offizielle Zentrumserklärung,” Vossische Zeitung, 3 September 1927, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 158.
110 “Ein neuer Flaggenerlass,” Berliner Tageblatt, 4 April 1929, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 60.
111 For instance, see “Die preußische Flaggenverordnung zum 11. August genehmigt,” Berliner-Börsenzeitung,
9 August 1927, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 175; “Innenminister Grzesinski zur preußischen Flaggenverordnung: Er
bezweifelt die Kompetenz des Staatsgerichtshofes,” Berliner-Börsen-Zeitung, 13 October 1927, in BAB,
R72/1316, Bl. 135; “Der Flaggenzwang in Preußen vom Landtagsausschuß gebilligt,” Berliner Börsen-Zeitung,
18 January 1928, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 118; “Die Flaggen-Verordnung,” Berliner Tageblatt, 3 July 1929, in
BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 44.
112 “Die Reichsfarben am Verfassungstag: Ein preußischer Gesetz,” Berliner Morgenpost, 12 December 1928,
in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 71.
114 “ Totenehrung verboten: Der amtliche Terror gegen Schwarz-Weiβ-Rot,” Deutsche-Tageszeitung, 14
September 1927, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 152; Dr. Jügler, “Die Schuld am Flaggenkrieg,” Berliner-
Börsenzeitung, 23 September 1927, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 145; “Ende des Berliner Flaggenkrieges: Der
Standpunkt der Hoteliers anerkannt,” Berliner-Börsenzeitung, 12 October 1927, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 136.
Breslau ordered the *Stahlhelm* not to carry black-white-red flags openly or covertly for a parade in 1928;\(^\text{115}\) and, the police chief in Berlin decreed that officers could not fly black-white-red flags, even at their private residences.\(^\text{116}\)

For opponents of the republican standard, these actions amounted to a betrayal of the very democratic values lauded by the bearers of black-red-gold. The measures taken by federal, provincial and local officials were decried as a form of tyranny by the Weimar Coalition parties, which put party politics above national unity. An article decrying the positions of the German Democratic Party and the Social Democratic Party in the debate about the flagging of Berlin hotels contended that the parties on the left “mention the black-red-gold national flag and mean their party flag.” The article continued by stating, “The left, more intolerant than Metternich, is not satisfied with it [the ordinance regarding hotels]; rather, [the left] demands that colors black-white-red vanish from Germany.”\(^\text{117}\) Friedrich Everling, a member of parliament from the German National People’s Party (DNVP) and later a member of the Nazi Party, went so far as to say that the allegedly democratic parties were less democratic than monarchs. Describing the “flag coercion” by the Prussian government, he argued, “More absolutist than an absolute king, the Prussian government now interferes in the flag laws. Its intervention was, aside from an act of absolution, an act of unitarianism.”\(^\text{118}\) A common complaint from the right was that the moves by the federal and provincial governments in favor of the republican standard were a violation of “self government.”


\(^\text{117}\) Dr. Jügler, “Die Schuld am Flaggenkrieg,” *Berliner-Börsenzeitung*, 23 September 1927, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 145.

\(^\text{118}\) Dr. Friedrich Everling (M.d.R.), “Die Flaggenfrage,” article in undated and untitled newspaper, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. rs. of 5.
Supporters of the imperial flag argued that the measures described above violated the rights of citizens granted by the Weimar Constitution. Indeed, the bearers of black-red-gold were not the only ones who interpreted their actions through the language of citizenship. A resident of Hamburg sent a letter to the municipal senator in charge of the police, the Reich Minister of the Interior, and the chancellor after being told by police that he could not display a black-white-red flag on the occasion of a protest rally called by the federal government against the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr in 1923. “According to the Weimar Constitution, every German has the right to express his opinion in speech, writing and image. The ordinance of the Hamburg police violates this constitutionally established right, and I heavily protest against it along with thousands of residents of Hamburg,” the man wrote. This man was especially upset that the police did not prohibit the flying of the red flag, the symbol of the political left, which contravened the fact that “before the law all Germans are equal.”

The conservative press and politicians also employed the discourse of rights granted by the republic in their efforts to undermine the republicans’ position. As one commentary hostile to the proposed boycott of Berlin hotels quipped, such a measure “has absolutely nothing to do with that true spirit of democracy.” To force the hotels to fly the Reich’s official colors, the author maintained, was contrary to “the hallmarks of a democratic attitude,” which were “the equality of all in every regard, the freedom of thought, action, political pursuits, unconditional tolerance for every national comrade [Volksgenossen] with regard to […], religion and politics.” And, in a depiction of this sentiment, a political

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119 Also see Achilles, “Re-Forming the Reich,” 162-163.
cartoon showed a large woman labeled “democracy” beating a man labeled “the free citizen and official” with a book of laws. Entitled “Legally Protected Enthusiasm,” the drawing showed the man sweating, waving two black-red-gold flags and screaming “hail freedom!” The caption below the cartoon exclaimed, “The Flag Coercion in Prussia becomes Law!”

Both sides of the Flaggenstreit therefore used (or abused) a discourse related to practices of citizenship and democracy in order to bolster their arguments. Each side however, tended to emphasize different aspects of these practices. The proponents of black-red-gold tended to talk about the responsibilities of citizens and governmental employees. For them, the duty to uphold and defend the democratic state appeared to be of the utmost importance. Supporters of the imperial tricolor most often discussed the rights of citizenship and the alleged abuse of them by republican authorities. By cynically calling attention to the freedoms granted by the Weimar Constitution, the anti-republicans within this group found an avenue to destabilize the republic on its own terms. In one of the few instances in which an adherent of the political right discussed responsibilities, the Chairman of the Union of Prussian Police Officers, Otto Dillenburger, acknowledged that there was a tension between “the rights and responsibility of the official [Beamtenrechte und Beamtenpflicht].” Writing in response to the decree by the Berlin police chief prohibiting the flying of the black-white-red flag, Dillenburger stated, “The right of free opinion finds its boundaries in the duty of the official, which is not allowed to be compatible with tendencies directed against the state.” Yet, socialist officials, according to him, had gone too far in their decree. Flying the imperial standard, Dillenburger argued, was not necessarily a display of treasonous tendencies. After all, the mainly black-white-red trade flag was an official flag (the Weimar Republic’s merchant flag was a black-red-white flag with a black-red-gold emblem in the corner). Even

122 “Gesetzlich geschützte Begeisterung,” Nachtausgabe, 6 March 1929, in BAB, R72/1316, Bl. 63.
if police officers decided to fly the black-white-red flag without the black-red-gold jack, he contended, it would not be possible to prevent them from doing so because “it deals with a hereby guaranteed right of the Reich’s constitution.” Party politics, rather than the dictates of the duties of state employees, were the decisive factor in the Berlin police decree, according to Dillenburger. His opinion reflected the widespread belief among those on the political right that Weimar Coalition’s party politics were to blame for Flaggenstreit.

Finding a Unity Flag

On the national stage, the struggle between the two sides peaked in May 1926 when a decree signed by President Hindenburg and Chancellor Hans Luther ordered that the largely black-white-red merchant flag be flown alongside the Reich’s flag at German embassies and consulates oversees, as well as at consular offices in European port cities. Pointing to the divisiveness created by the issue of the flag, the republican uproar stemming from the announcement of this decree led to Luther’s resignation after the liberal German Democratic Party among other parties refused to support his leadership. In the days before Luther resigned, however, Hindenburg wrote a letter to him stating that he did not intend “to abolish the constitutional colors” nor would he handle the flag issue outside the bounds of the constitution. He continued, “To create here in the foreseeable future a conciliatory compromise, which corresponds to present-day Germany and its goals and, at the time, does

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justice to the development and history of the Reich, is my deepest wish.” The letter amounted to a call for a “Unity Flag” and the dissemination of this letter by the press unleashed a flood of proposals and critiques from the press, officials, associations and individual citizens. Letters arrived from such varied places as Berlin, Finsterwalde, Pforzheim, Cologne, Breslau, Naumburg a.d. Saale, Frankenthal, Cassel, and Selb (Bavaria), as well as Buenos Aires, Brünn (Brno) and Vienna. And, as of August 1932, just months before Hitler became chancellor, the government was still receiving proposals.

The responses to this call for a “Unity Flag” reflected not only the political fragmentation of Weimar political culture, but also attempts to seek compromise. On the one hand were those who criticized the proposal as unrealistic. These detractors came from both sides of the flag debate and maintained that neither side would accept a compromise. An article printed in the *Niederdeutsche Zeitung* demonstrated the problem with trying to reconcile the two sides by concluding, “In any case, with such antics, one will not be able to dissuade from the only possible unity flag, the flag black-red-white.” A piece appearing in the socialist *Vorwärts* was also intransigent, “In the question of the flag, there is no compromise; there is only either-or. The flag of the republic is black-red-gold and there can be no agreement with whomever is against this flag.” Indeed, republicans of varying stripes worried that a flag combining all four colors would be an admission of defeat in the face of the onslaught from the political right. “The now sought after combination of two

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127 In the fall of 1926, the government looked to organize a Flag Committee to judge the value of the various proposals. According to the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, by early October 1926, the government had received around 1000 proposals, which Reichskunstwart Edwin Redslob and Stephan Kekulé von Stradonitz, an expert in heraldry, were to narrow down the submissions to 40 for serious consideration. “Die Flaggenfrage,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 6 October 1926, in BAB, R32/305.


flags, which should be achieved through the introduction of a jack or another combination of the four colors, seem to me as the emblem of a concession,” the Reichskunstwart (Federal Arts Expert) Edwin Redslob wrote to the Reich Minister of the Interior.\textsuperscript{130} As the liberal democratic Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt perceptively pointed out, it was doubtful the two sides could reach an agreement because “in the end behind the question of the flag stands today the question of the form of government. And there, there is no compromise.”\textsuperscript{131} Literally illustrating the futility of the exercise to find a unity flag was a proposal sent to the government by an anonymous individual. Using black, red, white and yellow crayons and colored bits of paper, the satirical illustration depicted a bird superimposed on an iron cross. The bird was wearing a hat labeled “Stahlhelm” and on its chest was an inverted hammer and sickle on top of a Star of David on top of a swastika.\textsuperscript{132} The use of symbols from antagonistic groups suggested the impossibility of finding a compromise for the fractures within German society.

Yet, most of the proposals sent to the government did not display such hardened attitudes. Even those associations which used either the black-red-gold or black-white-red banner as their main symbols appeared willing to compromise on the issue. The Werewolf (the League of German Men and Front Line Soldiers), an extreme right paramilitary organization connected to the Stahlhelm, suggested a black flag with a black eagle on a red foreground. It stated that the black-white-red flag should not be dismissed, but

\textsuperscript{130} Letter from Der Reichskunstwart Redslob to the Reichsminister des Innern, Berlin, 17 May 1926, in BAB, R32/304, Bl. 38-39, here 38. Also see Letter from Redslob to Reichsminister Koch, 21 May 1926, in BAB, R32/304, Bl. 49-51, here 49.

\textsuperscript{131} “Umschau,” Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt, May 1926, in BAB, R32/304, Bl. 111.

\textsuperscript{132} The top of the drawing says “Meoldy: I do not know what it should mean,” which is a musical composition by Friedrich Silcher for Heinrich Heine’s “Lorelei.” In PAAA, R98329, in between Ref. D 588/26 and Ref. D 597/26.
simultaneously recognized that this tricolor would not pass a popular referendum. The association therefore argued that its new flag proposal “could unite a majority.”

This right-wing paramilitary group was not alone; the republican paramilitary association, the Reichsbanner, sent a secret tract on the flag question to Reichskunstwart Redslob also proposing a compromise. This piece recognized the subtleties of the flag issue, acknowledging that not all supporters of the black-white-red colors were monarchists or fascists. It stated that the flag was dear to many Germans because of the Great War and should not simply be taken away. Observing the problems with winning support for the black-red-gold flag and providing an interesting commentary on republican efforts to enforce the flying of their standard, it proclaimed, “We learn from this: no solution through laws and ordinances, which are perceived as coercion!” Rather, Hindenburg should follow Ebert’s lead on the national anthem and simply declare a new, third flag to be the national one in order to avoid legal wrangling. The Reichsbanner argued, “A solution is possible if it is connected to heartfelt values held equally by both camps. In particular, the strong sentimental values can outshine the conflicting values and their symbols and can develop a common national feeling from the reciprocal acknowledgment of the same basic feelings.” Such common values, the Reichsbanner writer suggested, could be found in a supposed camaraderie experienced by German soldiers in the trenches, as well as both sides’ respect for the fallen soldiers. These examples demonstrate that, in the face of fragmentation, there were serious attempts, even by highly partisan groups, to find common ground.

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133 Letter from Der Bundesführer des Wehrwolfs to Reichskunstwart Dr. Redslob, Halle, 4 October 1927, in BAB, R32/305, Bl. 129.
Indeed, the drawings and flag descriptions submitted by individuals overwhelmingly proposed different compromises between the black-red-gold and black-white-red banners.\textsuperscript{135} One individual recognized the difficulties with finding an agreement between the two sides in a letter to the \textit{Reichskunstwart}, “Every genuine republican like me will be ill-disposed to a fundamental change of the Reich’s flag with regard to the colors, their number and sequence. On the other hand, a strong minority of citizens of the parties on the right assert a claim to the preservation of the monarchy’s colors.” He therefore went on to propose a combination of the two flags, although one that privileged the black-red-gold tricolor.\textsuperscript{136} His suggestion was only one among many about how to solve the flag problem. Some proposals used various symbols, such as the Reich’s eagle, stars and various types of crosses. Many limited themselves simply to using different color strips in a range of geometric designs. Individuals proposed a range of color combinations: black-red-gold/yellow-white in various layouts, black-red-gold-white-green, black-yellow-red, black-white-gold/yellow, black-red-yellow-blue, black-white, red-white-gold, black-red, blue-white-yellow-red, black-white-red-blue, black-white-blue, black-red-gold-white-blue. Others kept to using black, red and gold or black, white and red, but proposed putting them in a different order to assuage opponents.

A portion of these proposals included text, in which the individuals expressed a genuine conviction that a solution could be found in the flag debate. Significantly, these explanations did not limit themselves solely to reconciling the black-red-gold and black-white-red lobbies; they also addressed the larger problem of national disunity. Whereas the two sides of the flag debate contested which color scheme authentically represented the

\textsuperscript{135} For collections of these proposals, see PAAA, R98329 and Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BAK), R32/304-306. The BAB has microfiche versions of R32/304-306, but in order to see the colors used in these letters, one must consult the originals held in Koblenz.

\textsuperscript{136} Letter from J. Balog (Verlag Schule und Elternhaus, Balog & Co.) to Reichskunstwart Dr. Redslob, Siegen, 16 July 1926, in BAK, R32/305, Bl. 39.
German *Volk* and its history, these letter writers sought to find a symbol that could bridge various fractures within the *Volk*. As a letter from Bad Salzdetfurth stated in its suggestion of black-white-gold, “But I believe that it [the proposal] nevertheless is in accordance with the letter of the Reich’s president, and I now put it forward because I believe that it really can serve the reconciliation of the German *Volk*.”

Some contributors focused on trying to reconcile the two political sides of the *Flaggenstreit*. Alongside a proposal for a flag with the eagle and both tricolors in the same size, a political editor from Karlsruhe stated, “The proposal is built on the fundamental notion that the *Volk*, presently divided into two parts, can once again be brought closer together through a unified flag.” He believed that his proposal “will be just for both sides of the *Volk*, right as well as left.” Another flag combining the four colors in various ways would ensure that there would be “no victory of one party over another.”

Others emphasized the creation of a “Unity Flag” as a way to connect the different historical traditions emphasized by the adversaries in the flag debate. A proposal from Dresden stressed the need to include both tricolors in the new flag because “[b]lack-white-red and red-black-gold can, so long as there is a German *Volk* and a German Reich, never fall into oblivion or lose their meaning as symbols of a transformative century of German history.” Although these two symbols were currently viewed as antagonistic, there was a possibility, according to the writer, to reconcile them. “Just as the mutually fighting masses […] nevertheless must be reconciled and united because they are a *Volk* and are simply

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137 Letter from Dr. Dammermann to Reichsminister des Auswärtigen Dr. Stresemann, Bad Salzdetfurth, 12 May 1926, in PAAA, R98329, Ref. D 564/26. His inspiration was from a treatise by Reichsfreiherr vom Stein. This combination, according to Dammermann would unite the history and present-day of Germany, as well as the future union of Germany and Austria. A shorter version of this suggestion can be found in BAK, R32/304a, Bl. 52.


139 Letter from Hartwig Heymann, Bad Kissingen, 24 September 1929, in BAK, R32/306, Bl. 68.
forced to live with one another as a *Volk,*” the proposal stated, “so must black-red-gold and black-white-red, the sooner the better, become absorbed in complete equal unity, in a balancing and balanced new national flag.” An anonymous submission also suggested a combination of the two tricolors in order to merge the different historical meanings of these symbols. Showing a black-white-red iron cross on top of a green circle on top of the black-red-gold tricolor, the caption scribbled under the drawing read, “The flag means: black-red-gold – Freedom; iron cross in black-white-red – power and greatness; green border – hope.”

Another letter suggesting a similar combination of the eagle and both color schemes highlighted the need to connect the imperial past and republican present in a harmonious way, echoing Hindenburg’s letter to Luther. A self-proclaimed non-partisan Berliner created a new flag, “which is suitable to the actual circumstances in our fatherland and which can be recognized by everyone who is ready to position themselves on the terrain of the people’s state [Volksstaat] without giving up his national sentiments.” He believed that most Germans in the Reich and abroad were willing to recognize the legitimacy of the republic if the new form of government did not disparage the imperial past. By respecting the legacy of imperial Germany and simultaneously indicating “in the interests of the German republic […], that there is another, a new Germany,” he sincerely felt “that with the creation of a Unity Flag, which speaks to the feelings of the *Volk,* an important step is taken in bringing the German *Volk* together.”

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140 Dr. Theodor Grumbt, “Die neue Reichsflagge: Ein Kompromissvorschlag zur Lösung der Flaggenfrage, enclosed in a letter from Grumbt to Reichsminister des Innern Dr. Külz, Dresden, 1 June 1926, in BAK, R32/304a, Bl. 78-80, here 79-80.
141 Unsigned and Undated, in BAK, R32/304a, Bl. 30.
142 Letter from Erich Fuchs (?) to Herr Minister, Berlin, 27 June 1926, in BAK, R32/305, Bl. 16-17.
creating and representing a collective memory, which would enable Germans to find the elusive and desired national unity.

Still other propositions saw a new flag as a way to create a stronger sense of unity among different, at times antagonistic, regions. A letter from Nuremburg did not find the combination of the two tricolors to be a tenable solution, and, in its place, suggested a black-white-blue tricolor because it represented “the union of Prussia’s black-white with Bavaria’s white-blue.”  

A business school graduate described his submission as stemming from “the idea of a synthesis of the new and old Germany” and the motto, found in the Weimar Constitution, “The German Volk is united in its tribes!” On a black-red-gold background, the flag would also display the insignia and colors of each of the provinces.

Significantly, some of the proposals focused on territories excluded from the Reich, with the Anschluss idea playing a prominent role. One proposal made quite a political statement through its inclusion of territories stripped away from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, as well as Austria. It had a black-white-red flag with 10 golden iron crosses to represent “Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony (Thuringia), Württemberg, Baden, Mecklenburg, Hessen, Oldenburg, Elsass-Lothrigen (Germaness; abroad), Austria (or Thuringia).” And, tackling both historical and geographic divisions, a federal inspector from Düsseldorf suggested a flag with black, yellow, red and white triangles meeting in the center. “The color combination expresses (observed from above and below),” he explained, “first of all Prussia’s historical mission in the founding of the Reich (1871) and thereafter leads without constraints from the imperial Reich to the current German people’s state [Volksstaat].”

143 Letter from Ernst-Georg Gunther to Dr. Kekule von Stradonitz, Nuremburg, 2 June 1926, in BAK, R32/304a, Bl. 68. Also see the letter from Berlin-Karlsbhorst, 2 June 1926 in BAK, R32/304a, Bl. 69.
144 Letter from Hans Stahl to the Reichskunstwart, Berlin-Südende, 6 October 1926, in BAK, R32/305, Bl. 53-54.
145 Vorschlag von G.M. Ifinitzky, Chemnitz, in BAK, R32/304a, Bl. 34.
Furthermore, he continued, “The color combination will, however, also further satisfy our tribal brothers in the south according to the ethnographic boundaries of *Grossdeutschland*, the Austrians.” He saw his proposal as therefore encompassing Germany’s past and present, as well as Prussia and Austria, “the two leading lands in the Reich.”\(^{146}\) A diagram in another correspondence from Delmenhorst contained the following equation: the imperial German flag plus the Blue-Red-Gold flag of Weimar plus the Black-Yellow flag of Habsburg Austria equaled a Black-Yellow-Red “Unity Flag.”\(^{147}\) Austria, as has been demonstrated, occupied an important place for many Germans striving to create national unity.\(^{148}\)

The search for a “Unity Flag,” although unsuccessful, still demonstrates the importance of looking at the various facets of the *Flaggenstreit*. There was a serious attempt by Germans from across the Reich and even beyond its borders to find a solution that would satisfy both sides of the debate. And, as has been emphasized throughout this section, these proposals highlight an active citizenry conscious of the close relationship between it and the democratic government. Citizens asked their government to listen to their opinions and believed that their ideas would be taken seriously by officials. Thus, while the flag issue pointed to the many fractures within Weimar political culture, it also illuminates the various ways in which Germans conceptualized their roles as citizens living in a democracy. Nor was this negotiation of a transition to democracy unique to Germany. As the next chapter

\(^{146}\) Letter from Joseph Hoffmann to the Reichsminister des Innern in Berlin, Düsseldorf, 10 May 1926, in BAK, R32/304, Bl. 20.

\(^{147}\) Vorschlag von Studienrat Dr. Dirks, Delmenhorst, in BAK/R32/304a, Bl. 16.

\(^{148}\) For other proposals that directly address Austria, see Letter from Dr. Dammermann to Reichsminister des Auswärtigen Dr. Stresemann, Bad Salzdetfurth, 12 May 1926, in PAAA, R98329, Ref. D 564/26 and a shorter version of this suggestion in BAK, R32/304a, Bl. 52; Vorschlag Bankbeamter Henry Clemens, Hamburg, in BAK, R32/304a, Bl. 35; Letter from Max Roth to Reichsminnenminister Dr. Külz, Coblenz, 8 June 1926, in BAK, R32/304a, Bl. 122-123; Letter from Franz Kurt Lehmann to Reichsminister Dr. Külz, Berlin-Friedenau, 17 June 1926, in BAK, R32/304a, Bl. 150-162; Letter from Werner K. to Reichskunstwart Redslob, Helsingfors, 9 August 1928, in BAK, R32/606, Bl. 20; Letter from Frh. von Welser, Berlin, 15 August 1929, in BAB, R32/306, Bl. 61-63; Letter from Walter R. to Reichsminister des Äußeren, Braunschweig, 3 June 1926, in PAAA, R98329, Ref. D 588/26; Letter from Paul Britz to Auswärtige Amt, Call/Eifel, 21 June 1926, in PAAA, R98329, Ref. D 673/26.
will show, the citizens of Austria similarly engaged in a heated debated about which anthem would be represent the new rump state. However, unlike the flag debate in Germany, the divisions between the various political groups hardened as the conflict over the anthem wore on.
Chapter 3
Symbolizing Austria through Song?
The Anthem Debate in the First Austrian Republic

In 1990, a man reflecting on the part of his adolescence spent in a Vienna turned upside down by the war and the collapse of the Habsburg Empire recalled:

[b]eing submitted to such a piece of (unsuccessful) political invention in an Austrian primary school of the middle 1920s, in the form of a new national anthem desperately attempting to convince children that a few provinces left over when the rest of a large Habsburg empire seceded or was torn from them, formed a coherent whole, deserving love and patriotic devotion; a task not made any easier by the fact that the only thing they had in common was what made the overwhelming majority of their inhabitants want to join Germany. ‘German-Austria’, this curious and short-lived anthem began, ‘thou magnificent (herrliches) land, we love thee’, continuing, as one might expect, with a travelogue or geography lesson following the alpine streams down from glaciers to the Danube valley and Vienna, and concluding with the assertion that this new rump-Austria was ‘my homeland’ (mein Heimatland).

The author of these lines is none other than Eric Hobsbawm, the renowned Marxist historian of modern Europe. Interestingly, this reminiscence did not appear in his memoir, but rather as an example of the importance of “inventing traditions” in one of his scholarly books, Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality. His remark was both a personal memory of the confusion experienced by many Austrians after the First World War, as well as an academic evaluation of the difficulties facing the state’s attempt to gain legitimacy in the eyes of its inhabitants.

As Hobsbawm’s statement suggests, the debate over state symbols in Austria centered on the official anthem. During the course of the First Republic, four songs vied for the

designation of being Austria’s anthem. In need of an anthem for the republic’s army to play on official occasions, the new state’s government rejected keeping the imperial tune by Haydn and the lyrics of “God Preserve, God Save Our Emperor, Our Country.” “German Austria, Thou Magnificent Land,” an entirely new song composed by Hermann Kienzl with lyrics by the socialist leader Karl Renner, became the de facto national anthem of Austria in 1920. This new anthem failed to gain widespread popularity, as Hobsbawm’s recollection demonstrates. In particular, political conservatives decried the replacement of the Haydn melody. In late 1929 and early 1930, the Christian Social government discarded the Renner-Kienzl anthem and decreed that “Be Blessed without End” would be the new official anthem. This move by the cabinet restored the Haydn melody with a text by the right-wing priest and poet Ottokar Kernstock, much to the dismay of the socialists. However, the return to the Haydn tune presented a new struggle over the anthem, as three different sets of lyrics could now be sung to the same Haydn melody: “God Preserve, God Save Our Emperor, Our Country,” “Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles,” or “Be Blessed without End.”

The Official Anthems of Austria and Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Anthem of Habsburg Austria</th>
<th>De Facto Anthem of the First Austrian Republic, 1920-1929</th>
<th>Anthem of the First Austrian Republic and the Austrofascist State, 1929-1938</th>
<th>Official Anthem of the Weimar Republic, 1922-1933</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“God Preserve, God Save Our Emperor, Our Country”</td>
<td>“German-Austria, Thou Magnificent Land”</td>
<td>“Be Blessed Without End”</td>
<td>“Deutschland, Deutschland über alles”</td>
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In a number of ways, this debate about the Austrian anthem mirrored the struggle over the German flag discussed in the previous chapter. Similar to the *Flaggenstreit* in Germany, the Austrian anthem debate was caused by and reflected conflicting political attitudes toward the imperial past and the new republic. Moreover, as in the German case, the government was not alone in shaping the contours of the debate. The question of finding a new Austrian anthem elicited suggestions and complaints from the public, reflecting the democratization of politics and society caused by the First World War. Through their proposals sent to the government and their musical demonstrations after 1929, ordinary citizens influenced the course of the anthem debate.

There were also crucial differences between the symbol debates in Germany and Austria. Austrians faced a particular challenge in the attempt to find a suitable anthem in that they were divided over what this symbol should represent. With the traditional characteristics of Austrianness – the multinational empire and the Habsburg monarchy – no longer available for use after 1918, Austrians needed to redefine what it meant to be Austrian. Hence, while citizens of the Reich argued about which flag was authentically German, Austrians debated whether the anthem should symbolize their new rump state and its inhabitants or their membership in a larger German nation. The importance of cross-border connections lent a new urgency to the anthem debate in Austria. Throughout the anthem dispute, government officials, political parties, and individuals lent their support to a particular anthem based not only on their political viewpoint, but also the way in which they negotiated the relationship between their Austrian and German identities. Austrians’ attempts to find an anthem that could be reconciled with both their party politics and identity politics also highlighted a striking distinction between the German and Austrian debates:
whereas many German citizens sought to find a compromise through the creation of a “unity flag,” Austrian citizens and political parties became increasingly hardened in their opposition to their adversaries’ anthem preferences.

The Early Attempts to Find a New Anthem

With its praise for the Kaiser, “God Preserve, God Save,” could no longer represent the newly created Republic of German-Austria. In particular, the socialists viewed both the text of the old anthem, as well as the Haydn melody as tainted and therefore unusable. Yet, the collapse of the monarchy did not bring about the total demise of the so-called Kaiserhymne (literally, emperor’s anthem). One of the ways in which this anthem persisted was its use by a number of political commentators, who viewed the well-known text as a means to publicize their opinions about the immediate past or the present situation. Critics of the old order utilized the retired anthem to ridicule the very authority it had once praised. Two texts, for instance, took a similar approach by turning Seidl’s 1854 lyrics of “God preserve, God protect our Kaiser, our country!” on their head. “God preserve, God protect us from this dynasty, which with our meagerly allocated porridge killed the monarchy,” a piece entitled “Anti-Monarchism” suggested in the summer of 1919. In a damning final verse, it stated, “Enemy of freedom, enemy of light, the Habsburg monarchy was only a joke of world history, a bad irony!”² A little over a year later, the famed satirist Karl Kraus printed his own version of “God Preserve, God Save” in his journal Die Fackel. Kraus remarked, “Until the fatherland-consciousness is mature enough for a new melody and until one is given to it [the fatherland-consciousness], it could therefore come down to filling the imperial lyrics

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with a new and contrary meaning.”³ Barely changing the text of the Seidl’s work, Kraus likewise wrote, “God preserve, God save our country from the Kaiser! Powerful without his support, confident without his hand! Unshielded from his crown, we stand against this enemy: Never again may Austria’s fortunes be united with the Habsburg throne!”⁴

Those on the political right also employed the old anthem in order to air their misgivings about the postwar period. Mixing both deep-seated antisemitism and Catholic religiosity, a submission to Richard von Kralik, a conservative, Catholic, antisemitic writer, opened with the following verse: “God, protect, God, save our country from the Jews! Powerful through the support of faith, Christians, maintain a strong position! Let us protect our fathers’ legacy from the most terrible enemy! So that our Volk does not become corrupted, remain faithfully united!” Kralik, as a monarchist, explained to readers of the Catholic weekly Das Neue Reich that he preferred Seidl’s text, and added that it “may also be more to the liking of the Jews.”⁵ Despite Kralik’s self-proclaimed hesitations about the piece, he printed it mostly likely due to its expression of the fear among many Catholics that the new republic, and particularly Jews, would destroy the esteemed position of the Church and traditional ways of life. Austrian Nazis also printed their own adaptation, which included the tenets of Nazism: antisemitism, anti-Marxism, and anti-democracy. “Cowardice preserve, stupidity protect our Jew-republic,” the Nazi lyrics began. Other verses decried the Austromarxists by name and more generally: “What is created by the burghers’

⁴ Karl Kraus, “Volkshymne,” Die Fackel 554 (November 1920): here 59. Kraus’s text can also be found in Früh, “Gott erhalte? Gott bewahre!”, 283. Also consult Früh for additional proposals critical of Habsburg monarchy.
industriousness, the Communist seizes, with the powerful weapons of terror, you triumph dear Bolshevik.”\(^6\)

Whereas these authors did not seriously seek to write a new official anthem, other individuals sought to fill this musical void by creating a song in accord with country’s current state of affairs. Already in the initial months following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, lyrics and compositions began to materialize. These early entries welcomed the return of peace after four long years of war. Carl Michael Ziehrer, a well-known composer of military marches and waltzes, wrote and composed the celebratory “German-Austria’s Freedom Song” in late 1918. It viewed the present as a “hopeful time,” in which “peace returns to every house, throws all hate out the window, because we are all now brothers, here a band of love embraces us.”\(^7\) The following month, another individual tried his or her hand at an anthem entitled “German-Austria (republican folk song \([\text{Volkslied}]\).” As with the first text, this manuscript contained a pacifist message: “The warrior fury is banned,-Never let the world go up in flames, ‘Never again’, - so long as the world turns,-So long as a league of nations exists.”\(^8\) That same month, Eduard Kolbe composed a melody for lyrics written by Franz Obermann and passed along their “National anthem of all Germans” to Karl Seitz, who was the president of the Provisional National Assembly at the time. They too rejoiced about the end of the bloodshed in their song, “For

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\(^8\) “Deutsch-Oesterreich (republikanisches Volkslied),” Perchtoldsdorf bei Wien, January 1919, in Archiv des Vereins für die Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung Wien (VGA), Lade 1, mappe 42-1.
us, out of misery and death, peace and the sun’s rays grow / Freedom and people’s happiness, unity and justice.”

These particular attempts to create an anthem did not simply rejoice at the conclusion of hostilities; they also hailed the new democratic form of government. Ziehrer, for instance, did not appear to mourn the passing of the monarchy which had once appointed him to such prominent positions as *Hoffballmusikdirector* (musical director of the court balls). A little over a month after the republic was proclaimed, he embraced it, as can be seen in his second verse, “So vow all the people in German-Austria, whether poor or rich: a *Volk*, governed by the *Volk* alone. So reach out your hand brother, three cheers for German-Austria’s fatherland!”

The author of “German-Austria (republican folk song)” likewise joyously proclaimed, “‘German-Austria,’ – You free state, -Which the ‘German *Volk*’ has founded, Remain free and strong for all time,- From the heavy yoke, you are free!” And, Kolbe and Obermann repeated the refrain, “A loyal salute to you, republic!” alongside such statements as, “We are the *Volk*, which is enthroned: now free and equal/We are the majesty of German-Austria!”

And although Adolf Kirchl clarified that “[h]e did not want to presume to create the national anthem [Volkshymne] of the new state,” he still sent a proposal to the State’s

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11 “Deutsch-Oesterreich (republikanisches Volkslied),” Perchtoldsdorf bei Wien, January 1919, in VGA, Lade 1, Mappe 42-1.

Office for Education to commemorate the birthday of the republic, the day “which gave our fatherland the long desired freedom and hope...”  

The early efforts to create an anthem also often reflected the impulse of most Austrians to turn to their “Germanness” and Germany now that the multinational empire was gone. Not only did the German-Austria (republican folk song)” contain references to the “German Volk,” a “German hand,” and “German brothers,” but its author also included that it “can also be sung to the melody of ‘Wacht am Rhein’ [Watch on the Rhine].”  

And if the title “National Anthem of All Germans” was not revealing enough, its creators, expecting the Anschluss would come to pass, made their lyrics adaptable. In a notation, they stated that “[a]fter German-Austria’s Anschluss with Germany,” one of the references to “German-Austria” should be changed to “Großdeutschland.” Furthermore, the only other reference to “German-Austria” in these lyrics would be switched to “German-united Reich” once the unification of the two countries occurred. Another suggestion for an anthem discussed the “German Heimat [homeland],” which “freedom [has] given us.”  

Pointing to the importance of Germanness for anthem proposals at this time, an appraisal of Kirchl’s submission by the State’s Office for Education praised his work for its “good German convictions.” The proposals from this period appear to have avoided the later debate about whether the Austrian anthem should be a national anthem about Austrians’ Germanness or

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13 Quoted in Steinbauer, Land der Hymnen, 23.
14 “Deutsch-Oesterreich (republikanisches Volkslied),” Perchtoldsdorf bei Wien, January 1919, in VGA, Lade 1, mappe 42-1.
17 Quoted in Steinbauer, Land der Hymnen, 24.
whether it should be a state anthem primarily concerning Austria. Perhaps the absence of debate was due to these creations arising before the Entente banned an *Anschluss* in the summer of 1919. At this point, a political union appeared to be a real possibility and the preferred course of action by citizens and major parties of the newly created Austrian state.

Significant for future developments, Kernstock wrote his first version of “Be Blessed without End” during these early months of the republic. Signaling the important role that active citizens would play in the course of the Austrian anthem debate, the work first came about because a local historical association in the city of Graz asked Kernstock if he would author lyrics for Haydn’s melody. This association made the request because it wanted to “save the wonderful melody of our former Kaiser’s anthem, with which our essentially German [*Urzeutsch*] master Josef Haydn has created the most beautiful ‘national anthem [*Volkshymne*]’ in the world.”

Containing four verses, Kernstock’s initial draft did not solely refer to Austria, but also spoke of “German-Austria,” which was still the name of the state until the Treaty of St. Germain prohibited it. The text also mentioned “German *Heimat,*” “German work,” and “German love.”

Interestingly, the association stressed that Haydn was a German composer and this version of the lyrics underlined Austria’s place in the “German *Heimat.*” This emphasis stood in stark contrast to the use of this song in subsequent years by those seeking to create a stronger Austrian identity. In the second half of the 1920s, a number of Catholic conservatives began to claim Haydn, his tune and Kernstock as representatives of Austrianess. A letter by Kernstock to a newspaper in August of 1927 showed the radical re-inscription of the meaning of the work, “It [the poem] was suggested after the revolution by

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fellow countrymen loyal to the Heimat, who were of the opinion that the Austrian Josef Haydn’s melody, solemnly created for Austria, should live on in an Austrian folk song [Volkslied].”¹⁹ This change in emphasis, a topic to be explored in more detail in the next section, also reaffirms the widespread tendency of Austrians in the initial years of the republic to emphasize the Germandess of their state and its citizens.

Also of note is Kernstock’s inclusion of democratic ideas in his lyrics. The second verse stated, “No despotism, no vassals! An open path for every strength! Equal duties, equal rights! Free in the arts and sciences! Strong in bravery, determined in view, despite every blow of fate, go forth on the path of happiness, God with you, German-Austria!” A verse that was later cut when the Christian Social government implemented the piece as the official anthem also referred to German-Austria as “Land of freedom.” Considering that Kernstock was a conservative priest who wrote a poem praising the swastika during his brief interest in Nazism in 1923, the poem was surprisingly compatible with the new republic and its ideals. In later years, the Christian Socials would view this anthem as a way to return to a great imperial tradition and as a symbol of their increasingly reactionary and authoritarian ideas.

Yet, in spite of the various proposals put forth by the public, Austria was still without an anthem in 1920. By this point, the country needed an anthem that could be used for official occasions, whether within Austria or abroad.²⁰ It was the need of the newly formed Austrian army for a song which was compatible with the republic that finally led to a push to

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¹⁹ Quoted in Grasberger, Die Hymnen Österreichs, 121 and Steinbauer, Land der Hymnen, 59. Unfortunately, Grasberger does not provide citations for his sources, so it is unclear where Kernstock directed his letter.
²⁰ Steinbauer points out that the state would eventually need an anthem for its representation abroad. As he puts it, “‘Man brauchte also weniger eine Volkshymne für das Volk selbst als für die Vertreter des Volkes!” Steinbauer, Land der Hymnen, 29.
find an anthem. Karl Renner, a leading socialist and the chancellor at the time, proceeded to pen lyrics and find a composer for a new anthem. As he later explained:

> The Republic of Austria had been founded in the middle of the collapse of the old Habsburg Empire from the German lands of this empire. The old imperial anthem could naturally not have been adopted. The need for an anthem for the republic was first expressed by the military. The small number of troops, which the republic had, needed to swear an oath to it. The troop commanders assailed the chancellery, asking for an anthem. It had to be, so to speak, created overnight.  

Having decided to generate the text of the anthem, he contacted his friend and composer Wilhelm Kienzl to create a new melody. During their collaboration, the two worked together to revise Renner’s poem with the biggest change being the addition of “German-Austria” to the final version. The inclusion of the name “German-Austria” in the anthem amounted to a political statement, since this appellation had been specifically forbidden by the Entente in their efforts to establish Austria as a state completely independent of Germany. With the alterations and the melody finished in May, the anthem was first performed at a ceremony to swear in troops for the army on 15 July 1920 in Vienna.

Although the Renner-Kienzl composition was used for an official event, swearing in soldiers, the government had never issued a decree or passed legislation declaring it to be the anthem of Austria. When the army’s administrative post in Graz read about the Viennese ceremony, it asked the State’s Office of Defense for free copies of the lyrics and melody, only to be told that this song did not constitute an official state anthem. The defense department recommended that the army post in Graz write directly to Kienzl if they wished

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21 Quoted in Graberger, *Die Hymnen Österreichs*, 98. He does not state the source for the quote. Steinbauer also cites this passage from Grasberger on p. 29.

to obtain a copy of the song.\textsuperscript{23} The historian Johannes Steinbauer makes the very plausible suggestion that the government shied away from taking up the matter of the Renner-Kienzl anthem due to the growing tensions within the coalition between the Social Democrats and Christian Socials. According to Steinbauer, Austrian worries that the use of “German Austria” would alarm foreign powers was another possible reason that “German-Austria, Thou Magnificent Land” never became a legal symbol.\textsuperscript{24}

Despite its unofficial status, the Renner-Kienzl collaboration became the de facto anthem until late 1929. Government documents referred to it as the “federal anthem [\textit{Bundeshymne}]” or “national anthem [\textit{Nationalhymne}]” interchangeably and used it for official events, such as the military celebrations for November 12. Already by the third anniversary of the republic in 1921, the president’s office noted that President Hainisch, after greeting the battalion commanders, “[...] would remove his hat by the playing of the national anthem because the national anthem constituted the focus of the entire celebration.”\textsuperscript{25} And, as a 1927 report on a commemorative performance for Beethoven’s death indicated, “The playing of the national anthem upon the arrival of the president […] has proved itself to be very effective because it was the only means by which to signal the attendees to rise from their seats.”\textsuperscript{26} The application of the words “federal anthem” and “national anthem” to the Renner-Kienzl creation, as well as the song’s use for official functions, meant that “German-Austria, Thou Magnificent Land,” had for all practical purposes become a state symbol alongside the officially declared emblems of the flag and the coat of arms.

\textsuperscript{23} Steinbauer, \textit{Land der Hymnen}, 38-39.
\textsuperscript{24} Steinbauer, \textit{Land der Hymnen}, 37-38.
\textsuperscript{25} Amtserinnerung, betr. eine militärische Feier des dreijährigen Bestandes der Republik, PrK 6524/1921 in ÖStA, AdR, Präsidentschaftskanzlei (PrK) 6288/1922.
The Campaign for and against Haydn

The use of the Renner-Kienzl collaboration for official occasions did not, however, lead to the widespread acceptance of the anthem by the population. Due to the unpopularity of this anthem, individuals continued to send the government proposals for a new one. In particular, many Austrians viewed a return to Haydn as the best way to develop a meaningful symbol. Not only did most Austrian citizens already know the tune, but the melody also represented a link to Austria’s great cultural heritage in a period of instability. Although political conservatives would be the primary supporters of the reinstatement of Haydn, the desire to hear Haydn again was not simply confined to the right end of political spectrum. In a 1923 letter concerning the anthem, a self-proclaimed “republican” wrote to Hainisch, “as the freely elected President of the Republic who takes the same deepest interest in progress.” The “republican” questioned why Haydn could not be used to honor the republic. As chairman of the parents’ association at a boys’ primary school, the writer was in the process of organizing the festivities for the fifth anniversary of the republic. He explained that he had, “after a difficult struggle,” taught the schoolchildren the Renner-Kienzl anthem. Concluding that the song was seldom heard because it was “too hard” he recommended a return to the Haydn melody. “I believe,” the anonymous author opined, “that an anthem, to which that melody would be added, would soon become the common property of the entire Austrian Volk. In the schools, it would inflame the hearts of our youth, the future of our state, with love for the republic.” To make Haydn suitable for the republic, the writer provided his own set of lyrics praising the republic, as well as the “free citizens of all classes” and “freedom, equality.” 27 By creating a new set of lyrics that praised the republic,

27 Full text of the letter can be found in Steinbauer, Land der Hymnen, 45-47.
this author attempted to make the old imperial tune compatible with the new political situation.

It was during this period that the idea of reinstating Haydn with lyrics by Kernstock gained momentum. The popularization of the Kernstock-Haydn combination, first suggested in 1919, was due in large part to the efforts of Louise Pibus, a Viennese schoolteacher. Highlighting once again the importance of citizen participation in the course of the Austrian anthem debate, she conducted a five-year campaign to gain both official and popular support for this particular song.\(^{28}\) As early as the spring of 1922, she wrote to the federal government, requesting it to declare Kernstock-Haydn to be the official anthem. She claimed that she had no political motivations, and that both the lyrics and Austrian public showed enough political maturity to allow for the reinstatement of the old imperial tune. Although officials within the Ministry of the Interior and Education did not view the lyrics as problematic, they rejected Pibus’s suggestion due to “political concerns” over the Haydn melody.\(^{29}\) The government’s initial response did not, however, dissuade her from continuing her efforts to have “Be Blessed without End” recognized as Austria’s anthem.

Rather than simply lobbying the government as individuals had done, she turned her attention to gathering popular support for the Kernstock-Haydn song. She sent the lyrics to newspapers for publication, created postcards to increase awareness of the need for a new anthem and the suitability of “Be Blessed without End,” and urged school boards to include the song as part of their curriculum. In her attempts to popularize the song, she demonstrated a keen understanding of the expanded sphere of political action in a democracy. Her efforts to mount a petition campaign pointed to her awareness of the new role played by citizens in

\(^{28}\) For a detailed description and chronology of her efforts, see Steinbauer, *Land der Hymnen*, 62-72.

the republic. Addressing her “dear national comrades [Volksgenossen]” in 1923, Pibus explained that according to article 41 of the constitution, any issue able to garner the signatures of 200,000 voters or half of all voters in three provinces would become an item of business before parliament. 30 Although in a 1926 letter to the government she stated that she was giving up on the petition drive due to the authorities’ reluctance to act and fear that the song would be weakened through continual promotional work, she still enclosed pages of signatures containing about 350 names because she felt herself “personally obligated for the further representation” of the signatories. 31 Despite her ultimately renouncing the petition drive, her actions point to the notion that popular support was an important tool in making Kernstock-Haydn the official anthem.

Throughout her various activities, Pibus sounded a number of recurring themes with regard to the anthem situation in Austria. According to her, Austria was still in need of a popular anthem and “Be blessed without end” would be the best option to fill this musical void. As one of her postcards proclaimed, “We are lacking a people’s anthem [Volkshymne]!” The same postcard proposed a solution to the problem raised by Pibus; it contained Kernstock’s poem and stated that it should be set to Haydn. This song would bring “honor to our old, eternally young Austria.” Yet, Pibus did not simply highlight this particular song as an authentically Austrian symbol. Like the original commissioners of the text, she pointed to the song as a symbol of Austrians’ Germanness during the first few years of her efforts. On the same postcard discussed in the paragraph above, she also exclaimed,

30 Letter from Louise Pibus to mein liebenwerten Volksgenossen, Wieder ein Ruf im Sinne Österreichische Volkshymne (Kernstock-Haydn), May 1923, in ÖStA, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (AVA), Unterricht Allgemein (U. Allg.) 3258, 12733/1926.
31 Letter from Louise Pibus to the hohe Bundeskanzler-Amt von Österreich, Vienna, 1 May 1926, in ÖStA, AVA, U. Allg. 3258, 12733/1926.
“[s]o let this song, as a monument of German loyalty, strengthen us now!” And, during her petition campaign, she emphasized that every signature would “provide a building block for ‘monument of German loyalty.’” For her, the dual identifications were not in conflict, and she mentioned the German aspect of Kernstock-Haydn until 1925. However, “Be Blessed without End” would become a symbol increasingly associated by political conservatives with Austrianness and used to oppose both the socialists and radical right, which supported symbols associated with Germanness.

Not only did Pibus move easily between the identifications with Austrianness and Germanness, but she also saw the imperial origins of the melody as unproblematic. In suggesting a return to Haydn, Pibus continually stressed that she had no political motivations or affiliations. She frowned upon party politics, and saw “Be Blessed without End” as a way to create unity among Austrians. Furthermore, she argued that Kernstock’s lyrics and Haydn’s melody had gained widespread acceptance. As she noted in a 1925 letter to the federal government, “Numerous enthusiastic letters prove the sympathies of the population,- the new text appears after all to be a masterpiece, which allows the variedness of political feeling to become harmonized in a unified whole. And the old melody,- never legally supplanted by a new one – sounds since then repeatedly in public without any further obstructions.”

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33 Letter from Louise Pibus to mein liebenwerten Volksgenossen, Wieder ein Ruf im Sinne Österreichische Volkshymne (Kernstock-Haydn), May 1923, in ÖStA, AVA, U. Allg. 3258, 12733/1926.
34 In a 1922 letter, Pibus wrote, “Das Schicksal droht uns zu vernichten! Wie lange werden wir dem selbst noch Vorschub leisten durch Parteistreit?” Quoted in Steinbauer, Land der Hymnen, 64-65.
35 See a letter Pibus wrote to one of her financial supporters in 1923, reprinted in Steinbauer, Land der Hymnen, 65-66.
36 Letter from Louise Pibus to the Hohe Regierung der Republik Österreich, Vienna, 1 May 1925, in ÖStA, AVA, U. Allg. 3258, 11096/1925.
might have been valid before it was declared Austria’s anthem; yet, as soon as the Christian-Social cabinet discussed making it an official symbol, it would provoke an uproar.

As they had done in 1922, government officials refused to act upon Pibus’s suggestion. Again in 1923, an official in the Ministry of Education by the name of Kobalt rejected the use of Haydn, saying that the melody was “completely filled with the patriarchal spirit of the empire.” Moreover, he gave a positive evaluation of the Renner-Kienzl anthem, which “is filled by a modern democratic-republican spirit.” He maintained again in 1925 that the circumstances were “not suitable” to institute a new anthem when one was already in place. A year later, however, Kobalt reversed his earlier position about the two songs. Observing that the Renner-Kienzl had failed to catch on with the public, he concluded that “it will not become popular.” He also no longer viewed Haydn’s tune as outdated. “The suggestion to connect the old Haydn melody, a masterpiece of Austrian music, with a text that supports the state’s changed political affairs and to declare it once again as the Austrian national anthem,” he wrote,” would have a lot going for it and would doubtlessly find strong support from the population, which is familiar with the wonderful

37 Quoted in Steinbauer, Land der Hymnen, 68.
39 As Steinbauer notes, Kobalt most likely changed his mind after reading a brief on the topic by the former director of the National Library, Dr. Donabaum. Pibus had gone to see Donabaum, pleading for him to intervene on her behalf with the Ministry of Education. Following this meeting, he wrote a letter to Kobalt in which he identified both the advantages and drawbacks of the Kernstock-Haydn song. He noted that in 1923, President Michael Hainisch was enthusiastic about “Be blessed without end.” Kobalt then corresponded with Vice Chancellor Felix Frank, a member of the Greater German People’s Party (GDVP), who stated that the GDVP would most likely be supportive of Kernstock-Haydn since Germany had declared the same Haydn tune as its official anthem in the summer of 1922. Kobalt also spoke with one of Seipel’s advisors, but worries of a conflict with the socialists prevented any of these parties from acting. Much to his surprise, Kobalt noted that even the socialist Glöckel seemed supportive of the idea of reverting back to Haydn with a new text. Yet, nothing came of these conversations. By the time Pibus met with him in 1926, Kobalt noted that the CSP was in favor of “Be blessed without end,” but that the socialists were strongly against it. With regard to the GDVP, he observed that many would likely want the lyrics of “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles” rather than those of Kernstock if Haydn became the official melody. Steinbauer, Land der Hymnen, 70-73. The original letter can be found in Letter from Hofrat Donabaum to Ministerialrat Kobalt, Vienna, 9 March 1926, in ÖStA, AVA, U. Allg. 3258, 12733/1926.
Haydn melody [...].” Although he approved of the Kernstock-Haydn combination, he remarked that the decision would be up to the parliament and that the chancellor’s office deemed a change in the song for official occasions as unnecessary. Indeed, a final note from the chancellor’s office in the Ministry of Education’s 1926 file concluded, “Because the current time seems not well suited to introducing the new *Volkshymne* suggested by [Pibus], a proactive measure is dismissed for the time being.” That same year, officials also turned down the first request of Karl Vaugoin, the Christian Social Vice-Chancellor and Defense Minister, to institute Kernstock-Haydn as the anthem for the army for similar reasons.

Although Pibus’s efforts did not meet with immediate success, the movement to replace the Renner-Kienzl anthem with Haydn gained momentum. In the same year that Kobalt changed his assessment of the two musical pieces, the *Reichspost*, a newspaper representing the views of the Christian Social Party, published an article which mirrored Kobalt’s opinion. Austria had become “The Land of Songs – Without Songs [*Das Land der Lieder – ohne Lieder*],” according to the 1926 article. This situation was particularly lamentable because, as the article stated, Austria, “which has given more to German music than anyone else, the *Heimat* of countless songs, which has made a path throughout the entire world, possesses no national song today.” Characterizing Renner’s lyrics as “odd” and “naive”, the article explained that only a few specialists related to the de facto anthem. To remedy this problem, the piece took its cue from the “the completely unpolitical idea held by many sides.” In place of this unpopular song, Austria should reinstitute the “immortal Haydn

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41 Steinbauer, *Land der Hymnen*, 75.
anthem.” By returning to the Haydn tune, with a text that would suit the new state, Austrians would once again have a popular “Austrian anthem [Volkshymne].”

Three years later, the Christian Social-controlled cabinet began seriously to consider reinstating Haydn with the lyrics by Kernstock as part of their overhaul of the constitution. To win support for their initiative in the autumn of 1929 and to defend the new anthem after its implementation in December of that year, Catholic conservatives mounted a two-pronged anthem campaign: on the one hand, they attacked the Renner-Kienzl song, and, on the other, they elaborated a detailed argument about why Haydn and Kernstock should be the new anthem of Austria. From the moment the cabinet began to consider changing the anthem to Kernstock-Haydn in October 1929, conservatives cheered the idea of replacing the Renner-Kienzl song. Whereas the 1926 Reichspost article criticized Renner’s lyrics on aesthetic grounds, it changed in 1929 to a politically charged criticism of the text of “German-Austria, Thou Magnificent Land.” In his speech at the December cabinet meeting that led to the anthem change, Defense Minister Vaugoin, critiqued Renner’s poem for having “revolutionary symptoms.” The Wiener Neueste Nachrichten used similar language upon reporting that the cabinet had approved the new anthem. “So will Austria finally be freed from the ‘revolutionary rubbish,’” the paper’s endorsement of the cabinet’s decision read, “which more than any other thing oppressed the Austrian soul, […], and disfigured the Austrian countenance.”

43 Vaugoin (Vizekanzler und Bundesminister für Heereswesen), Beilage K zu Punkt 13 des Ministerratsprotokolle Nr. 603 von 1929, BMfHW, 59.869-Prä. von 1929, 10 December 1929, in ÖStA, AdR, BKA, MRP, Kt. 150.
As the reference to the “Austrian soul” demonstrates, many conservatives began increasingly to speak about “Be Blessed without End” as an authentically Austrian symbol. Although the final version of Kernstock’s poem chosen by the cabinet still kept mentions of “German work” and “German love” and proponents of this song still spoke of the German character of Austrians, the Christian Social Party in particular began to place more emphasis on the specifically Austrian origins and nature of the song. In the eyes of writers at the Reichspost, Haydn was “one of the greatest sons of his land and his tribe, [one] of the most Austrian among Austria’s composers.”45 As the “son” of the Austrian people, his creations became interpreted as an expression of the “Austria’s soul.”46 His composition used as the anthem therefore amounted to an Austrian “Volkshymne,” which “breathes the peaceable nature and mentality of the Austrian Volk.”47 The cabinet’s decision to dispense with the politically suspect Renner-Kienzl song and to reinstate Haydn’s melody, maintained another article in the Reichspost, provided “proof that Austria had once again found itself after a ten-year odyssey.”48 According to this viewpoint, the Austromarxists had led the country astray through their revolutionary tendencies and emphasis on class divisions, and the Christian Socials were now returning Austria to its roots.

The Christian Socials’ focus on Haydn, as opposed to Kernstock, appears related to their attempts to erase the break between what they saw as a glorious past and an unhappy present. Since Vaugoin’s appointment as the republic’s defense minister in 1922, he had steadily reintroduced the imperial symbols and military music that his socialist predecessor

45 “Sei gesegnet ohne Ende!”, Reichspost, 17 October 1929, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, National Hymne 342.228.
46 “Sei gesegnet ohne Ende!”, Reichspost, 17 October 1929, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, National Hymne 342.228.
48 “Sei gesegnet ohne Ende!”, Reichspost, 22 December 1929, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalhymne 342.228.
had abolished. His motion in the cabinet to declare Kernstock-Haydn as Austria’s anthem was thus another move to reinforce connections to Austria’s past and Catholic heritage. In a speech on the anthem made to the gathering of the Margareten branch of the Christian Social Association in February 1930, he explained to his captivated listeners that he had for years been trying to “reawaken the Austrian tradition in our soldiers” as a way to guard against the destructive tendencies of the Austromarxists. “But also in political life and far beyond the army in civilian life, there is no better medicine for a Volk to make progress than tradition,” he continued.49 His statement implied that by honoring and keeping alive Austrian imperial and Catholic traditions, the sociopolitical troubles brought about by war and revolution could be overcome.

These arguments advanced by many Christian Socials supported their broader attempts to create a stronger Austrian identity based on Catholicism and the imperial past. Although they believed that Austrians were members of a larger German nation, they desired to maintain Austria’s sovereignty. The right-wing and Viennese branch of the party opposed an Anschluss due to their fears that their Catholicism and Austrian particularities would be swallowed up by Protestant and Prussian-led Germany.50 From their vantage point, the reinstatement of an allegedly Austrian symbol consequently helped to strengthen the rump state and their position within it. Related to the increasing emphasis on Austrianess was also the turn toward authoritarianism by a number of Christian Social leaders, including Vaugoin and Seipel, in the mid to late 1920s. By this point, these men were questioning

50 For further details on the attempts to create a stronger sense of Austrianness, see Hanns Haas, “Staats- und Landesbewuβtsein in der Ersten Republik,” in Handbuch des politischen Systems Österreichs: Erste Republik, 1918-1933, ed. Emmerich Tálos, et. al. (Vienna: Manzsche Verlags- und Universitätbsbuchhandlung, 1995), 479-481; Suval, The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era, Chapter 12; Steinberg, Austria as Theater and Ideology. However, I disagree with Suval and Steinberg’s contention that there was an Austrian national identity at this time. See Chapter Five of this work for more detail.
parliamentarism and lending their support to the *Heimwehr*, the Austrofascist paramilitary group seeking to overthrow the government.\(^{51}\) The reform of the constitution in 1929, of which the anthem decree was part, was Seipel’s idea and he hoped that it would lead to the “strengthening of the authority of the state.”\(^{52}\) “Austria’s consolidation is not only an economic, but also a psychological problem,” an article in the *Reichspost* asserted. The piece went on to say that the return to Haydn’s melody would help to convince Austrians “not to lose faith in Austria,” thereby preserving the country’s existence. The change in anthem was therefore just as important as economic and political reforms. “Just as the stabilization of our currency brought the fraud of the inflation and, at the same time, the revolutionary era to an end,” the article stated, “so the return of the state to the anthem by Josef Haydn means the leave-taking of the spirit of that awful time. The reform of the constitution has cleansed a wide expanse of the Austrian *Heimat* from this ‘revolutionary rubble.’”\(^{53}\) For this wing of the Christian Social Party, the Haydn melody was to be a symbol of traditional, conservative, Austrian values.

Members of the Social Democratic Party protested the replacement of the socialist-penned Renner-Kienzl collaboration with the Kernstock-Haydn song. They challenged the old-new music on political, not aesthetic, grounds. The change in the lyrics of the old Habsburg melody did not, in their eyes, make the reintroduction of the Haydn tune suitable for the republic. “Haydn’s pretty melody is so connected to the imperial song that it can, at least for Austrians, not at all be detached from [the imperial song …],” an article in the

\(^{52}\) von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 362.
\(^{53}\) “‘Sei gesegnet ohne Ende!’, *Reichspost*, 22 December 1929, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalhymne 342.228.
Moreover, the article contended that the Christian Socials were conscious of the inability for Austrians to disassociate the tune from its imperial origins. The Christian Socials were intentionally trying to ensure that the monarchy lived on even after its collapse:

> [I]n that the ‘federal anthem’ contains the melody of ‘God Preserve the Kaiser,’ they [the Christian Socials] want at the very least to preserve the conscious memory of the monarchy in song. The upholder of all ‘traditions’, Mr. Vaugoin has also made no secret about it: the reintroduction of the ‘God Preserve’-melody has been enacted by the cabinet based on his motion. It is adopted so that the republic can appear to be the continuation of the old state.  

For the Social Democrats, who were the only political party as a whole still defending the democratic system, the anthem change therefore amounted to a provocation.

Additionally, the socialists contested the conservative claim that the new anthem was already a “people’s anthem,” unlike the Renner-Kienzl anthem. The very fact of the melody’s dynastic origins, according to the socialists, meant that it could not be a popular anthem. In an article printed in a socialist publication for soldiers and in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the author provided a history of the melody in the imperial era. “It is therefore a totally pathetic historical lie, if someone argues that the song of Austrian patriotism has come from the *Volk*, from the depths of the *Volk*’s soul, as one would like to make believable,” for the anthem was created at the insistence of the police official Count Saurau in order to create popular support for Emperor Franz II in the war against Napoleon.  

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56 “Vom Kaiserlied 1797 – zur Bundeshymne 1929,” *Auf Vorposten: Schulstunden des Freien Soldaten*, 1 March 1930. An abridged version of the article can also be found in “Gott erhalte ohne Ende...Die Geschichte des Kaiserliedes,” *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 2 March 1930. Both are in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalhymne 342.228.
lyrics by a priest to the imperial melody, the Social Democrats also insisted that the song could never become a meaningful symbol for the population at large. As the Social Democratic mayor of Vienna, Karl Seitz, proclaimed during a meeting of the city council, the anthem was simply “a Christian Social song,” a comment which caused a heated argument among the representatives.\(^{57}\)

There existed another group of proponents of the new anthem who were on the center-right of the political spectrum and therefore found the socialist contentions misguided. The liberal newspaper, the \textit{Neue Freie Presse}, agreed with the socialists of the need to be vigilant of antidemocratic tendencies. “The Social Democrats have every reason,” the article read, “to impede the creeping in of monarchist interpretations and the enlistment of the federal anthem by anti-republican forces for their own use.” However, the \textit{Neue Freie Presse} did not appear to see the use of Haydn with the changed lyrics as inherently incompatible with the republic, especially since Kernstock’s lyrics “correspond to the republic.”\(^{58}\) Even some Christian Socials highlighted the ability of the old melody to be used as a way to win the republic further support. Max Freiherr v. Hussarek-Heinlein, a legal scholar and the last Minister-President of the Austrian half of the Habsburg Monarchy, wrote in January 1930 that he thought it was a mistake that the new republican government had not kept the Haydn melody after the war. He argued that the new Kernstock-Haydn anthem did “not in the slightest [have] an underlying monarchist tendency.” Rather, “the taking over of such traditions is well suited to pioneer feelings for the republic in circles that are rather indifferent to the current form of government.” Like the anonymous “republican” who had


written to the government in 1923, Freiherr von Hussarek-Heinlein insisted that the reinstatement of Haydn was not an attack on the republic, but a way to win the republic new supporters.\textsuperscript{59}

And, once again signaling the importance of transborder connections in these debates about symbols, the various backers of “Be Blessed without End” underlined the fact that the Weimar Republic used the same Haydn melody for its anthem, “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles.” Stemming from this situation, the champions of Kernstock-Haydn made two more arguments in favor of their anthem. First, it was lamentable that another country was using the Austrian “people’s anthem” while it was banished from its birthplace for eleven years. “And so the burlesque became reality,” the \textit{Reichspost} bemoaned, “that the wonderful anthem of the Viennese Haydn, officially banished from Vienna and Austria, returns as the national anthem of a neighboring country […].”\textsuperscript{60} Second, the decision by the Social Democratic president of the Weimar Republic to declare the \textit{Deutschlandlied} as the official anthem in 1922 was proof that Haydn’s tune could be used in the changed, postwar political circumstances. The \textit{Reichspost} seized upon this point, remarking that the Austrian socialists should be aware “that their political comrades in the German Reich enthusiastically foster the singing of the Haydn melody, on whose selection they played a leading role at that time.”\textsuperscript{61}

Moreover, as Leopold Kunschak, a pro-democracy member of the Christian Social Party and the leader of the Christian Social Workers’ Association, pointed out, the socialist Mayor of Vienna Karl Seitz had no problems singing “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,” and thus

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{60} “Sei gesegnet ohne Ende!”, \textit{Reichspost}, 17 October 1929, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, National Hymne 342.228.
\item \textsuperscript{61} “Sei gesegnet ohne Ende!”, \textit{Reichspost}, 22 December 1929, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalhymne 342.228.
\end{itemize}
Haydn, at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Frankfurt Parliament in 1923. The socialist opposition to the reinstatement of Haydn in Austria was therefore groundless, according to conservatives.

The Haydn melody, from the viewpoint of the “Be Blessed without End” supporters, had proved its political flexibility and, consequently, there should be no problems using it for the First Austrian Republic. Referencing the many uses of the British national anthem, the Neues Wiener Tagblatt stated, “A well devised melody has such a large psychological terrain, that the most diverse political ideas can find a place on it. Haydn’s eternal melody has certainly shown the same thing: Between praise for the ‘good Kaiser Franz’ and ‘Deutschland, Deutschland über alles’ there are at least a few differences. Both texts give Haydn’s music luster. And so too will Kernstock’s poem.” Yet, precisely what the article identified as the strength of Haydn’s music would prove to be a great weakness in the political climate of early 1930s Austria. The fact that the lyrics for the imperial anthem, the Deutschlandlied, and now “Be Blessed without End” could be sung to the same Haydn melody only intensified the contest over the anthem, politics and Austrian identity.

“Anthem-Chaos:” Popular Participation in the Contestation of “Be Blessed Without End”

Within a couple weeks of the cabinet’s decision to declare Kernstock-Haydn as Austria’s new anthem, an Austrian newspaperman by the name of Anton Ello wrote to the Austrian Chancellor both to express his concerns about the government’s resolution and to

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propose a new anthem. Upon hearing the music played at official occasions, the warring political groups in Austria would simply choose which set of lyrics to sing and “it would surely often come to alarming political demonstrations that would disturb public peace and order and eventually [come] to clashes between the different parties and groups!” Having raised the possible adverse consequences of the cabinet’s decision, he suggested a new anthem using a composition from Oscar Straus’s operetta “A Waltz Dream” and “Austrian, popular [Volkstümlich], unpolitical” lyrics penned by himself.64 Although the government dismissed his suggestion, Ello foresaw the very issues that would arise with the new anthem.

With the shift to Haydn, a different form of civic engagement emerged. Whereas Ello sent a letter to the government to make his views known, many others would now literally voice (sing) their opinions with regard to the pressing questions related to Austrian politics and identity.

Although Ello and other contemporary observers mentioned the imperial lyrics as a contributing factor to the “anthem-chaos,”65 they would play very little role in the public debate over the anthem. This was perhaps due to the fact that there was little worry about a monarchist restoration in Austria by the 1930s. Rather, the burning political questions of the day related to the conflict between fascist, conservative and socialist groups over what form of government best suited Austria. There was, according to the Neue Freie Presse, only a “small group of supporters of the empire,” who “already declares that they still observe ‘God Preserve’ as their true conviction […]”66 Furthermore, as Steinbauer points out, the

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65 “Hymnenchaos: Der Erlaß Glöckels über die Pflege des ‘Deutschlandliedes’,” Neue Freie Presse, 14 February 1930, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalhymne 342.228.
monarchists “threatened the proponents of the Kernstock anthem with minimal danger and competition,” for there was a “certain ‘spiritual affinity’ between the monarchists and many Christian Socials.” After all, certain Christian Socials viewed the Kernstock-Haydn anthem as a way to bring the imperial past into the republican present. Moreover, the monarchists appear to have found the return to the imperial melody with Kernstock’s lyrics as a satisfactory anthem. The Kaiser’s Loyal People’s Party, for example, raised their voice to protest an alleged lack of deference shown by the socialist mayor of Vienna, Karl Seitz, for “Be Blessed without End.” And, in one of the few references to the imperial anthem being sung in public (for the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Franz Josef’s birthday), the participants not only included monarchist organizations, but also apparently members of the government. Among the singers of “God Preserve, God Protect” at a ceremony in St. Stephen’s Cathedral in Vienna was none other than Johann Schober, the chancellor whose cabinet had implemented the Kernstock-Haydn anthem.

Whereas the imperial anthem had very little public impact due to its remove from the pressing issues of the day, the same could not be said for the third set of lyrics set to Haydn: Hoffmann von Fallersleben’s “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles.” The Deutschlandlied directly related to the fraught issue of Austrian identity after the First World War. Although the Christian Socials had pointed out the common melody between “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,” the Weimar Republic’s anthem, and “Be Blessed with End” in their efforts to legitimize the new Austrian anthem, they appear to have overlooked that this

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67 Steinbauer, Land der Hymnen, 104.
68 Oberst Gustav Wolff (Führer der schwarzgelben Legitimisten), “Nur in Österreich möglich!”, Neues Wiener Journal, 29 January 1930, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalhymne 342.228. Allegedly, Seitz failed to stand and remove his hat when the Kernstock-Haydn anthem was played at a figure skating tournament.
69 Steinbauer claims Schober participated in the singing of the imperial anthem; however, he does not provide citations for this event. Steinbauer, Land der Hymnen, 104. For another description of the singing of Seidl on this occasion (though no mention of Schober is made), see “Der hundertste Geburtstag Kaiser Franz Josefs,” Neue Freie Presse, 18 August 1930, p. 2.
shared tune could provide a basis to challenge them and their newly selected symbol. Now that the Haydn melody was once again back in use as Austria’s official anthem, the option existed to sing “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles” when it was played. Already during the cabinet meeting in which the Kernstock-Haydn combination was declared the official anthem, Franz Slama, a member of the Greater German People’s Party (GDVP) and the justice minister at the time, raised the possibility that members of his party would rather sing Hoffmann von Fallersleben’s lyrics. According to minutes of the meeting, “Minister Dr. Slama regrets that the text used in the German Reich with Haydn’s melody is not declared as the federal anthem [of Austria].”

A number of political groups and individuals agreed with Slama’s opinion and proceeded to make their views on issues ranging from the anthem to an Anschluss known.

The education system, one of the main issues of contention between the political parties throughout the entirety of the republic, was one of the primary sites where the contestation of the anthem and its Christian Social supporters took place. In January 1930, the cabinet passed another resolution making “Be Blessed without End” the “official text of the federal anthem” for the schools. On January 31, the education minister sent a notice to all school

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71 Ministerratsprotokoll Nr. 610, 23 January 1930, “Erklärung der Haydn’schen Hymne zur offiziellen Bundeshymne,” in ÖStA, AdR, BKA, MRP, Kt. 151. The December 1929 resolution, while declaring Kernstock-Haydn to be the official anthem of Austria, only applied to the army at that point. As there was no law or constitutional provision regarding an official anthem, the cabinet simply decreed Kernstock-Haydn as the anthem and made it the responsibility of each minister to implement the anthem with regard to his particular portfolio. In the December meeting, the cabinet agreed to delay its introduction to the school “bis er auf Grund vorzunehmender Verbreitung im Volke entsprechend Eingang gefunden hat.” (Ministerratsprotokoll Nr. 603 vom 13. Dezember 1929, in ÖStA, AdR, BKA, MRP, Kt. 150.) Upon questions from foreign governments about which song to play for Austria after 1929, the government decided to extend its resolution to the school system.
boards, informing them of the government’s decision. The very same day, a group of students at the University of Vienna sang their dissenting opinions loud and clear. An Evening of Song for the Care of the German Folk Song concluded with the playing of the Haydn melody. Instead of singing Kernstock, a number of students sang “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles.” Shortly thereafter, similar incidents occurred, but this time in the presence of the Chancellor Schober, whose cabinet had enacted the new anthem. At ceremonies in Vienna and Graz to confer honorary degrees on Schober, students “who do not stand far from the greater German Lager” again sang Hoffmann von Fallersleben when Haydn was intoned, much to the surprise of the other guests.

Such occurrences continued throughout the remainder of the republic’s life. On the occasion of the thirteenth anniversary of the republic, 1,000 youths attended a Völkisch Rally of the Catholic German Middle School Youth in Graz. About 100 students affiliated with the Nazis caused a disruption of the ceremony when, upon the playing of Kernstock-Haydn, they sang the Deutschlandlied and gave the Hitler-salute. And, in the spring of 1933 in Salzburg, at the beginning of a celebration for the Day of Fostering Music, students from the upper classes sang “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles” upon hearing the Haydn melody. The teachers had to stop the singing and proceeded to forbid the students from singing while

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74 Description of the students at the Viennese ceremony is from “Kernstock oder Hoffmann von Fallersleben?”, Neugkeitenweltblatt, 14 February 1930, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalhymne 342.228. Also see “Das Deutschlandlied – ein Zwischenfall,” Arbeiter-Zeitung, 13 February 1930, in ÖStA, AdR, Parteiarchive, GDVP, Zeitungsausschnitte, Mappe 24a, 02/c.

75 Gestrige Sicherheitswachekommandierungen: 1/48, Frührapport der Abteilung I am 13. November 1931, in Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv (StLA), Zeitgeschichte Sammlung (ZGS), Karton 132, Polizeidirektion Graz: Vorfallenheitsberichte, Versammlungen, Veranstaltungen, 1.6.1931-31.5.1932. The Nazi students were apparently upset that the press had only advertised the “Völkisch rally” as an event held by the Catholic German Middle School Youth, thereby excluding the Nazis.
the anthem was played again.\textsuperscript{76} These incidents demonstrate the active political engagement on the part of Austrian youths, highlighting how widespread the politicization of Austrian society was at the time. Furthermore, they point to the conflicting ideas about what it meant to be Austrian in the interwar period.

For supporters of the Kernstock-Haydn anthem and/or the Christian Socials, the students’ actions were alarming due to their implications for the current government and its project to create a stronger sense of Austrianness. Reporting on the “regrettable” first incident, the \textit{Welt-Blatt} questioned how they could feel “so little connected with the Austrian tribe \textit{[Stamm]} and state.” It further asked, “Must the student body really also place itself in a position that opposes that political direction that seeks to strengthen Austria’s faith in itself?” The students’ decision to sing the \textit{Deutschlandlied} instead of Kernstock had amounted to a display of a lack of loyalty both to the Austrian state and to the Austrian people, and, as such, a threat to the stability of the country.\textsuperscript{77} An article addressing the disruptions of the honorary ceremonies for Schober similarly concluded that the students’ preference for the Hoffmann von Fallersleben was a direct challenge to the government. It was a “demonstration against the chancellor himself,” who was an “embodiment of the Austrian state’s authority.” These students, most likely aligned with the Greater German People’s Party, “do not allow themselves to be led by aesthetic concerns, but only political ones, which do not recognize an Austrian state consciousness \textit{[Staatsbewusstsein]}.\textsuperscript{78}” One individual was so upset by the students’ musical protests that he wrote the government asking that the text of the \textit{Deutschlandlied} be taken out of all schoolbooks and that children be forbidden from singing

\textsuperscript{76} Präsidial-Büro, Salzburg, 13 May 1933, in Salzburger Landesarchiv (SLA), Rehrl-Brief (RehrBr) 1933/1044.
\textsuperscript{78} “Kernstock oder Hoffmann von Fallersleben?”, \textit{Neugigkeitsweltblatt}, 14 February 1930, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalhymne 342.228.
the song. In singing “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,” in other words, the students were seeking to subvert an already fragile state by defying its government and advocating an Anschluss.

Political groups on the right of the political spectrum were not the only ones advocating the singing of “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles.” In addition to criticizing the Christian Socials’ implementation of Kernstock-Haydn, the socialists advocated the singing of Hoffmann von Fallersleben. This tactic on the part of the socialists aimed not only to mount a challenge against their political opponents, but also to express their großdeutsch sentiments. Otto Glöckel – a leading member of the Social Democratic Party, an influential education reformer, and the head of the Viennese school board – retaliated against the cabinet’s anthem measures by releasing his own anthem edict for the Viennese school district ordering “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles” to be sung at school celebrations. In contrast with the earlier socialist claims that the Haydn tune was tainted by its imperial associations, Glöckel maintained that this connection between Haydn and the empire could be broken because “[a]fter more than a decade, the republican form of government has dulled this memory.” The “pretty Austrian melody” could be saved by using it in conjunction with Hoffmann von Fallersleben’s text, which provided “the official expression of the consciousness of unity of the entire German Volk.”

Unlike the right-wing uses of “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,” Glöckel’s use of the song to support a future Anschluss did not entail a complete dismissal of Austrianness.

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79 Letter from Mjr.d,R Raoul von Sziegethy to the Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Graz, 15 November 1931, in ÖStA, AVA, U.Allg. 4943, 36211/1931. The government dismissed the request. Interestingly, however, a letter from the Bundeskanzlerant (Inneres) to the Bundesministerium für Unterricht included in the file stated that it could not be determined whether von Sziegethy was an Austrian citizen.
nor did it seek to undermine the state system. He celebrated the fact that the *Deutschlandlied* was a marriage of the work of an Austrian composer and a German poet. “We have as Austrians and Germans every reason to bring our youth closer to the *Deutschlandlied* with the text by Hoffmann von Fallersleben and the melody by Haydn,” he remarked in the edict. The ordinance also made sure to clarify that “German-Austria, Thou Magnificent Land,” the former de facto republican anthem about Austrian landscapes, would not be replaced by the *Deutschlandlied*. Both would be practiced by Viennese schoolchildren. The decree once again highlighted the important connection that republicans in both Austria and Germany made between großdeutsch nationalism and the support of democracy. In ordering the song to be sung in schools, Glöckel wished to “cultivate the national and republican education of the youth.”

Such a statement was in line with the party program of the socialists, who voiced continued support for a political union in hopes that it would lead to a strengthened, more socialist republic. And, although not mentioned by the ordinance, one can imagine that the fact that fellow socialist Friedrich Ebert’s decree in 1922 to make “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles” the official anthem of Germany played a part in Glöckel’s decision. Considered a song of the radical right before 1922, Ebert was able to convince other republicans to accept it due to its origins as a song supporting a free and democratic Germany.

Hence, while using the song to oppose the Christian Socials and their increasing desire to institute an authoritarian government, the ordinance did not seek to undermine the democratic form of government in Austria.

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82 Bernd Buchner, *Um nationale und republikanische Identität*, 159-167. For primary documents on the topic, see BAB, R1501/116880.
Thus, the crux of the debate about the *Deutschlandlied* in Austria was the question of whether Austrians were looking for a state symbol (“Be Blessed without End) or a national symbol (“Deutschland, Deutschland über alles”). As was the case with the students’ musical demonstrations, Glöckel’s ordinance raised the ire of the proponents of Kernstock-Haydn. In accordance with the Christian Social project of creating a stronger sense of Austrianess, the *Reichspost* argued that the Austrian state needed a *Staatshymne* (state anthem) as opposed to a *Nationalhymne* (national anthem). The paper did not insist that the *Deutschlandlied* should never be sung in Austria. Rather, it maintained that the song was appropriate for “national rallies, which wanted to give expression to the feeling of community and togetherness of all Germans regardless of citizenship.” However, “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles” was not suitable “as a state anthem [*Staatshymne*]” precisely because the boundaries mentioned in the song did not coincide with the current geopolitical situation and would therefore also upset Austria’s eastern neighboring countries. Even the *Neue Freie Presse*, which supported the teaching of the *Deutschlandlied* and was more sympathetic to it, regretted that “the children would themselves be drawn into the party politics controversy.” “[N]othing [could be] more pernicious,” the article lamented, “as when one harms youthful enthusiasm through the conscious pitting of one text against the other one, of the national idea against the Austrian one.”

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83 Steinbauer also uses this terminology to describe the debates about the *Deutschlandlied*. He says, [A]ls ‘National’-Hymne (im Gegesatz zu einer ‘Staats’-Hymne), die die Verbundenheit der Österreicher mit der deutschen Nation ausdrücken sollte, oder sei es bloss als Protest gegen das herrschende System.” Steinbauer, *Land der Hymnen*, 21.

84 “Die Zwei Texte,” *Reichspost*, 19 February 1930, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalhymne 342.228. This view fit with the cabinet’s announcement in late January 1930 that the introduction of Kernstock-Haydn did not mean that the *Deutschlandlied* was forbidden. The cabinet said the song could be used freely at unofficial occasions. See Ministerratsprotokoll Nr. 611, 31 January 1930, “Einführung der neuen Oesterreichischen Bundeshymne,” in ÖStA, AdR, BKA, MRP, Kt. 151.

proponents of a *Staatshymne* and the supporters of a *Nationalhymne* therefore demonstrates the contours of the Austrian identity crisis after the Great War: state and nation were not aligned for Austrians; they were citizens of an independent state, but felt themselves to be members of the German nation.

In addition to voicing one’s opinions through the singing of a particular set of lyrics, others unhappy with “Be Blessed without End” engaged in more traditional forms of protest, such as catcalling. For example, on May 16, 1930, a soccer match was held in Vienna between England and Austria. Before the game began, the English anthem was played without incident. However, the Austrian anthem was intoned only after the match started upon the Austrian president’s late arrival at the stadium. Rather than singing along, the crowd of 50,000 booed and hissed as the melody sounded. Had the spectators jeered the anthem simply because they were aggravated that the song had disrupted the match? Or, had the game’s audience staged a political protest? While the *Neue Freie Presse* was inclined to answer the first question in the affirmative,86 other newspapers interpreted the incident from the vantage point of the increasingly violent political conflicts in Austria. socialist publications insisted that the spectators’ actions amounted to a spontaneous demonstration against the anthem and its supporters. “It was not a Social Democratic affair,” insisted *Das Kleine Blatt*, citing the fact that the socialists had not put on the game. The paper went on to claim, “It was the true voice of the *Volk*, which quivering with rage cried out there as they heard the sounds of that song, with which the Habsburgs sent the nations to their death.”87 Not only did socialist papers attribute the jeering to the audience’s stand against the imperial past, but they also asserted that the incident was a protest against the

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86 “(Pfui!!),” *Neue Freie Presse*, 16 May 1930, p. 8.
federal government’s authoritarian tendencies. According to the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the crowd’s reaction was the “spontaneous outbreak of the *Volk*’s contempt for the song of reaction – fifty-thousand people were enthusiastic!” The paper was especially enthused that the foreigners in attendance could see “how the *Volk* of Vienna think about their [the government’s] reactionary shenanigans.” To support its argument that the booing was a political act, the article pointed out that during the half-time break, the crowd warmly greeted leaders of the Social Democratic Party in attendance and cried out the socialist greeting “*Freundschaft!*”

In the eyes of the socialists’ political opponents, the reaction of the socialist papers was treasonous. Highlighting the increasingly hardened battle lines between the different political camps, the rabidly anti-Marxist *Neues Wiener Journal* remarked that the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*’s coverage of the event showed “that with these subversive [*staatsfeindlich*] Austromarxists in no way can a deal be made.” And, the foreign visitors at the match did not witness a stand for democracy, but the “scandalous excess of the Austromarxists.” Given the socialists’ hostile attitude toward the current government and its choice of a state symbol, “[t]he Austrian Self-Protection Associations [right-wing paramilitary groups] now nonetheless are justified: With these opponents there can be no compromise. They must be pushed down and constrained with an iron fist, subordinated to the common interests of the state!”

The violent and uncompromising language of this article was indicative of a country on the brink of civil war.

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88 These statements are from an *Arbeiter-Zeitung* article reprinted in “Marxisten pfeifen die ‘Volkshymne’ aus,” *Neues Wiener Journal*, 16 May 1930, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalhymne 342.228. Steinbauer also makes mention of this incident and argues that it shows a change in socialist attitudes with regard to the anthem. Whereas earlier in the year, the party had still considered it tabu to dishonor the anthem outright, it now celebrated such public protests. Steinbauer, *Land der Hymnen*, 105.

There is no doubt that the struggle over the anthem was related to the fragmentation of political culture in Austria. Austrians were unable to reach a consensus about the purpose of this symbol: Should it represent the nation or the state? Should it make reference to Austria’s prewar past or should it be firmly rooted in the democratic present? Government officials, political parties, and ordinary citizens all sought to provide answers to these questions. However, as the anthem debate demonstrates, they were unable to find a solution to these problems that would be amenable to a cross-section of the population. Indeed, by the late 1920s, Austrians could not reach any form of compromise over the state symbol, a marked contrast to the flag debate in Germany. The problematic relationship between Austrians and the state itself can in part account for the more divisive nature of the anthem debate. These differences between German and Austrian political cultures will be addressed more fully in the next chapter’s exploration of the attempts to create and stage state holidays.

Chapter 4

Representative Democracy:
Commemorating August 11 in Germany and November 12 in Austria

The attempt to establish and stage holidays to celebrate the infant republics formed another important terrain on which citizens of both countries debated the legitimacy, as well as the Germaness and Austrianness, of the new political systems. Commemorations, as both contemporaries and scholars have indicated, were an important way to create, (re)define, and concretize “imagined communities.” Ideally, commemorations can serve as a means of showcasing unity and consolidating existing power relations. Yet, both contemporary observers and historians have also recognized that commemorations risk becoming occasions that highlight divisiveness and unrest. In a time of immense political and social change, the creation of new state holidays in Germany and Austria therefore had the potential not only to aid in forging a community of loyal republicans, but also to become part of the vitriolic and violent political struggles.

As the case of the Weimar Republic illustrates, the search for a suitable holiday displayed both of these tendencies. During its existence, the Weimar Republic never had a

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legally declared national holiday. According to many scholars, as well as contemporaries, the failure of parliament to pass a law declaring any number of suggested dates as a national holiday – January 18, November 9, May 1, August 11 to just name a few – highlights the extreme fragmentation of Weimar political culture and the inability to find a resonant democratic consensus. Focusing too much on fragmentation, however, obscures the energetic and innovative efforts made to win over the hearts and minds of Germans to the republican cause, an important point made by recent studies. Republicans coalesced around August 11, the date on which Friedrich Ebert crossed out the words “draft of” and appended his signature to the Weimar Constitution in 1919, as the best option for a celebration of the fledgling democracy. Hence, although never legally established, Constitution Day (Verfassungstag), became the de facto state holiday. Reflecting the middle ground occupied by the parties of the Weimar Coalition (the Social Democratic, the liberal German Democratic and the Catholic Centre Parties), republicans of varying stripes shared a desire to create a Volksstaat (people’s state) and a Volksgemeinschaft (national community), as well as to reconcile the two, through the staging of a Volksfest (popular celebration). Government officials and private organizations, while drawing on older traditions, made a concerted effort to stage new forms of commemoration that would forge a democratic and national community of loyal citizens.

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4 For examples of scholars who emphasize fragmentation, see Detlef Lehnert und Klaus Megerle (eds.), Politische Identität und nationale Gedenktage; Detlef Lehnert and Klaus Megerle, “Problems of Identity and Consensus in a Fragmented Society: The Weimar Republic,” 43-59.

5 See Manuela Achilles, “Re-Forming the Reich,” especially Chapter 5, which is on the Constitution Day celebrations. Nadine Rossol has also made a similar argument. Her dissertation, Visualizing the Republic – Unifying the Nation: The Reichskunstwart and the Creation of Republican Representation and Identity in Weimar Germany (Dissertation: University of Limerick, 2006), is not available. The author allowed me to see two chapters in order to get a sense of her work. Also see Bernd Buchner, Um nationale und republikanische Identität; Eric Bryden, “In Search of Founding Fathers”.
In Austria, the situation regarding a legal holiday presented the opposite scenario of what was occurring in Germany. Unlike the Reich Germans, Austrians faced the double task of coming to terms not only with the new political system, but also an entirely new (and often times, unwanted) state. Despite the enormity of this undertaking, the Austrian National Assembly easily passed a law declaring November 12, the day on which German-Austria was proclaimed as a democratic republic in 1918, to be an official holiday. Yet, this lack of debate over the legislative aspect of the holiday was not duplicated in its organization and celebration. As the few scholars who have examined the topic have rightly pointed out, the celebrations on November 12 often mirrored the divisions between the major political “camps” (Lager) – the Social Democratic Party, the Christian Social Party, and the Greater German People’s Party – in Austrian society. Although the three major parties pledged their support of the state with the current form of government, they disagreed at a fundamental level on the meaning of the history of November 12, as well as concepts such as democracy, the republic, freedom, and Austria. With few exceptions, the commemorative activities replicated this political conflict. After 1920, mostly half-hearted festivities organized by the Christian Social-controlled federal government came into sharp, and at time violent, conflict with the socialist celebrations. In contrast to Germany, after the early years of the republic, no attempt was made by the three major parties to create a popular and unified celebration.

Whereas the first two sections of this chapter compare and contrast the Reich German and Austrian efforts (or lack thereof) to legitimize the new republics through

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6 Ernst Hanisch, “Das Fest in der fragmentierten politischen Kultur: Der österreichische Staatsfeiertag während der Ersten Republik”; Ernst Hanisch, “Politische Symbole und Gedächtnisorte”; and Gustav Spann, “Der österreichische Nationalfeiertag.” This dissertation adds a new dimension to work on the holiday by using archival research and looking at celebrations of November 12 in the provinces. It demonstrates that the conflict was not one between “Red Vienna” and the provinces, but a clash between the political right and the Social Democrats throughout Austrian cities and towns. Here I disagree with Ernst Hanisch’s claim that when the workers celebrated themselves, they were only celebrating the Viennese working class. Hanisch, “Das Fest in der fragmentierten politischen Kultur,” 53.
commemoration, the last part of this chapter examines how these separate state holidays again served as an opportunity to discuss and show the connections between citizens on both sides of the border. It should not be surprising that November 12 would lend itself to proclamations of Großdeutschum. After all, in the “Law from November 12, 1918 about the Form of the State and Government of German-Austria,” the article immediately following the proclamation of a democratic republic declared that “German-Austria is a constitutive part of the German republic.”7 However, it was not simply Austrians who utilized the state holiday to stress an Austro-German community; many Reich Germans also used the occasion of August 11 to state their desire for a future Anschluss. As historians Sabine Behrenbeck and Alexander Nützenadel have indicated, “A successfully completed formation of a nation is not a precondition for a national holiday; rather, the events are part of the process by which a nation continually constitutes itself.”8 Although they took the form of two separate “national,” i.e., state, holidays, August 11 and November 12 would serve as another platform for republicans in both countries to highlight the connections between democracy and the idea of a transborder German nation.

**Commemorating Constitution Day in the Weimar Republic**

Initially, the suggestion of August 11 as the date for the Weimar Republic’s commemoration came in response to a 1919 inquiry from the Finnish foreign office regarding the date of Germany’s national holiday. The German foreign minister at the time,

Hermann Müller of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), proposed August 11 as a way to “dispel the doubts arising abroad about the continued existence of the German Reich’s democratic form of government.”\(^9\) While this first consideration of the date largely concerned foreign opinion, subsequent discussions, debates and planning focused on generating domestic support for the new republic through an annual commemoration. Furthermore, backers of Constitution Day aimed (unsuccessfully) to avoid a multitude of problems associated with the other leading dates proposed for a national holiday.\(^10\) May 1 would be unable to generate widespread support for it was directly connected to one social milieu, the labor movement, and was an international celebration ill-suited for a “national” holiday. Constitution Day also avoided the political liability associated with November 9, which conservatives and many members of the middle and lower middle classes viewed as a day of shame and instability. And, unlike January 18 (the date on which the German Reich was founded), August 11 had no association with the monarchical past, and could therefore appeal to committed republicans of all parties.

With the choice of August 11 as the potential holiday for the new republic, the constitution became more than a legal document and took on a symbolic function. Ralf Poscher has argued that constitutions do not usually make for successful symbols because they are “complex, based on compromise and at least in their organizational component strictly rational objects, which are subject to historical change.”\(^11\) Although these challenges, as well as opposition to the new republican form of government, presented obvious obstacles

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9 Auswärtiges Amt, 28 November 1919, Berlin, Nr. A 29570/10370, in BAB, R43I/566, Bl. 34.
10 Good overviews of the proposals and debates regarding statutory holidays can be found in Fritz Schellack, Nationalfeiertage in Deutschland von 1871 bis 1945 (Frankfurt am Main, Bern, New York and Paris: Peter Lang, 1990), chapter 3; and Bernd Buchner, Um nationale und republikanische Identität, chapter 5.
in transforming the constitution into a meaningful symbol, republicans highlighted a few key aspects of the constitution in their endeavor to build political consensus around it. In what can be seen as the attempt to attract liberals, conservatives and skeptics, proponents of August 11 emphasized that the constitution was an instrument of order because it had prevented the complete collapse of Germany, maintained the unity of the Reich, and stemmed the westward spread of Bolshevism. As Heinrich Krone of the Center Party stated after describing the threats that Germany faced in the months following the war, “The worst enemy of the work from Weimar cannot deny that, with our new constitution for the Reich, our Volk has had its state and political life restored.” Along these lines, republicans also stressed the “the national meaning of this constitution for the German future.”

For those citizens who were more likely to support the parties of the Weimar Coalition, republicans held up the constitution as the symbol of freedom for and equality of all Germans, regardless of religion and class. Wilhelm Marx, who twice served as chancellor and was a member of the Center Party, pointed out that the Weimar Constitution guaranteed freedom of religion and for the first time “has given the Catholics here freedom, to which they in many ways had a formal as well as earlier constitutional right, but a right that was time and again limited.” In his role as Minister of the Interior, Carl Severing of the SPD emphasized that the workers could now feel “that this new state is their state,” which would

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13 Copy of Die Rede des badischen Staatspräsidenten Dr. Hummel bei der Reichstagsfeier des Verfassungstag, 1922, in BAB, R1501/116864, Bl. 40-46, here 41.

in turn lead to a “feeling of the bond of fate with all sectors of the population.”\textsuperscript{15} Such statements about equal rights were primarily directed towards Catholics and workers, both of whom had experienced repression during the imperial period.

This anniversary was not simply organized as a celebration of the constitution, but also (and even more so) as a celebration of the \textit{Volk}, understood here in a civic sense as the citizens of the republic. As the German Democratic (DDP) mayor of Hamburg, Carl Petersen, explained in his 1924 Constitution Day speech in the Reichstag, “We chose August 11 as such a day of reflection because this August 11 is connected to the memory of the first formation of a system of German communal life, which the German \textit{Volk}, […][, has created itself.”\textsuperscript{16} In other words, as creator of the constitution (by way of elected representatives), the \textit{Volk} was to be a key motif of this anniversary. The centrality of the \textit{Volk} in the content of Constitution Day celebrations was also due to the fact that as a democracy the constitution declared the \textit{Volk} to be the source of the state’s power. According to Gustav Radbruch, a professor of law at Heidelberg and a member of the SPD, “The serious meaning of such happy celebrations in a democracy is the self-expression and the realization of the \textit{Volk}, which is subject to no one other than itself, of the \textit{Volk}, from which, according to the first article of our constitution, the power of the state emanates.”\textsuperscript{17} The centrality of the \textit{Volk} to the new republic was especially seen in the prevalent use of the concept of the \textit{Volksstaat} (people’s state).

\textsuperscript{15} Quoted in “Feier der Reichsregierung,” \textit{Westfälische Neueste Nachrichten}, 12 August 1929, in AdSD, Nachlass Carl Severing, Abteilung 1, Mappe 15. Marx also discusses the constitution with regard to the creation of a welfare state. Marx, “Ethisches in der Reichsverfassung,” 15. For a general mention of equal rights as an important aspect of the constitution, see „K. Müller/Die Notwendigkeit eines nationalen Feiertages.“ \textit{Die Hilfe}, Früher Naumanns Organ, in seinem Sinne fortgeführt vom Abg. Heile und Fräulein Dr. Bäumer, 5. Sep. 1921, in BAB, R1501/116861, Bl. 120.

\textsuperscript{16} “Ansprache des Herrn Bürgermeister Dr. Petersen bei der Verfassungsfeier im Reichstag am 11. August 1924,” in BAB, R32/527, Bl. 22.

\textsuperscript{17} “Verfassungsrede gehalten von Prof. Dr. Gustav Radbruch bei der Feier der Reichsregierung am 11. August 1928,” in BAB, R32/527, Bl. 72-80, here 74 and rs.
For supporters of the republic, an annual holiday specifically devoted to the new republic provided an invaluable opportunity to educate Germans about the merits of the new state. The German Teachers’ Association, for instance, wrote to the Reich Ministry of the Interior in the early 1920s that it wanted the government to make August 11 into a national holiday. “The implementation of a national holiday is an issue of far-reaching importance,” stated the association’s letter. “Not least of all, the younger generation’s education [Erziehung] in the idea of the Volksstaat requires a visible focus around which all national comrades [Volksgenossen] rally. The avowal to the Reich and to the principles of its constitution necessitates a regularly recurring celebratory form, which can best be created in the shape of a general national holiday.”\footnote{Letter from the Deutscher Lehrerverein to the Ministry of the Interior, Tgb.Nr.2019/22, Berlin, 21 November 1922, in R1501/116861, Bl. 330.} Coming from a teachers’ organization, which could have just as easily advocated the use of civics lessons in school, this letter shows that supporters of the republic attached a special importance to the role of a state holiday in winning over the public to the democratic state.

The creation of a holiday specifically for the republic necessitated, in the eyes of Constitution Day organizers, a form of state commemoration that befitted the now more intimate relationship between state and society. One of the most important figures in developing a suitable holiday was Edwin Redslob, the head of the newly created office of the Reichskunstwart (Federal Art Expert).\footnote{For more on the duties of the Reichskunstwart, see Annegret Heffen, Der Reichskunstwart, Kunstpolitik in den Jahren 1920-1933: Zu den Bemühungen um eine offizielle Reichskunstpolitik in der Weimarer Republik (Essen: Verlag Die Blaue Eule, 1986). Her specific discussion of Constitution Day can be found on pp. 163-172. Also see, Achilles, “Re-Forming the Reich,” 122-139.} While various ministers of the interior dealt with the organizational aspects of August 11, Redslob was in charge of the staging and decorations for the federal government’s celebrations. Furthermore, he was the one federal
government official who consistently dealt with August 11 during the entire Weimar Republic. Redslob had trained as an art historian and served as a museum curator before his appointment in 1920 to this post within the Reich Ministry of the Interior. Although the actual power of the office has been debated by historians, he both theorized about and engaged in a wide array of artistic and cultural activities, ranging from taxes on works of art to the problems faced by traditional handicrafts to the creation of new symbols for the Reich. For the purposes of this chapter, the focus will be on Redslob’s theories regarding the role of commemoration in German society. “A new search for community [Gemeinschaft] in our immediate present,” wrote Redslob for a radio address on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the constitution, “clearly follows from the dissolution of all forms of state brought about by the revolution.”

In his view, commemorations played a key role in this search: “Festivals are the formed experience of the community [Gemeinschaft].”

To create a community of loyal republicans, Redslob proposed to craft a new type of state commemoration that would be radically different – in both content and form – from the commemorations of the Kaiserreich. He criticized these festivities for promoting dynastic particularism over German unity. Imperial Germany “honoured the Prussian crowning of the king [Königskrönung] but not the crowning of the emperor [Kaiserkrönung], just as the Siegesallee portrayed Prussian history emanating from the Mark Brandenburg rather than German history.” Furthermore, not only was the Volk made into a passive audience at these ostentatious festivities, but the Volk and the Gemeinschaft also did not figure as the

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20 Edwin Redslob, Draft of “Die Verfassungsfeier als Ausdruck deutscher Festeskultur,” in BAB, R32/426, Bl. 79-96, here 79. Letter requesting Redslob to give an address is Letter from Funk-Stunde to Redslob, Berlin, 3 August 1929, in BAB, R32/426, Bl. 78. For another copy of Redslob’s essay, see R32/499, Bl. 263-280.
22 [Redslob], draft of “Akademie-Vortrag,” BAB, R32/499, Bl. 331-332.
object of celebration. Instead, “[t]he state celebrations of the last epoch became more and more a conscious display of the power of the state [...].”

Such styles of commemoration, which privileged the state over its citizens, would not suit the new Volksstaat. However, what Redslob referred to as “the movement to a new festival culture” did not entail a complete rejection of pre-existing traditions. In seeking to create a volkstümlich (popular) celebration that would be more in line with democratic politics, he looked back to the popular festivals of the first half of the nineteenth century. This form of commemoration was created by the Volk to celebrate itself and often in opposition to reactionary, particularistic governments. Redslob posited that in imperial Germany a division had developed between Staatsfeste (state celebrations) and Volksfeste (popular celebrations), and his goal was to erase this historical split. One newspaper columnist summed up what he found to be a tedious speech at the Akademie der Künste by Redslob: “A form of celebration must be created, in which both types are unified, thus the state ceremony as popular celebration [die Staatsfeier als Volksfest] [...].”

In order to achieve a popular state celebration, organizers both within and outside of the government stressed the involvement of ordinary citizens in the holiday. Just as citizens were now active participants in the state’s power, they too should play an active role in the celebration of the state. The various sorts of events developed needed to “overcome the sharp division between participant [Mitwirkenden] and onlooker [Zuschauer],” an important aspect of traditional volkstümlich festivals and a sharp difference to the pompous celebrations

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24 [Redslob], draft of “Akademie-Vortrag,” BAB, R32/499, Bl. 332.
of the Wilhelmine period. As Redslob explained in a 1929 radio address entitled, “Constitution Day as the Expression of German Festival Culture”:

For the state, a decisive task arises from this urge for community [Drang nach Gemeinschaft]. One demands from it, that it also have the strength visibly to express its sovereignty. However, one does not demand it out of the feeling of the onlooker, who wants to be satiated through showiness. One demands it out of the feeling of the citizen, who feels himself as a participating member of the whole, and for whom the symbols of the state are therefore the symbols of the community for which he fights and risks his life.

Whereas Redslob aimed primarily to forge a community loyal to the democratic state through the active involvement of individuals, others also made similar proposals in order to teach the individual about his or her role in the nascent republic. Fritz Koch, a leader of Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, argued that the Constitution Day celebration needed to be a Volksfest in which people were more than simply spectators. “The attempt must be made to interest old and young, man and woman to take part themselves to the best of their ability [...],” Koch proposed. “Thereby will all those, who today still stand aside uninterested, become aware and thus be won for us. [...] We will achieve the growing feeling of responsibility of the German citizen and thereby also the self-confident feeling of being a free citizen in a free state.” This push to create participatory celebrations was therefore not only a reflection of the new power relations in the state, but also an instrument to instruct citizens of their new function in politics.

These goals and content, i.e., the fact that the *Volk* was a central object of celebration as well as the active agent of the event, did not simply transform Constitution Day into a *Volksfeiertag*. An obviously important aspect of creating a real *Volksfeier* was getting people to participate in the holiday. The creation of a *volkstümlich* holiday was a process in which every year organizers tweaked the program and created new events in response to previous year’s successes and failures. After all, in 1920, when asked whether the government would decorate with flags for the first anniversary of the constitution, the Reich Ministry of the Interior under Erich Koch-Weser of the DDP, ruled out the idea because “one cannot well hang flags in a time of national humiliation.”\(^{31}\) And, when the government did stage the first Constitution Day festivities in 1921, they were far from being a *Volksfest*. Concerned about provoking opponents of the republic, especially those recently elected to the Reichstag, the government limited celebrations to a ceremony in the State Opera House in Berlin, which included musical performances and a speech about the meaning of the day given by Chancellor Joseph Wirth of the Centre Party. Furthermore, Redslob was told to refrain from decorating the room with the Republic’s controversial colours of black-red-gold. This Constitution Day was, in Redslob’s later estimation, an “academic, cool ceremonial act of the Reich authorities.”\(^ {32}\) Yet, already during the ceremony, Wirth brought up images of Gottfried Keller’s *Green Henry* in expressing his hopes that in the future the *Volksstaat* would be celebrated by the entire *Volk*.\(^ {33}\) And, in the years that followed, the Constitution

\(^{31}\) Auszug aus dem Protokoll der Sitzung des Reichsministeriums vom 3. August 1920, in BAB, R43I/566, Bl. 55.

\(^{32}\) Edwin Redslob, “Die Staatsfeiern der Reichsregierung,” without newspaper title or date, in BAB, R32/499, Bl. 314.

\(^{33}\) Text of Wirth’s speech can be found in, Untitled [about the celebration on 11 August 1921], 1921, in R1501/116861, Bl. 152.
Day festivities would continually come closer to this ideal of a summer *Volksfest* celebrating the democratic state (i.e., at least until 1931).

The mild success of the 1921 celebration and the unexpected outpouring of support for the republic at Walther Rathenau’s state funeral after his assassination by members of the *Deutschvölkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund* convinced the government to start taking measures to turn the *Verfassungstag* into a *Volksfeiertag*. In a letter to the President, Chancellor and ministers from early July 1922, the Reich Minister of the Interior Adolf Köster of the SPD cited these two events when suggesting that the federal government’s main ceremony be moved to the Reichstag “as the real house of the people [*Volkshaus*],” that public events should be created (by the government or private initiative) “so that the population itself also plays a part in the celebration,” that a military reveille should start the day, that a cultural performance organized by the federal, Prussian and Berlin governments should be held in the evening, and, lastly, that the provincial governments should be encouraged to hold similar activities. These recommendations would establish the basic framework for all future Constitution Days, and demonstrate the push beginning in 1922 to actually make the holiday more popular. Celebrations would no longer simply be confined to the administration or to Berlin.

Over the course of the next nine years, the federal government and some provincial governments would continue to come up with specific commemorative practices to spread the appeal of the holiday to all citizens. These included festive and torchlight processions

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34 For more information on the commemorations for Rathenau, see Achilles, “Re-Forming the Reich,” Chapter 4.
35 Copy of a letter from the Minister of the Interior to the President, Chancellor and all ministers, Berlin, 5 July 1922, in BAB, R1501/116864, Bl. 5.
by organizations and clubs, open-air concerts by military and police bands, garden parties, sporting events particularly for the youth, the addition of more evening events in larger spaces in Berlin, publications about the meaning of the day, and competitions to come up with poetical and musical works that would pay tribute to the Volksstaat in a volkstümlich manner. Remarking on the importance of such events for attracting the youth to the republican cause, Reich Interior Minister Rudolf Oeser of the DDP stated, “The meaning of these afternoon and evening events should also especially be that which wakes the interest of the youth in Constitution Day and, through their active participation, powerfully suggests to them the basic idea of the celebration – love and appreciation of the state.”37 Regardless of whatever developments had occurred the previous year, officials during the planning stages of Constitution Day often highlighted “that the joint Constitution Day celebration in this year still needs to be organized differently and above all should develop into a genuine Volksfest” – as a Prussian minister put it when he suggested that more open-air concerts and special activities for children should be held in 1928.38

The government was not the only organizer of celebrations for August 11. Private organizations and sporting and singing clubs also played key roles in participating in government events and orchestrating their own activities. After its founding in 1924, the Reichsbanner became the most significant association in this regard, and, as Koch’s statement above demonstrates, also had the goal of creating a Volksfest for August 11. Choosing one city as the location for its central celebration, the Reichsbanner also staged

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37 Copy of a letter from the Reichsminister des Innern to Sämtliche Landesregierungen, Preussen: das Staatsministerium (alle ubrigen Ministerien), the Reichspräsidenten, the Reichskanzler, the Reichsminister, the Präsidenten des Reichstags, I 4972, Berlin, 7 July 1923, in BAB, R43I/570, Bl. rs. of 153-154.
smaller Constitution Day celebrations throughout Germany. In the first year of its existence alone, the group’s commemorations brought together thousands of people in both major cities and small towns. A sampling of estimated numbers of attendees provides an idea of the extensiveness of this Reichsbanner Constitution Day: 15,000 Reichsbanner members in Weimar; over 1,000 men and women in Münster; thousands of participants in Berlin with 5,000 uniformed Reichsbanner members; “almost the entire population” in Cottbus, Sommerfeld, Guben, Spremberg, Frankfurt an.d. Oder, Schneidemühl, Schwiebus, Prenzlau; over 100,000 people in Hamburg; 15,000 to 20,000 people in Stettin; 35,000-40,000 people in Kiel; 30,000 people in Magdeburg; “the entire population” in Görlitz; 28,000-30,000 people in Breslau; 2,500-3,000 spectators and 600 Reichsbanner members in Brieg; 15,000 people in Rostock; 20,000 people in Hanover; 8,000 people in Goslar; 16,000 people in Cassel; 60,000 people in Nuremberg.\(^{39}\) These Reich-wide celebrations performed an important function in bringing popular Constitution Day events to those provinces such as Bavaria, where the provincial government – conservative and wary of a federal push to centralization – refused to organize official commemorations.

Such commemorations were able to bridge some political, class, religious, gender and generational gaps in their celebrations. With a leadership comprised of members from the Social Democratic, German Democratic and Centre Parties, the Reichsbanner highlighted that it brought together members of all three parties, as well as Catholics, Protestants and Jews. “As in the trench,” Hermann Grossmann stated on the occasion of the Reichsbanner’s 1925 Constitution Day in Berlin, “rich and poor; educated and uneducated; farmer and city

\(^{39}\) For fuller descriptions of the events in these places and others, see “Pressestimmen über die Feier in Weimar,” “Die Verfassungsfeier in Münster,” and “Die Feier in den Bannergauen,” all in Der Fünfte Jahrestag der deutschen Reichsverfassung: Aufmarsch des Reichsbanners Schwarz-Rot-Gold am Verfassungstag 1924, in R431/570, Bl. 275-289.
dweller; Jew, Christian and atheist also stand together in the *Reichsbanner*. Catholic and Protestant, in short a German person next to the other, so that we understand one another and learn to act justly.40 And even though the organization was for veterans, it made energetic efforts to interest the youth and attracted many female participants to their Constitution Day festivities. These initiatives from private organizations to create an inclusive community of republicans demonstrate that the holiday was indeed developing into a *Volksfest*.

The culmination of the search for a popular state holiday was a new event added for the tenth anniversary of the constitution in 1929 and held again during the 1930 holiday: the staging of a mass spectacle in the Berlin stadium.41 The 1929 stadium show, written by Josef von Fielitz and held under the guidance of Redslob, had 3 main motifs: the attempt to build a bridge (which can only be successfully completed by the youth) to represent the unity of the Reich; “the image of a living Reich flag"42 made up of children dressed in black, red and gold; and, finally, sporting competitions and dancing. All in all, 11,500 schoolchildren (under the guidance of their teachers) performed alongside members of the *Deutscher Arbeiter-Sängerbund* (German Workers’ Choral League), an athletic club, and the bands of the police and of the *Reichsbanner* for an audience of about 50,000. The 1930 stadium show, entitled “Germany’s River,” was written by Redslob and performed both in Wiesbaden in July 1930 on the occasion of the liberation of the Rhineland from French troops and in Berlin.

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40 Dr. Hermann Grossmann (Senatspräsident bei dem Kammergericht), “Gerechtigkeit,” in *Festschrift zur Verfassungsfeier 1925, Berlin, 8. und 9. August* (Berlin: Wrenvertrieb des Reichsbanners Schwarz-Rot-Gold, 1925), 24, in AdSD, Nachlass Willy Müller, Abteilung V, Box 8, Fsz. 249. These words of Grossmann were more than just idealistic rhetoric. Unions often participated in the Reichsbanner celebrations, and at the 1926 commemoration in Bonn, a service was not only held at the Ehrenfreidhof, but also at the Jewish cemetery. For Bonn program, see “Programm,” *Verfassungsfeier 1926 des Reichsbanners Schwarz-Rot-Gold Gau Oberrhein in Bonn, 14. u. 15. August 1926*, in AdSD, Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, Exponate 19.

41 Also see Rossol, Performing the Nation in Interwar Germany, Chapters 3 and 4; Swett, “The Reichsverfassungsstag in Berlin, 1929-1932,” 288-291. I disagree with Swett’s argument that these events were failures on the grounds that they did not present a “coherent vision of the Republic, its past and future” (290). When one contextualizes the imagery from these events into the larger republican arguments about nationalism and democracy, I think that the republican idea of what the state should like does emerge.

42 Draft of the Spielfolge, in BAB, R32/430, Bl. 70.
for Constitution Day. The central themes here were the use of children clad in different shades of blue and green to represent Germany’s rivers – the Pregel, the Vistula, the Oder, the Elbe, the Weser, the Spree, the Havel, and the Danube accompanied by symbols of the major cities on each of these rivers – and the need for the Rhine to be freed from the chains of foreign oppression before it could join the rest of the rivers. Once again, thousands of schoolchildren performed for an audience of 50,000 people. Both of these stadium shows included the singing of the national anthem, which according to organizers and the press, enabled those in the bleachers to become participants.43

The turn to mass spectacle by the organizers of Constitution Day was hailed as a great success in creating a truly volkstümlich celebration. As one newspaper headline proclaimed, “Constitution Day – finally a Volksfeiertag!”44 Furthermore, this development in the culture of commemoration did a great deal in achieving its two chief goals: the education of the population, on the one hand, and the portrayal and construction of a republican community, on the other. In a report on the schools’ participation in the 1930 show, the vice president of the provincial school council concluded that like the previous year, the participation of the schoolchildren once again had an “educational benefit.” “In vivid style,” he continued, “they experienced the idea of the Reich’s constitution, which holds Germany together, they experienced the misery of the occupied borderland, otherwise unknown to Central Germany, and the importance of its liberation. Generally they learned to fit into a great whole, and they saw how, despite all opposition, the labor of the many evolved into a gratifying work for all

44 Title of a picture collage from an untitled, undated publication, in BAB, R32/437, Bl. 81.
Indeed, according to Redslob, these mass spectacles accomplished “an exceedingly strong effect” and gave “a large number of Germans the feeling of togetherness and unity on Constitution Day.”

An important aspect of the spread of the holiday and the growing size of its events was the set of new technological developments during the Weimar period. Two technologies in particular, the radio, which was introduced in Germany in 1923, and the creation of microphone and loudspeaker systems made the staging of mass celebrations possible. Redslob showed a great appreciation for the possibilities of these new inventions alongside older ones such as film. The radio broadcast of the Berlin stadium shows to listeners across the Reich allowed them to “have the opportunity [...] to take part in the celebration from afar” according to Redslob. It is important to note that he did not just view the radio audience as listeners, but as participants in these events as well. Furthermore, the stadium spectacles, for instance, would have been impossible if it had not been for the development of loudspeaker systems. The 1929 stadium show was the first time that loudspeakers were used in the Berlin stadium, and Redslob wrote a very appreciative letter to Siemens & Halske thanking them for the technology which allowed “a unity of the celebration to be achieved, as had not yet been achieved for a festival with such great dimensions.”

Although the Nazi state would become infamous for its abilities in staging mass rallies and employing radio and

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46 Thank-you letter from Redslob to Oberspielleiter Josef von Fielitz, Berlin, 16 August 1929, in BAB, R32/503, Bl. 136.
48 Letter from Redslob to the Firma Siemens & Halske, 22 August 1929, in BAB, R32/431, Bl. 53.
film, the turn of the German state to new mass events and media for propagandistic purposes actually happened during the Weimar period.  

In seeking to create a Volksfest for a Volksstaat, August 11 organizers and participants did not just define the term Volk in a civic sense; equally important for the supporters of the republic was a national understanding of the Volk. Nationalism for republicans differed from the racialized, totalizing idea of the Volksgemeinschaft promoted by the right. Rather, they saw nationalism as compatible with democracy, and sought to reconcile the Volksstaat with the Volksgemeinschaft. As a suggested text for a Constitution Day speech published by the government explained, “Unity and Justice and Freedom [Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit] are the three seeds of the German rebirth, are the pillars of German state life, the bands which hold the German national community [Volksgemeinschaft] together.” And in a 1924 speech for Constitution Day, Petersen exclaimed, “There is no other way to national freedom and national strength than that through the German republic!” Socialists too saw an intimate connection between the nation and the republic. “The republic has achieved this,” Interior Minister Carl Severing of the SPD declared on the tenth anniversary of the constitution, “It has saved German

49 Also see Nadine Rossol, Performing the Nation in Interwar Germany.
50 Cultural and/or ethnic ideas of the nation were the most prevalent among republicans.
51 In his book on the “idea of 1914,” Steffen Bruendel argues that German intellectuals grew increasingly divided during the course of the war about what future form Germany should take with the ideas of the “Volksgemeinschaft” and the “Volksstaat” as being the basis of the two opposing camps. Bruendel, Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat: Die ‘Ideen von 1914’ und die Neuordnung Deutschlands im Ersten Weltkrieg (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003).
53 Ansprache des Herrn Bürgermeister Dr. Petersen bei der Verfassungsfeier im Reichstag am 11. August 1924, in BAB, R32/527, Bl. 25 rs.
54 Buchner recognizes this important point and states, “Viel eher als das Bekenntnis zum Sozialismus findet sich in den sozialdemokratischen Stimmen das Bekenntnis zu Nation und Vaterland. Der Verfassungstag wurde zum Anlass genommen, die besondere Verbundenheit der Partei nicht nur zur Republik, sondern auch zum Vaterland zu unterstreichen.” Buchner, Um nationale und republikanische Identität, 343-344, here 343.
territory [Boden] and the German Volk!”

According to this republican line of thinking, democracy was a German value and characteristic and Germanness was democratic at its core. They also emphasized that democracy was a true expression of the national community because the Volk itself had created the state.

Republican national sentiment was not just expressed through words, but also in the stagings of various Constitution Days. To name just a few key examples: Ebert used the 1922 Constitution Day to declare “Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles” as the national anthem of the republic, the 1923 Constitution Day was held under the sign of a Rhine and Ruhr Day, and the 1930 Constitution Day was connected to the liberation of the Rhineland with the performance of “Germany’s River.” While an important motivation in all of these actions was to entice skeptics of the republic to participate by employing motifs that would also be dear to their hearts, it would be wrong to see this as the organizers’ only purpose. These particular events also allowed republicans an opportunity to express their specific version of German nationalism. As one newspaper exclaimed after the performance of “Germany’s River,” “It was an hour of a national experience. Republicans also have national sentiment.”

Despite these successes, Constitution Day simultaneously drew attention to fractures within Weimar political culture due to the opposition of many political groups to the postwar

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55 Quoted in “Feier der Reichsregierung,” Westfälische Neueste Nachrichten, 12 August 1929, in AdSD, Nachlass Carl Severing, Abteilung 1, Mappe 15.
56 Achilles also discusses these two events. Achilles, “Re-Forming the Reich,” 268-270.
57 Fritz Schellack in his impressive study on commemorations in Germany writes off the performance of “Germany’s River” as not benefiting the Constitution Day much. He also contends that the reason for it staging in Berlin was because it could achieve “an overall consensus of all political tendencies.” While he is in correct in his assessment, he ignores the fact that its performance also stemmed from the national sentiment (and chauvinist attitudes towards the French) of republicans. Schellack, Nationalfeiertage in Deutschland von 1871 bis 1945 (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1990).
democratic form of government. On the political right, critics of August 11 decried the attempt to turn the constitution into a national symbol. Members of the German National People’s Party (DNVP) and the Stahlhelm, a right-wing paramilitary organization, argued against the republican notion that the constitution grew out of the Volk. Rather, they maintained that it was a foreign imposition. In an effort to prove their point, they cited Article 178.2 of the Weimar Constitution, which stated that the postwar constitution of Germany could not affect the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. According to their logic, this article demonstrated that the Weimar Constitution was subordinate to the so-called Allied Diktat. Furthermore, as Reichstag Representative Friedrich Everling, a member of the DNVP and later the Nazi party, argued, the republican proposals to make August 11 a “national holiday [Nationalfeiertag]” misused the term “national.” According to Everling, “the content of the constitution contradicts the essence of our nation” and “it does not have the ability to unify, which we must at the very least connect with the concept of the ‘national.’” For the radical right, republican proclamations concerning the relationship between Germanness and democracy fell on deaf ears.

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59 For the notion that these celebrations were emblematic of political fragmentation, see Lehnert and Megerle (eds.), Politische Identität und nationale Gedenktage. In a piece on commemorations of November 9 and August 11 in 1928 and 1929, Friedrike Schubart carefully balances the ability to achieve a limited consensus among socialists and democratic liberals in particular with the inability of the republicans to win over communist and right-wing political opponents. Friedrike Schubart, “Zehn Jahre Weimar – Eine Republik blickt zurück,” in Griff nach der Deutungsmacht, ed. H.A. Winkler, 134-159. Also see Achilles for an interpretation which recognizes both the successes and limitations of the Constitution Day celebrations, “Re-Forming the Reich,” Chapter 5.

60 See arguments made by Reichstag Representative Axel von Freytag-Loringhoven (DNVP) against a 1927 socialist proposal to declare August 11 a national holiday in “Um den Nationalfeiertag. Beratungen im Rechtsausschuss,” Börsen-Zeitung (Berlin), 7 July 1927, in BAB, R72/1160, Bl. 69. See similar remarks from the Stahlhelm in “Gedankliches zur Verfassungsfeier,” Stahlhelm Zeitung (Braunschweig), 11 August 1927, in BAB, R72/1309, Bl. 2.

61 Dr. Friedrich Everling, M.d.R., “Nationalfeiertag? – Nationaltrauertag!”, Der Aufrechte (Berlin), 15 July 1927, in BAB, R72/1160, Bl. 68. Everling also claimed that August 11 was an attempt by the political left to push the date of German Unification (January 18) and Bismarck’s achievements in the background. According to Everling, it was not the republic and Weimar Constitution, but Bismarck’s work that had maintained the unity of the Reich in the fall of 1918.
Right-wing nationalists, as well as Communists, also disparaged the proposition by supporters of democracy that August 11 should be a day of celebration. During a 1927 debate in the Reichstag’s Committee for Legal Affairs concerning proposals to make August 11 a legal holiday, August Creutzburg, a member of the German Communist Party (KPD), remarked that Communists “would regard Constitution Day (Verfassungstag) as a day of mourning (Trauertag)” for “the Weimar Constitution has only secured the rule of the bourgeoisie.” In the same debate, Axel von Freytagh-Loringhoven of the DNVP advanced one aspect of the right-wing argument against Constitution Day: in a time of national humiliation, i.e. while the Treaty of Versailles was still in effect, Germans should not hold festive occasions. Instead the population should hold a national day of mourning on June 28, the day the treaty was signed. Those on the right of the political spectrum also cited the political divisiveness within Germany as a reason for countering legislative proposals concerning August 11. Employing similar language to the republican plans for staging Constitution Day, these opponents of August 11, such as Graf Westarp and Wilhelm Bazille of the DNVP, respectively asserted that “the national holiday must arise out of the heart of the Volk” and that a “national holiday can only be a day about which the entire Volk is

63 See arguments made by Reichstag Representative Axel von Freytagh-Loringhoven (DNVP) against a 1927 socialist proposal to declare August 11 a national holiday in “Um den Nationalfeiertag. Beratungen im Rechtsausschuss,” Börsen-Zeitung (Berlin), 7 July 1927, in BAB, R72/1160, Bl. 69. It should be noted that those falling in line with Stresemann’s less radical German People’s Party (DVP) proposed that January 18 be the new national holiday. For instance, see Prof. Dr. R. Hennig (Düsseldorf), “Sedan-Ersatz,” Tägliche Rundschau (Nationalistisches Blatt der Oberlehrer- und Offizierskreise), 8 August 1922, in BAB, R1501/116864, Bl. 106, and “Nationalfeiertage: Ein Vorwort zu den Verfassungsfeiern am 11. August,” Tägliche Rundschau, 2 August 1922, in BAB, R1501/116861, Bl. 286.
64 A comment by Graf Westarp (DNVP) concerning the 1927 attempt to make August 11 a national holiday. Auszug aus dem Protokoll der Parteiführerbesprechung vom 4. Juli 1927, in BAB, R431/567, Bl. 87. See similar comments in Prof. Dr. R. Hennig (Düsseldorf), “Sedan-Ersatz,” Tägliche Rundschau (Nationalistisches Blatt der Oberlehrer- und Offizierskreise), 8 August 1922, in BAB, R1501/116864, Bl. 106.
convinced that this day means something great in its life." Both concurred that Constitution Day did not fulfill these requirements due to opposition to the republic and political cleavages within the population.

This antagonism towards legislation regarding August 11 was also reflected in the actions of opponents during the planning and celebration of Constitution Day. From storming out of ceremonies to refusing to stage festivities to providing diminished funds for planned commemorations, adversaries of Constitution Day found ways to make their dissatisfaction with the de-facto holiday known. In 1927, for example, soldiers created an uproar when they abruptly left a Constitution Day ceremony in Gießen after the speaker criticized the monarchy. Their actions prompted republicans to decry the “demonstration against the republican political system” by members of the army, who had sworn an oath to protect the democratic constitution. In other cases, organizations opposed to the republic refused from the outset to take part in festivities on August 11. Much to the dismay of Chancellor Wilhelm Marx (Centre), who had hoped to stage a grand apolitical celebration, the Stahlhelm declined an invitation to participate in torchlight parade for the 1927 Constitution Day in Berlin. Members of the DNVP, Nazi Party (NSDAP), and the KPD skipped a 1929 session of the Munich city council because the mayor was giving a speech to commemorate Constitution Day. More consistently, Bavarian authorities, with the exception of the 10-year anniversary of the constitution in 1929, rejected requests by the

65 Letter from Der Staatspräsident von Württemberg (Bazille) to Reichskanzler Dr. Marx, Stuttgart, 21 June 1927, in BAB, R431/567, Bl. 76-77.
66 Copy of a letter from the Der Staatspräsident und Minister des Äussern (Ulrich) to the Reichswehrminister, 17 August 1927, Darmstadt, in BAB, R431/571, 162-164, here 163. Also see Bl. 165-173. The police, as well as other officials in Oberhessen criticized the speech as being too political and unsuited for the occasion of Constitution Day.
67 See relevant documents in BAB, R431/571, Bl. 100-121, 126, 134-136.
68 Letter from the Vertretung der Reichsregierung in München to the Reichskanzlei, Munich, 9 August 1929, in BAB, R707/101, Bl. 32.
Reich Ministry of the Interior to hold annual festivities on August 11. As the Bavarian government explained in 1923, “In Bavaria, one admittedly affirms the constitution, but one does not affirm it happily.” The Bavarian government went on to complain that such a request “transgresses the authority of the Reich government.”

Such demonstrations against Constitution Day, although troublesome for the republic’s attempt to gain legitimacy, rarely devolved into physical conflicts. The relative peacefulness of the de-facto holiday in Germany stands in sharp contrast to the state holiday in Austria, which was plagued by violence. Bazille, the DNVP governor of Württemberg, in part explained why this was the case. “I am naturally of the opinion that one should not infringe upon the views and feelings of others,” stated Bazille. “My demonstration is therefore not directed against the heretofore customary style of the Constitution Day celebration, but simply against the attempt to make this day the legal national holiday of the Germans.”

Even the Stahlhelm, a paramilitary organization aimed at bringing down the democratic form of government, echoed such sentiments. And, as the historian Bernd Buchner has noted, although President Paul von Hindenburg and interior ministers from the DNVP and DVP were not supportive of the republic, none of these politicians attempted to cancel the August 11 events.

Although Constitution Day surmounted these challenges, it could not weather the increasingly violent clashes between political adversaries, growing economic difficulties, and

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69 Bericht über die Sitzung im Reichsministerium des Innern mit den Vertretern des Reichsrats über die Verfassungsfeier am 11. August, Berlin, 14 July 1923, in BAB, R43I/570, Bl. 166 and rs.
71 Letter from Der Staatspräsident von Württemberg (Bazille) to Reichskanzler Dr. Marx, Stuttgart, 21 June 1927, in BAB, R43I/567, Bl. 76-77.
72 “Gedankliches zur Verfassungsfeier,” Stahlhelm Zeitung (Braunschweig), 11 August 1927, in BAB, R72/1309, Bl. 2. Note that their position to not disturb the Constitution Day activities was part of its political savvy strategy to accuse the republicans of denying the group its full rights. It was particularly dismayed that its members could not display the imperial flag.
73 Buchner, Um nationale und republikanische Identität, 334-336.
escalating efforts to dismantle democratic institutions. By 1932, therefore, Constitution Day was no longer a celebration of the Weimar Constitution; rather, it had become a “burial of the republic,” as the historian Bernd Buchner has put it.\footnote{Buchner, \textit{Um nationale und republikanische Identität}, 304.} Although the 1931 Constitution Day activities had to be scaled back due to the effects of the Great Depression and the presidential cabinets, the speaker at the event, Finance Minister Hermann Dietrich (DDP), continued to find inspiration in the constitution while recognizing the immense challenges facing Germany.\footnote{Rede des Reichsministers der Finanzen im Reichstag zur Verfassungsfeier am 11. August 1931, in BAB, R43I/573, Bl. 219-236.} However, a year later, the official Constitution Day speaker, Interior Minister Wilhelm Freiherr von Gayl (DNVP), dismissed the constitution as a divisive force in German national life and advocated changing it. Furthermore, he maintained that Constitution Day had never developed into a \textit{volkstümlich} holiday.\footnote{[Untitled], in BAB, R43I/573, Bl. 284-297.} As Joseph Goebbels sarcastically remarked in a 1932 diary entry, “Last Constitution Day! Let them have a brief bit of joy!”\footnote{Quoted in Buchner, \textit{Um nationale und republikanische Identität}, 304.} And indeed, the 1932 commemoration for the Weimar Constitution was the last. In four months time, Hitler was appointed chancellor, bringing the democratic experiment to an end.

Yet, it is important to recognize that until 1931, the general trend was toward the increasing popularity and success of the holiday. Redslob was not misguided when he exclaimed, “So quickly goes the development; so quickly does the self-evident become generally accepted: the loyalty to one’s own state, even if it has changed from a monarchy to a republic \textit{[Volksstaat]} – or one may already say: precisely because!”\footnote{Redslob, 1. Fassung Aufsatz Dr. R. f. Berl. Tgeblt, 1929, in BAB, R32/426, Bl. 48.} Although it is important not to ignore the difficulties that republicans encountered in garnering support for the republic, one must also disagree with the critiques, such as the one that George Mosse
levels against Constitution Day. “A government based on discussion and compromise,” Mosse argues, “had no real interest in grasping the traditions of a national cult which seemed opposed to rational control of the state.” What such a critique ignores is the concerted efforts that republicans made in trying to achieve a balance between fantasy and rationality. They appealed to the ideas of the Volksgemeinschaft while also trying to inculcate the population with the individual responsibilities of a citizen living in a democratic state.

Considering the controversial founding of the republic, as well as the economic and political turmoil during its lifespan, it is remarkable to see the considerable strides made by the government and private organizations in creating a popular holiday for the republic. As the case of Austria shows, the legal declaration of a national holiday to commemorate the infant republic did not necessarily accomplish the desire to stage a true Volksfest.

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79 George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism & Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (New York: Howard Fertig, 2001 [1975]), 124-125, here 125. One of the fundamental problems with Mosse’s analysis is that for him festivals and the appeal to fantasy are equated with a totalizing impulse that culminates in Nazism. Detlev Peukert saw the lack of a “legitimizing founding ritual” as an obstacle to gaining legitimacy in the eyes of the populace. Furthermore, he contends that the adoption of the constitution “was not an event of symbolic importance that imprinted itself on the minds of contemporaries.” Peukert, *The Weimar Republic, The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, trans. Richard Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), for example, 5-6; 35. Peter Gay’s discussion of the “Vernunftrepublikaner” is also relevant to the argument that republicans lacked fantasy and the ability to create popular symbols for the republic. Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture*, especially Chapter 2.

80 Here, I disagree with Pamela Swett’s conclusion that Constitution Day was a failure. Swett, “The Reichsverfassungstag in Berlin, 1929-1932.” For instance, she criticizes the 1929 spectacle for admitting that “work still needed to be done” in creating a Volksgemeinschaft. She writes, “After ten years of a republican state, this was not a positive analysis of the situation” (288). However, I think she overstates her case in two ways. First, it would have been foolhardy and delusional for republicans to portray the republic as perfect. In constantly citing the hardships facing Germans and their republic, republican organizers and speakers at Constitution Day were able to highlight the progress made by the republic. Second, it is also important to note that the usual normative models of successful holidays and functioning democracies, the United States and France, must be deconstructed. As Gillis points out neither July 4th nor July 14th were immediately established as official holidays and that the celebration of them was also contested in their early stages. Gillis, *Commemorations*, 8-11. Furthermore, it should be noted that Imperial Germany never had an official holiday.
Commemorating November 12 in Austria

On 24 April 1919, a proposal was brought before the Constituent National Assembly regarding holidays. Originating from the Staatskanzlei, then headed by the Social Democratic Karl Renner, it suggested that November 12 and May 1 be declared legal holidays. The next day, the issue came up for discussion in the National Assembly with Representative Adelheid Popp of the SDAP making a short speech in favor of the two dates. While she felt the need to make a case for May 1 due to its party-specific nature, she indicated that November 12 was a more clear-cut case. “There is not much to say about how important, how beautiful and noble it is to consecrate the inception of the republic with a holiday,” Popp stated. “I believe I find myself in agreement with the house when I express the conviction that we also give expression to the needs, wishes, and ideals of the broadest sectors of society by proclaiming November 12 as a state holiday.” With no further comment, the representatives approved both dates.

This initial acceptance would not be without problems in the future. It reflected the political situation of the early years of the republic, when the Social Democrats, Christian Socials and Greater Germans worked together as a coalition government until 1920. Increasingly, the different political parties would disagree about the past events leading to the declaration of the republic, the present state of the country, and the future path Austria should take. The consensus achieved in April 1919 regarding the holiday would become the exception rather than the rule in the future yearly commemorations. Whereas republicans in Germany had not chosen November 9 so as to avoid conflicting sentiments about the meaning of that day, the various political parties in Austria would engage in a hostile dispute.

over what had actually happened in the autumn of 1918. Although the Constituent National Assembly’s “Announcement to the Austrian Volk” from November 12, 1918 had declared that “burgher, farmer and worker have united in order to found the new German-Austria,” the major political parties began to put forth differing interpretations of the republic’s creation. As the conflicting narratives of the republic’s founding demonstrate, the adherents of the three major parties were unable to create a common collective memory that transcended the social and political divisions within Austria.

Relying on Marxist language and ideas of class struggle, the socialists insisted that workers alone had created the republic. As Ferdinand Hanusch, an SDAP representative to the Nationalrat and a central figure in implementing social reforms after the war, pronounced before a like-minded crowd in Graz during the 1922 celebrations, “[...] it is shameful that neither the bourgeoisie nor the landowners were involved with the founding of the republic. They have left it solely to the working class.” The Social Democrats did not simply take pride in their role as founders of the new state; they also viewed the actions of the working class as amounting to a revolution which freed subjects of the empire from Habsburg oppression. Situating the events of 1918 into the longer struggles of Social Democracy, Otto Bauer explained on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the republic, “In the revolution of 1918, Social Democracy finally chased away the emperor, dissolved the House of Lords and the provincial legislatures and municipal councils elected on the basis of privileged voting rights, and enforced the democratic republic against the resistance of the still monarchist

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82 The announcement was read by then Staatskanzler Karl Renner of the SDAP to no objections. 3. Sitzung der Provisorischen Nationalversammlung für Deutschösterreich am 12. November 1918, p. 69.
Hence, in the socialist narrative, November 12 was, despite the terrible material deprivation of the time, a positive event worthy of celebration.

Politically conservative Catholics took issue with this socialist interpretation of November 12. An article in the *Reichspost*, the unofficial newspaper of the Christian Social Party, summed up various aspects of this viewpoint on the 1925 anniversary. It deserves to be quoted at length:

> The new Austria still has no state holiday which would be, in a positive sense, a heartfelt affair of the entire Volk. An accidental historical date cannot mean more for the general feeling than Kienzl’s well-intentioned national anthem for which Dr. Renner has written his peculiar text. No great longing of the Austrian Volk, no national dream, no high political goal was realized on November 12, 1918. Also not for the Social Democrats. Such big words they also found afterward – they supported the old empire’s right to exist until the last months before the collapse and also did not miss giving personal declarations of loyalty to the monarch. The Austria of November 12 was for no one a constructive work, for no one a victory of positive energies. Rather, it was only the result of an insane destructive work in which we have played the smallest part. The Republic of Austria was not created back then. Rather, it is left over [über blieben]. The chapter of world history, which in those days rolled over us, was neither honorable nor carried by a great idea nor in any other way uplifting.\(^8^5\)

For many Christian Socials, no revolution, socialist or otherwise, had taken place in November 1918. Supporters of the Christian Socials often highlighted the fact that the workers did not overthrow the imperial state; rather, the socialists had maintained their support of the monarchy until its final days. Moreover, many politically active Catholics repeatedly denied that the Austrian people, from any social background, played a role in the

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creation of the new state. The Austrian republic was “left over.” In other words, the country was the outcome of the collapse, not the overthrow, of the Habsburg monarchy. Or, in another interpretation that again denied the agency of the Austrians in the founding of the state, conservatives suggested that the rump state was the sole doing of the Allies. On the occasion of the third anniversary of the republic, another Reichspost article argued that “the harsh will of merciless victors formed” the new state.86

The Greater German People’s Party (GDVP) advanced its own version of events that fell in between the SDAP’s and CSP’s interpretations. Like the Christian Socials, the supporters of the GDVP argued that the SDAP was not the decisive factor in the political change that occurred on November 12, 1918. Furthermore, the Greater Germans agreed with the Christian Socials that a revolution did not occur; however, from this point forward, their two interpretations often differed. Members of this disparate political group argued that by the autumn of 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was coming to an end regardless of the actions of the population. In fact, these opponents of the monarchy maintained that the imperial state collapsed due to the strains of the war, the authorities’ loss of power and legitimacy, as well as the population’s indifference towards the Habsburgs. “Above all and in the first instance,” an article in the Greater German oriented Wiener Neueste Nachrichten stated on the 1927 anniversary, the rule of the Habsburgs “had died in the feelings of the broad masses of the Volk already before the resolution of the Provisional German-Austrian

86 “Liebe des freien Mannes (Zum dritten Jahrestag der Republik),” Reichspost, 12 November 1921, in ÖStA, AdR, Parteiarchive, GDVP, Zeitungsausschnitte, Mappe 24a 0/c. Also see “Zum Staatfeiertag,” Reichspost, 11 November 1921, in ÖStA, AdR, Parteiarchive, GDVP, Zeitungsausschnitte, Mappe 24a 0/c.
National Assembly.” The article continued that no revolution had occurred because there was no authority left to revolt against.\(^{87}\)

Greater Germans did not refute Austrians’ role in the formation of the new republic. Decrying the “Marxist-party political falsification of history,” the same article emphasized that all sectors of Austrian society – the Bürgertum, farmers and workers alike – had participated in the establishment of the republic.\(^{88}\) The Greater Germans even went so far as to assert, “The decisive national circles were also the ones, who in the days of the collapse of 1918, long before the Social Democrats, carried the idea of the republic in the Viennese population,” for a democratic state was the only way to achieve their desired Anschluss after the events of November 9 in Germany.\(^{89}\) And, as fervent supporters of an Anschluss, some members of the GDVP looked back at the declarations of November 12, 1918 as the realization of Greater German hopes, although others highlighted the hardships of that period and the eventual Allied prohibition of a political union.

The disputes over the founding of the republic reflected a fundamental disagreement among, and even within, the parties regarding the meaning and practice of democracy, as well as the custodianship of the republic.\(^{90}\) Members of opposing political parties traded


\(^{88}\) “Der Tag der Republik,” *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten*, 12 November 1927, in ÖStA, AdR, Parteiarchive, GDVP, Zeitungsausschnitte, Mappe 24a 02/P. Similar claims can be found in Dr. Franz Dinghofer, “Zum 12. November,” *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten*, 12 November 1925, in ÖStA, AdR, PrK 7809/1925; “Nationalfeiertag, Wiener Neueste Nachrichten, 12 November 1926, in ÖStA, AdR, Parteiarchive, GDVP, Zeitungsausschnitte, Mappe 1 0/P. In his role as one of three presidents of the Constituent National Assembly and a founder of a party which would become the GDVP, Dinghofer emphasizes the important role that the events in Germany had on developments and Austria, and points to the central role that the representatives of all parties had in creating the republic.

\(^{89}\) Viktor Lischka, “So kam die Republik...”, *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten*, 11 November 1928, in ÖStA, AdR, Parteiarchive, GDVP, Zeitungsausschnitte, Mappe 24a, 02/P.

\(^{90}\) Helmut Rumpler, “Parlamentarismus und Demokratieverständnis in Österreich, 1918-1933,” in *Das Parteiwesen Österreichs und Ungarns in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, ed. Anna M. Drabek, Richard G. Plaschka and
accusations about who could be labeled the supporters and enemies of the republic, highlighting the us-versus-them mentality among the Lager. 91 Whereas the discursive terms and symbols for Constitution Day in Germany possessed a flexibility that enabled the three centrist parties to map their own political definitions on these terms and still find common ground, discussions about the republic and democracy on November 12 furthered the fragmentation of Austrian political culture. The ability of the ideas of the republic and democracy to be filled with different meanings did not, in the Austrian case, enable a consensus to be established among the various parties. With the republic at the center of the November 12 commemorations, the annual Austrian holiday therefore reinforced divisions within society, especially among the followers of the two largest parties: the SDAP and the CSP.

Among the major parties, the socialists presented the most consistent message due to the highly organized nature of the party and relatively homogenous party base. At the November 12 celebrations, socialists often talked about “our republic,” with the possessive article referring to the workers and not to Austrians. For a party which had not held power at the federal level since 1920, this assertion that the republic belonged to the proletariat was predicated in part on the achievements of the revolutionary period. As the self-anointed founders of the republic, socialists highlighted how their overthrow of the Habsburgs led to political equality and freedoms for workers, who had heretofore been suppressed by a violent monarchy and a political system based on privileges. In addition to the democratization of the government, workers benefited from a series of social reforms enacted by the SDAP


91 Hanisch points out that the fear of the “Other” became an obsession during the First Republic. Hanisch, “Das Fest in der fragmentierten politischen Kultur,” 44.
while it was still part of the governing coalition: the eight-hour work day, unemployment
insurance, and vacation time. “It is our republic! The republic of the workers,” the Arbeiter-
Zeitung proclaimed on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of the republic. “Because we,
the working Volk of city and town, we have created it, we have built it, we have defended it
against economic crisis and political danger. It is our republic! Because the republic has
given the disenfranchised working Volk political freedom and equality and truly no small
measure of social rights and social protection.”92

Socialists advanced their claims to the republic based not only on their role as the
republic’s creators, but also as its sole defenders. They repeated the refrain that they would
“do one’s utmost to defend the new democratic state form against all plans of the reaction.”93

From their point of view, an array of domestic and foreign threats endangered the republic,
democratic practices, and consequently the political and social advancements made by and
for the working class. Viewing the contemporary political situation through a Marxist lens,
socialists lamented that “our republic also had to become a bourgeois republic.” The crux of
the problem was that “[...] the bourgeois republic is in this country an internal contradiction
because our bourgeoisie are not republican.”94 A number of dangers arose from this situation
according to supporters of the SDAP: the threat of a monarchist restoration, attempts to
reform the constitution in order to create an authoritarian government, the plots of right-wing
paramilitary groups to overthrow the republic with the help of Mussolini and Horthy, the

94 “Der Tag der Republik,” Arbeiter-Zeitung, 12 November 1920, p. 1. Such accusations were already being
made in 1919 when the socialists were still in a coalition with the so-called bourgeois parties. For example, see
increased power of the Church in political affairs, and the country’s submission to international capitalism and domestic stock market barons and landowners.95

Precisely due to the cooptation of the republic by reactionary forces, the socialists argued that the republic was not the final goal sought by the working classes. Rather, the republic was a step towards achieving socialism. As a 1923 article in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* proclaimed, the republic was “still not the emancipation itself, but is the way to emancipation, the terrain of emancipation.”96 Yet, in socialist rhetoric, the republic was not simply the basis for emancipation, but also an important site where the class struggle outlined by Marx was taking place and could finally be won by the workers. “The republic has given us power to constrain the class rule of the bourgeoisie,” an article from 1932 in the bulletin for the SDAP in Styria explained. “That’s why we celebrate this republic as the effective instrument of class struggle, as the barricade that we have erected against the boundless class rule of the bourgeoisie, as the barricade on which we protect ourselves and over which we will rush forward to new victories!” The article concluded by saying that the SDAP would march and demonstrate “For our republic! For the socialist republic!” on November 12.97

Although in policy and practice the Social Democrats pursued a reformist agenda, they primarily used fiery and uncompromising Marxist rhetoric.98 Their discursive attempts to

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95 These accusations are made repeatedly in socialist newspapers on November 12 during the course of the republic. I have specifically consulted the *Arbeiter-Zeitung, Arbeiterwille* (Graz), and the *Salzburger Wacht*. The socialist concern about monarchist restoration was strongest before 1927. After the Justice Palace incident in July 1927, the socialists became more worried about the threat posed by fascism. From 1927 onwards, the socialists linked the bourgeois government to fascism. A very good example of these views can be found in “Gegen den Fascismus! Für die Republik des arbeitenden Volkes!,” *Der Abend*, 11 November 1927, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalfeiertag (12 November).


97 “Durch die Republik zum Sozialismus empor!”, Mitteilungsblatt der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Steiermarks, November 1932, Nr. 11, page 1, in StLA, ZGS, Karton 204, Verschiedenes: Kommunistische Partei.

98 There is widespread agreement among historians of Austria that the SDAP used radical rhetoric to maintain party unity. Although the party spoke of revolution, its leadership abhorred violence and pursued reformist policies. However, their rhetoric had a negative impact on Austrian society as a whole as it provided the
claim the republic for the workers and socialism created real fear among the middle classes
and farmers, who were terrified that the Bolshevik Revolution would be repeated in Austria.
Their doctrinaire words thereby contributed to the dysfunction of the Austrian republic.99

Members of the Christian Social Party vociferously disputed the socialists’ contention
about who were the supporters and the adversaries of the republic. Speaking material
distributed by the General Secretariat of the Christian Social Federal Executive Committee
for the tenth anniversary of the republic refuted the socialist accusation that the CSP “is an
opponent of the republic.”100 As the pamphlet explained, simply using the “the word
democracy” did not give one “a right to become called the defender of democracy.” Only
those “who through their work prove that they think, feel and also thereafter behave
democratic” could be considered to be the supporters of democracy.101 It was the Christian
Socials, the piece continued, who “[…] over nine years in this decade were represented in the
government of the republic and have carried the difficult burden of work and responsibility
[…].”102 Having listed the accomplishments of the party and its leader Ignaz Seipel, the
party’s executive committee argued “that the threat to democracy comes from those who

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99 There is widespread agreement among historians of Austria that the SDAP used radical rhetoric to maintain
party unity. Although the party spoke of revolution, its leadership abhorred violence and pursued reformist
policies. However, their rhetoric had a negative impact as it provided the political right with evidence that the
SDAP was a radical and threatening political force. Hence, while numerous historians agree that the Heimwehr
and their Christian Social supporters are primarily responsible for the collapse of the republic, a number of them
also point to the SDAP’s role in increasing the tensions between the political camps. For a sampling of the
scholarly literature, see Leser, “Austria between the Wars”; Kitchen, The Coming of Austrian Fascism, Chapter
1; Melanie A. Sully, “Social Democracy and the Political Culture of the First Republic,” Peter Loewenberg,

100 Generalsekretariat der christlichsozialen Bundesparteileitung, “Rednermaterial: Die Arbeit der
christlichsozialen Partei in der Republik,” p. 3 in SLA, Rehrl Politica (RehrLP), 1929/0006.

101 Ibid., p. 4.

102 Ibid., p. 1.
always pretend to be the best democrats and the best republicans, from the Social Democrats, who as recently as two years ago at their party congress have declared their strange democratic-republican belief that democracy and the republic are for them actually just the transitional stage to social dictatorship.” The Christian Socials therefore reversed the argument made by the socialists. Portraying themselves as the ones seeking to stabilize and save the republic, they used the socialists’ rhetoric of class warfare in an effort to prove that the socialists sought to supplant democracy with Bolshevism.

Yet, the Christian Social references to democracy did not entail straightforward definitions revolving around the ideas of “government by the people, for the people” or equality. Although Christian Social attitudes towards the republic were divergent and changed over time, Christian Socials collectively and repeatedly infused their idea of democracy with a Catholic worldview. “In the Volksstaat, the rigid structure of the disintegrated authoritarian state [Obrigkeitsstaat] is doubly supplanted by the Volk’s sense of duty [Pflichtbewußtsein]. Materialism and socialism cannot offer the foundations. They do not have a lasting conception of the state [Staatsidee]. Their dogmas lead to chaos, their statesmanship brandishes ideological terror instead of the police baton,” an article on the third anniversary or the republic explained. “Only Christian solidarity of the Volk forms the

103 Ibid., p. 4. This statement refers to the 1926 Linz Party Program of the SDAP, which stated that a dictatorship of the working class would be needed in order to secure, not replace, democracy. As Melanie Sully explains, ”At Linz, the party inserted the unfortunate reference to a dictatorship into its program. It came out of the assumption that the party would come to power with the backing of the country but right-wing forces would proceed to mount a counterrevolution and the workers would then be forced to retaliate with a dictatorship, which would be necessary not to subvert democracy but to protect it from reactionary enemies. Thus dictatorship was not envisaged as the means for a dramatic seizure of power but as a last resort to defend a position which had been democratically won.” Such a stance was problematic for the radical rhetoric provided further evidence for those on the right that the SDAP was really trying to implement Bolshevism in Austria. Indeed, as Sully points out, “the right fully exploited [the reference] in order to gain financial support from industry for their efforts to stamp out the ‘reds.’” Sully, “Social Democracy and the Political Culture of the First Republic,” 62.
sole basis for the *Volksstaat*.\textsuperscript{104} As with the socialists, the Christian Socials assumed a polarizing stance about not only which Austrians could lay claim to the republic, but also which values should underpin it. In seeing Catholicism as the basis for democracy and demanding a role for the Catholic Church in public life, the Christian Socials devised an understanding of democratic values and practices which would be unacceptable to the socialists and the German nationalist camp.

The desire to link Catholicism and the republic gave way to more troubling presuppositions about how democracy should function in Austria. During his two-year break from being chancellor of the republic, Ignaz Seipel proclaimed during the 1925 anniversary of the founding of the republic that “no state – may it be a monarchy or republic, old or young, big or small – can exist without God. Because we Catholics know this, we expressly declare our belief that in our state as well there can be no authority except for that which comes from God.”\textsuperscript{105} Repeatedly, members of the party and the Catholic Church used the republic’s celebration to assert an idea that stood in direct opposition both to the declaration of the republic – “German-Austria is a democratic republic, all public authorities are to be conferred by the *Volk*” – and to the first article of the constitution – “Austria is a democratic republic. Its laws proceed from the people.”\textsuperscript{106} Indeed, by the late 1920s, Seipel had reversed his earlier (although reluctant) backing of a democratic form of government and

\textsuperscript{105} “Am Grabe des Landespatrons: Eine hochbedeutsame Predigt Dr. Seipels,” *Reichspost*, 13 November 1925, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{106} Hanisch, “Das Fest in der fragmentierten politischen Kultur,” 50. See Alfred Diamant, *Austrian Catholics and the First Republic*, for the full range of attitudes towards democracy among the CSP and the Catholic Church.
came increasingly to speak of “true democracy,” which in reality amounted to authoritarianism, corporatism and support for the *Heimwehr*.\(^{107}\)

Additionally, Christian Social claims to the republic did not simply create a deeper divide between the republic’s two major political parties and alienate the majority of the working classes who voted for the socialists. Since the party’s founding, antisemitism had served as major plank in the party’s platform and it continued to do so after the Great War. Whereas some members, such as Ignaz Seipel, were “moderate antisemites,” others combined older forms of religious antisemitism with new racial ideas, leading to radical proposals about how to deal with the Jewish population of Austria.\(^{108}\) Anton Jerzabek, a member of the Christian Social Party and the leader of the League of Anti-Semites, used the occasion of the first anniversary of the republic to proclaim to loud applause, “If we are missing something in the Republic of Austria, it is democracy. So long as the Jewish domination lasts, we must fight for the equality of Christians until the day comes when we can say: We are free from the yoke!”\(^{109}\) In this case, freedom was equated with freedom from Jews. Indeed, some Christian Socials went so far as to advocate segregating Jews from Christian society and reducing Jews to second-class citizens. Among this group were individuals such as Jerzabek and Leopold Kunschak, the leader of the Christian Social Workers’ Association. Kunschak’s rabid antisemitism, which he persisted to voice even after the Second World War, is particularly significant because he was the leader of the CSP’s pro-democracy wing, disagreeing with Seipel’s alliance with the *Heimwehr* and seeking to work

\(^{107}\) For more on Seipel’s ideas, see von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, especially Chapters 4-7; Diamant, *Austrian Catholics and the First Republic*, especially 106-116; Diamant, “Austrian Catholics and the First Republic, 1918-1934”; Steiner, *Wahre Demokratie*.

\(^{108}\) For the varieties of Catholic antisemitism in interwar Austria, see Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), Chapter 11.

with the SDAP in the republic’s final phase. Hence, while willing to see equal rights for all workers regardless of their political allegiances, his notion of democracy and freedom did not extend to Austrian Jews.  

Both reflecting and heightening the irreconcilable understandings of the founding of the republic and the function of democracy were the actual festivities organized for the holiday. In contrast to Germany, there was no central government office in Austria tasked with organizing state celebrations for the November 12 anniversary. Rather, the task of orchestrating various activities came from different ministries. The federal government under the control of the Christian Socials, however, made very little effort to create the type of popular republican holiday envisioned and staged by Redslob. Indeed, the celebration of the republic’s founding was primarily the domain of the political parties, a factor which contributed to the divisiveness of the holiday and an increasing level of violence during the annual commemoration.

Already in 1919, certain patterns of celebration developed that would continue throughout the republic. From the first anniversary of the republic, the SDAP began to organize party assemblies, marches, torchlight parades, sporting events, concerts, activities for the youth, and plays with inexpensive tickets in Austria’s urban centers. At the rallies and marches, fiery speeches and placards were filled with the type of rhetoric detailed above: claims that the republic belonged to the workers and invective denouncing those deemed to be reactionary, monarchist, fascist, bourgeois, and/or clerical. Working-class men, women and children turned out in large numbers to the November 12 rallies and marches. At

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gatherings held in each Viennese district, as well as in cities throughout the country, they sang a host of songs that were symbols of previous revolutions and international socialism. The most popular were the *Lied der Arbeit*, the anthem of Austrian social democracy that was first used by the working-class organization in the late 1860s, the *Marseillaise* and Hölderlin’s *Hymne an der Arbeit*, both celebrating the French Revolution, and the Internationale. They carried the international symbol of socialism, red flags, and wore red armbands and red carnations, a symbol of the socialist movement in Austria since the late nineteenth century. The fact that the symbols of the republic – the Renner-Kienzl anthem before 1929 and the red-white-red flag – were largely missing from the socialist festivities is indicative of the socialists’ narrow understanding of the republic as the domain of the workers.\(^{111}\) For parades, organizations and groups associated with the Social Democratic Party – ranging from various unions to workers’ gymnastic organizations to the *Republikanische Schutzbund* to shoemakers to bookbinders to postal employees to socialist women to the Red Falcons – marched in the hundreds, thousands, and even tens of thousands.\(^{112}\)

Indeed, the socialists quickly came to dominate the celebration of November 12. While they filled the streets of cities like Vienna, Graz, Salzburg and Linz, the other sectors of Austrian society tended to stay at home, an observation which only confirmed the socialist argument that the bourgeoisie was seeking to undermine the republic. “How cool, how foreign, how hostile it [the bourgeoisie] faces the republic,” the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* pointedly

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\(^{111}\) As Hanisch has indicated in his piece on the holiday, “Der ‘Transfer des Sakralen’ auf die Republik, auf einen gemeinsamen Verfassungspatriotismus mißglückte.” According to Hanisch, the socialists sacralized their party and the proletariat, while the Catholics politicized the sacred. Hanisch, “Das Fest in einer fragmentierten politischen Kultur,” 50.

\(^{112}\) This description is based on issues of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the *Arbeiterwille* (the Social Democratic paper in Graz), and the *Salzburger Wacht* in the days following the November 12 celebrations from 1919-1933.
stated on the second anniversary of the republic, “never shows more clearly than on the legal state holiday of the republic; it does not celebrate the republic. For [the bourgeoisie], the republican November 12 is no less foreign than the proletarian first of May.” For the Social Democrats, November 12 amounted to a visual manifestation of the anti-republican attitudes of the CSP, GDVP, and more generally the bourgeoisie. With the exception of the tenth anniversary of the republic, members of the SDAP emphasized that only the workers turned out for the republic’s annual commemoration; the bourgeoisie was conspicuously absent. November 12 therefore became a way for the socialists to denounce their political opponents while demonstrating their own loyalty to the republic and the strength of the working class in Austria. Upon reporting that over 20,000 workers had marched through the streets of Linz for the third anniversary of the republic, the Arbeiter-Zeitung concluded that the “demonstration celebration” was a warning to the bourgeoisie to keep its hands away from the workers’ republic because it showed that “Linz is red and remains red, and this red Linz is determined to defend its cause, the socialist cause, until the last man, until the last drop of blood!” The state holiday, for the SDAP, had become another May 1, i.e., another working-class holiday, a point which socialist newspapers repeatedly pointed out.

The Social Democrats’ opponents had an explanation as to why much of the population did not turn out to celebrate the republic. According to a 1919 article in the Tagespost, a newspaper out of Graz aligned with the German-nationalist point of view, “The first anniversary of the proclamation of the republic yesterday became almost exclusively a

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115 For example, see “Linz. 12. November,” Arbeiter-Zeitung, 14 November 1921, p. 2. Also of note is that the postwar Austrian socialist party continues to commemorate November 12. At the 2006 holiday, there was a red-white-red banner hung on the Republik-Denkmal (to be discussed below), stating, “12. November 1918 – 12. November 2006. Es lebe die Republik. Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs.”
party holiday of the Social Democrats.” Or as the Christian Social *Grazer Volksblatt* put it eight years later, “Since November 12 has been celebrated as the national holiday, it was used by the party- and ‘patent’-republicans not as a celebration for the republic, but as a protest against it, as a demonstration for the ‘socialist’ republic according to the model from Moscow.”116 Both pieces condemned the SDAP for turning what was supposed to be a national holiday into a party holiday, in effect keeping all non-socialists from participating. Just as the Social Democrats saw the absence of the bourgeoisie as evidence of its betrayal of the republic, the other parties interpreted the socialists’ alleged seizure of the holiday as proof of the SDAP’s undemocratic intentions. The marching workers trumpeting Marxist slogans became for non-socialists another sign that the Social Democrats were really Bolsheviks wishing to install a proletarian dictatorship. Thus, due to the prominence of socialist demonstrations on the republic’s anniversary, the republic became, in the eyes of the middle classes throughout Austria, inherently linked to socialism, thereby extinguishing their support for it.117

Not all Catholics stayed at home on November 12. As a way to link the new Austrian state to older Catholic and imperial traditions associated with the Habsburg Empire, they moved the celebration of the feast day of the patron saint of Austria, Leopold III, from November 15 to November 12.118 Since 1902, members of the Christian Social Party and Church hierarchy had made a pilgrimage to the grave of Leopold, who had been a member of the Babenberg dynasty and the margrave of Austria from 1095 until 1136, on November 15th. After the First World War, prominent Christian Social politicians, the archbishop of Vienna

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117 Hanisch, “Das Fest in der fragmentierten politischen Kultur,” 57. Diamant does not speak about this in terms of the November 12 holiday, but raises the point that association of the republic with socialism weakened Catholic support for it. Diamant, *Austrian Catholics and the First Republic*, 75.
118 Also see Hanisch, “Das Fest in der fragmentierten politischen Kultur,” 50-51.
and other members of the clergy, as well as thousands of their followers, now visited his grave at Klosterneuburg, a monastery founded by Leopold and located a short distance from Vienna, on the republic’s anniversary. According to Anton Orel, leader of the Christian Social League of Working Youth, a Viennese municipal councilor, and a member of the executive committee of the Antisemites’ League, Leopold provided “the symbols of our Catholic, German, Austrian culture.” And, during the 1930 anniversary of the republic, the Reichspost proclaimed that the pilgrimage amounted to “[t]he avowal to the Christian state, the pledge not to rest before this goal is achieved.” As with the Social Democrats, the Christian Socials sought to lay claim to the state based on their particular world view. Moreover, such calls for a Christian state were predicated on the exclusion of both socialists and Jews, who were frequently denounced at the ceremonies at Klosterneuburg.

Amid the aforementioned party commemorations were the festivities organized by the federal government. In the early years of the republic, when Social Democratic leaders still occupied positions of power, the activities involved celebrations to be held in all schools, as well as sporting events and competitions, weather permitting. Cognizant of the difficulties facing the country, Glöckel, then Under State Secretary of Education, suggested in 1919 that the school celebrations involve “serious and dignified singing” and speeches by the teachers, which should “illuminate the meaning of the day, especially indicating the consequences of newly won political freedom, foreshadowing the tremendous difficulties with which our young state form had to struggle. They should therefore remind the future citizens [Bürger

und Bürgerinnen] of German-Austria of the duties which stand before them: working collaboration on the construction and internal administration of our free state."121

Additionally, the involvement of the military in the November 12 celebrations began informally as early as the first anniversary.122 The Volkswehr, the immediate postwar armed forces of German-Austria disbanded by the Treaty of St. Germain, held a celebration in their barracks in 1919.123 And, in 1920, the socialist leader Julius Deutsch, who had been the defense minister until a month prior, gave a speech to assembled soldiers at Viennese city hall, praising their defense of the republic from threats mounted by the extreme right and left. He also pronounced the usual party line about the workers being the only founders and supporters of the republic since, in the early years of the republic, the Social Democrats controlled the army and the soldiers were largely SDAP backers.124 Upon the suggestion of Josef Waechter, an army officer serving as the defense minister, the first official celebration of the newly formed Austrian army occurred in 1921, with units stationed around the country parading through major thoroughfares and being reviewed by federal, provincial, and local officials.125 Both the 1921 and 1922 military celebrations earned the approval of the socialists. “It was a sober military celebration fit for the serious times. It was stripped of all the pomp and finery from the monarchical period, and thereby proceeded directly in a very dignified manner,” the Arbeiter-Zeitung commented on the third anniversary of the republic.

122 Interestingly, the Austrian army still plays a prominent role in the current Austrian national holiday, October 26th, the day in 1955 when the Austrians gained their independence from the Allied occupation forces in exchange for their neutrality. At the 2006 holiday, the Bundesheer had numerous soldiers, helicopters, and videos at the Burgplatz.
124 Deutsch’s remarks can be found in “Der Gedenktag der Republik: Die Feier der Wehrmacht,” Arbeiter-Zeitung, 13 November 1920, p. 3.
“The sons of the Volk gathered in unaffected style to celebrate the day of remembrance for the republic that they fought for and to vow that they are ready anytime to sacrifice everything to defend the free Volksstaat.”126

The tenor of the military celebrations soon changed as the army became a political instrument of Karl Vaugoin, a leading Christian Social who served briefly as defense minister from 1921 and then again from 1922-1933. The military celebrations, especially those in Vienna, now became a site of conflict during the November 12 festivities. Whereas the Social Democratic and Catholic commemorations for the first four anniversaries of the republic occupied separate geographical spaces, the military celebrations orchestrated by Vaugoin now brought the socialists and Christian Socials into a direct confrontation with one another beginning in 1923.127 Just as the Christians Socials sought to establish a link to older Catholic and imperial traditions through the pilgrimage to Klosterneuburg, Vaugoin set about reintroducing Habsburg symbols to the army. Hence, for the 1923 holiday, the order went out from the Ministry of Defense that imperial songs including the Prinz-Eugen-Marsch, Deutschmeister Regimentmarsch, and the Radetzky-Marsch were to be played as the army marched, for the first time, on Vienna’s Ringstrasse.128 Moreover, a number of officers in the Second Squadron were wearing the imperial medals that they had earned during the First World War. Furthermore, in addition to the president, parliamentary representatives and

Viennese city councilors, and ambassadors and foreign military attaches, Vaugoin also invited the generals and field marshals of the old imperial army to watch the parade.\textsuperscript{129}

In response, workers, identifiable by their red flags and carnations, began to whistle and yell. According to military reports, they insulted the troops, calling out, “FAMISHED NAZIS, MONARCHIST SKULLS.”\textsuperscript{130} An account of the incident in the \textit{Reichspost} claimed that they had screamed, “Three cheers for the red army! Three cheers for the proletarian soldiers!”\textsuperscript{131} The \textit{Arbeiter-Zeitung} maintained that the workers had shown up to support the army, but yelled out “Three cheers for the republic!”, “Three cheers for the republican army!”, and “Boo Vaugoin!” upon hearing the imperial marching tunes and whistled only at those soldiers wearing their war medals.\textsuperscript{132} The socialists viewed Vaugoin’s staging of the ceremony as a direct provocation. “If [the government] already has to celebrate the national holiday,” the \textit{Arbeiter-Zeitung} proclaimed when it learned that imperial officers would be given a special place from which to observe the ceremony, “it would like to still take the soul of the day, which is dedicated to the tradition of revolution that gave birth to the republic, and dedicate it to the tradition of the \textit{k. und k. [kaiserlich und königlich (dual monarchy)] army!”\textsuperscript{133} For the Social Democrats, the staging orchestrated by Vaugoin and the workers’ response fit into their narrative that the workers had to defend the republic against a hostile clerical, bourgeois government. The Christian Socials, on the other hand, saw the workers’ demonstration as a sign of their disloyalty to the republic, for it was “[c]ompletely unseemly,

\textsuperscript{131} “Parade der Wiener Garnison,” \textit{Reichspost}, 13 November 1923, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{133} “Wie Seipel und Vaugoin den Nationalfeiertag feiern,” \textit{Arbeiter-Zeitung}, 11 November 1923, p. 2.
tactless, and equally harmful to the reputation of the army and the republic […]”\textsuperscript{134} Once again, the actions of the two major parties in the First Republic, as well as their interpretations of events, pointed to the increasingly hardening lines between the different political cultures.

In 1923 the Viennese celebration was limited to a war of words, but the situation escalated to physical conflicts the following year. The military celebration again drew the ire of the workers. Habsburg army officers had prominent seats among the government officials viewing the parade, the military band played imperial tunes, and more soldiers wore their imperial war medals, or as the \textit{Arbeiter-Zeitung} called them, “symbols of the monarchy’s mass murder.”\textsuperscript{135} When the cavalry (on their horses) were leaving the Ringstrasse to return to their barracks, they encountered a large group of youths at the top of Mariahilferstrasse who proceeded to boo them. The police stepped in to provide protection for the military riders, but more demonstrators continued to gather at the Stiftskaserne and Neubaugasse as the cavalry tried to make their way down Mariahilferstrasse. At this point a socialist city councilman, Franz Kurz, was arrested by the police for leading the demonstration, which further angered the protesters. (Kurz, upon identifying himself, was let go.) More police were brought in in an attempt to break up the crowds as ever more protesters joined in when the procession reached the Gürtel. A man rushed at one of the riders, seeking to make him fall from his horse, and was arrested by the police. As the cavalry neared the barracks, 2,000 more workers awaited them. Due to their numbers, the police failed to prevent them from then throwing stones at the riders. By the end of this incident, the police had detained 17

\textsuperscript{134} “Parade der Wiener Garnison,” \textit{Reichspost}, 13 November 1923, p. 4.
people and charged two of them.\footnote{Report sent from the Polizeidirektion Win to the Bundesministerium für Heereswesen, Pr.Z.IV-47 Exp., Paradeausrückung der Truppen der Garnison Wien am 12. November 1924, Vienna, 12 November 1924, in ÖStA, AdR, BMfHW, 1924, 23 1/1, 69018/1.} According to the statements gathered from the soldiers involved, the angry crowd had been comprised of both younger and older people wearing red armbands, streetcar and railway workers, and members of the Republikanische Schutzbund (the socialist paramilitary group), who shouted insults, spat at the soldiers and caused injuries by throwing stones, bottles, and hardware.\footnote{See the various Protokolle in ÖStA, AdR, BMfHW, 1924, 23 1/1, 69018/1.} Thereafter, the military parade was cancelled in Vienna (although not in other cities), and the troops stationed in the capital held a ceremony in the barracks instead. Even though only low-level violence had occurred, it was indicative of the militarization of Austrian society.

Not all events in the years leading up to the tenth anniversary were so divisive. There were some military celebrations that occurred peacefully without disturbances: the 1924 celebrations in Graz and Linz went smoothly, for example.\footnote{See coverage of the Graz ceremony in ÖStA, AdR, BMfHW, Kanzleistelle A, 1924, 23 1/1, 60933/1. For Linz, see “Die Parade der Garnison Linz,” Tagblatt, 15 November 1924, in ÖStA, BMfHW, 1924, 23 1/1, 70425/1.} And, in rare moments, some politicians sought to achieve a degree of consensus in support of the republic. In Krems, on the occasion of the third anniversary, all three of the major parties came together for “[a] powerful rally” and “carried out in unity the oath of allegiance to the republic and let ring out the warning call for all those who should want to infringe upon our free state, the democratic republic of German-Austria.”\footnote{“Der Tag der Republik,” Land-Zeitung (Krems an der Donau), 17 November 1921, enclosed in Letter from the Ortskommando in Krems a.d.D. to the Bundesministerium f.Hw., Zahl 498 res., Bericht über die Nationafeier am 12. November 1921, Krems, 18 November 1921, in ÖStA, AdR, BMfHW, 1.A.39-11/10, 1921.} The same year in Tyrol, the leaders of the three major parties in the provincial assembly, put forward the following motion: “Tyrol renews its commitment to the republican state form,” which “[t]he representatives declare to steadfastly
hold onto and to protect it with all available means." Moreover, Michael Hainisch, the partyless Austrian president from 1920 until the end of 1928 who was committed to democracy, gave addresses on the November 12 holidays that sought to engender support for the republic and to find common ground among all citizens regardless of their party affiliations. And, when he hosted receptions in 1925 and 1927 for the chancellor and the presidents of the Nationalrat and Bundesrat, the speeches given by these leaders, even though they belonged to either the SDAP or CSP, encouraged both harmony and support for democracy.

But, even the more conciliatory celebrations held by government officials still pointed to a fundamental problem with the Austrian national holiday: the government’s lack of efforts in trying to create a popular holiday. In addition to the presidential reception of the country’s top politicians, beginning in 1925, the president invited representatives serving in the Nationalrat and the Bundesrat, diplomats and consular officials, and journalists to high tea. Although the presidential reception resulted in speeches that were carried by the major newspapers for the public to read, both of these events were limited to elites. The president’s office never looked into creating an event that would involve popular participation. Even the military parades throughout Austria, which attracted large crowds of onlookers, were not created with the idea of a Volksfest in mind. Although Vaugoin chose to move the military parade to the Ringstrasse from the Heldenplatz in 1923 “because [there is] more freedom of movement and the public sees more,” there was no further talk of using

140 "Tiroler Landtag: Ein Bekenntnis zur Republik," Grazer Volksblatt (Morgenblatt), 9 November 1921, p. 3.
this event to create a more participatory form of commemoration.\footnote{The defense ministry would give newspapers a short press release announcing the military ceremonies, but went no further to encourage the public’s participation.} Indeed, the purpose of the military ceremony was to allow the army to demonstrate “the public expression of the loyalty of the army to the constitution.”\footnote{BMfHW, Präs. Zahl 3720 von 1923, Gedenkfeier am 12. November, 2 November 1923, p. 1 in ÖStA, AdR, BMfHW, 1.A.39-17, Präs. 3720.} Unlike Redslob, who wanted to erase the division between onlooker and participant in order to create a more democratic form of commemoration, Austrian officials paid little attention to public involvement and certainly did not seek to capture the imagination of the population.

Furthermore, the government under the Christian Socials did not show an interest in the “invention of tradition” for the republic.\footnote{Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), \textit{The Invention of Tradition} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992 [Canto Edition]).} Aside from the annual school celebrations, which had been instituted by the Social Democrats in 1919, and military concerts held on the evening before November 12, there was no event held on a consistent basis. The presidential receptions and teas occurred repeatedly, but not every year. For instance, after the 1925 presidential reception, the government did not organize one for the next year. A report from the president’s office indicated that the cabinet director mentioned the previous year’s reception one week before the 1926 holiday. He pulled the files on the 1925 events and gave them to Chancellor Seipel. According to the report, “Subsequently, no further initiative followed.” Friedrich Austerlitz, the editor of the \textit{Arbeiter-Zeitung} and a Social Democratic representative to the Nationalrat, called the director of the cabinet to lodge a complaint and to argue that the cancellation of the event was because “the current government did not want to celebrate the anniversary of the republic,” by which he meant Seipel and not Hainisch.\footnote{In the course of two phone conversations, Austerlitz attacked Seipel while acknowledging that Hainisch “alles tue, um den republikanischen Gedanken zu fördern.”}

Among the reasons presented to Austerlitz as to why the reception was not staged were: there
was no established precedent for a reception because 1925 was the only year that it had happened thus far and that the issue of the impending end of the League of Nations’ inspections of Austria provided a specific reason to get the heads of the different branches of the government together in 1925, whereas there was no such pressing issue in 1926. Despite the well-received exchange of speeches in 1925, the government showed no impetus in creating rituals to honor the republic.

The tenth anniversary of the republic was simultaneously an exceptional year that was still plagued with many of the difficulties discussed above. Both the government and the citizenry greeted the 1928 celebrations with great fanfare. In Vienna, on the evening of November 11, military musicians played a “monster concert” on the Heldenplatz; troops helped to illuminate the parliament building, Heldenplatz, and the tower of St. Stephen’s Cathedral with spotlights, while the Viennese government did the same for city hall; troops conducted celebratory ceremonies in the barracks; government buildings were festively decorated with the flags bearing the country’s colors of red-white-red. On the day of the anniversary, a platoon of soldiers with flags made their way in the morning to the president and chancellor’s offices at Ballhausplatz with musical accompaniment; numerous government officials, including Hainisch, Seipel and Vaugoin, and members of the diplomatic corps attended a High Mass with Te deum led by the Archbishop of Vienna; the military companies stationed outside the church, then paraded through the streets back to the barracks; the president held receptions for the presidents of the Nationalrat and the Bundesrat, for the federal government, and for foreign officials; and the Nationalrat

conducted a celebratory session.\textsuperscript{149} Around the country, there were military parades, cultural offerings, celebratory masses, and special sessions of provincial assemblies and city councils to celebrate the tenth anniversary. Events such as the “monster concert” and the festive lighting of major landmarks in Vienna, as well as the military celebrations in the provinces, drew large crowds, prompting the \textit{Reichspost} to observe, “It needs to be entered as proof of the advancing consolidation of our political system despite all inhibitions: yesterday, on the tenth anniversary of the declaration of the republic, the population in its entirety has actively participated in the day of rememberance for the first time.”\textsuperscript{150}

Not only did the tenth anniversary draw out large swaths of the population who had previously stayed home, but, as with some of the earlier observances, there were also glimpses of conciliatory politics. The Salzburg newspapers aligned with the Social Democrats and the Greater German People’s Party both praised a performance of Schiller’s “Wilhelm Tell” for the occasion because the audience had included people from the three different Lager. As the socialist \textit{Salzburger Wacht} declared, “Here the common people’s republic was already carried out…All sections of the Volk, all secular and Church authorities of the city and province (including the Archbishop) met peacefully by the Rütli oath: ‘We want to be a single Volk of brothers.’ In league with Friedrich Schiller, who lives in all the hearts of the German Volk, the question of the republic would therefore already be solved.”\textsuperscript{151} And the numerous speeches given by officials of the three major parties at the presidential receptions and the celebratory sessions of the legislative bodies took a more

\textsuperscript{149} For a copy of the program, see “Programm,” in PrK Zahl 8999, Amtsveranlassung, Bericht über die Feierlichkeiten am 11. und 12. November 1928 (Nationalfeiertag anlässlich des 10 jährigen Bestandes der Republik), in ÖStA, AdR, PrK 8999/1928.


subdued tone than the speeches given to their party bases. During the commemoration in the Salzburg Landtag, its president, the Social Democrat Josef Breitenfelder, concluded his speech by expressing the wish for the “peaceful cooperation of the parties for the well-being of our beloved Heimat and the Republic of Austria, for the benefit of the Volk, of our country and of the entire citizenry [Bundesvolk].”

The widespread participation of all sectors of the Austrian population in the tenth anniversary celebrations should not be mistaken for consensus. Although the German ambassador to Austria, Hugo Graf von und zu Lerchenfeld, concluded his report on the tenth anniversary commemoration with the following line – “All in all the day from November 12 proves a decisive strengthening of the Austrian state idea and of the willingness of all sectors of the Volk to work together on this state” – his full account belied such a rosy outlook. He began his description of events by explaining how the November 12 celebrations had, in the past, been “a party affair of the Social Democrats,” and that the federal government was seeking to give the tenth anniversary “the meaning of an occasion of the entire Austrian Volk.”

Yet, the following sentence pointed to the limits of the attempt to surmount sociopolitical divides and include the “entire” population. Lerchenfeld quoted Seipel as personally telling him, “The people should see that we are not a socialist republic.” Seipel’s desire was therefore not to create a popular celebration shared by all citizens, but to encourage the participation of Catholics in an effort to reclaim the republic from the Social Democrats. Lerchenfeld went on to detail how the Bundesrat failed to have a commemorative ceremony due to the SDAP’s refusal to participate. The Social Democrats

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in the Bundesrat argued that the President of the Bundesrat, Richard Steidle, was unfit to give a celebratory speech for the republic due to his leading role in the *Heimwehr*. He also mentioned how before and after the University of Vienna’s celebrations, there were skirmishes between Austrian Nazi and “radical leftist” students.\(^{153}\) Hence, the greater number of activities organized to celebrate the holiday and the larger numbers of people participating did not surmount the increasing conflicts by various political parties to control the image and governance of the republic.

As in previous years, the parties continued to employ highly charged rhetoric, parties still held their own festivities, and skirmishes remained a mainstay of the 1928 celebrations. Thousands of Catholics living in or near Vienna once again made the annual pilgrimage to Klosterneuburg.\(^{154}\) Throughout the country, the socialists held their annual assemblies and marches. And, in the capital, they unveiled before a large crowd of supporters the “Monument of the Republic,” which carried the inscription – “The memory of the establishment of the Republic on 12 November 1918” – above the busts of three deceased Austrian socialist leaders: Viktor Adler, Ferdinand Hanusch, and Jakob Reumann. Months earlier, the monument had already provoked a heated debate in the Vienna city council. Members of the CSP and GDVP protested that the memorial was not a “monument of the republic,” but a “party monument.” These councilmen asserted that the socialists were using the monument to falsify history in an effort to lay sole claim to the republic.\(^{155}\) Additionally,

\(^{153}\) Letter from the Deutsche Gesandtschaft Wien (Lerchenfeld) to the Auswärtige Amt Berlin, Vienna, 14 November 1928, in PAAA, R73378, II Oe 1874.

\(^{154}\) “Am Grabe des heiligen Leopold,” *Reichspost*, 13 November 1928, p. 3.

\(^{155}\) Quote is from Karl Rummelhardt, who was also the president of the Christlichen Gewerkschaft. Full text of the debate can be found in Stenographisches Bericht über die öffentlichen Sitzung des Gemeinderates der Bundeshauptstadt Wien vom 22. Juni 1928, pp. 1968-1983, in Wiener Stadt und Landesarchiv, Zahl 2322, präs. 30.6.1928.
the *Republikanische Schutzbund* disrupted military celebrations in Klagenfurt,\(^{156}\) and workers in Vienna booed the army, its supporters, and the police as the troops made their way from St. Stephens back to the barracks.\(^{157}\)

The tenth anniversary celebration also had the ignominious distinction of being the first time that the *Heimwehr* and the Austrian Nazis, both of which were intent on destroying the republic, took part in the November 12 anniversary. Around 18,000 members of the *Heimwehr* descended on Innsbruck, the site of the largest *Heimwehr* gathering that year,\(^{158}\) with smaller assemblies and marches occurring in places like Graz, Leoben, and Bruck an der Mur.\(^{159}\) The leading figures of the *Heimwehr* used the republic’s holiday to announce that while the *Heimwehr* was loyal to the state, “the best parts of the *Volk* reject the state in its present form.”\(^{160}\) The SS also held a celebration in Innsbruck,\(^{161}\) while the Viennese *Gau* of the Hitler Youth organized a rally later in the month under the heading, “We have experienced betrayal and deception by the marxist leaders in the ten years of the republic.”\(^{162}\) Clashes between the socialists and the extreme right, which had been occurring throughout the country, now became a fixture of the November 12 celebrations. In Innsbruck, clashes

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\(^{156}\) Letter from the Deutsches Konsulat Klagenfurt to the Deutsche Gesandtschaft in Wien, Tgb.Nr. 2381, Klagenfurt, 12 November 1928, in PAAA, R 73378, II Oe 1879.


\(^{159}\) For police reports and newspaper coverage of the Heimwehr and socialist commemorations in Styria, see Feier des 12. November 1928 (Republikfeier), in StLA, L. Reg. 384 R 21/1928.

\(^{160}\) “Heimwehrrkundgebung in Innsbruck,” *Salzburger Chronik*, 13 November 1928, p. 3. Speeches were given by Walter Pfrimer and Richard Steidle.


\(^{162}\) 3,000 copies of the flyer announcing this event were confiscated by the police. Enclosed in Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, G.P.P. 2211/28, Flugschrift: “Verrat und Betrug”..., Beschlagnahme gemäß § 15 PrG, Vienna, 23 November 1928, in ÖStA, AdR, BKA, Berichte der Wiener Polizeidirektion, Kt. 12.
occurred between the Social Democrats and the *Heimwehr*, with one member of the *Heimwehr* ending up with a stab wound in the back.\footnote{“Zusammenstöße in Innsbruck,” 6-Uhr-Blatt (Abendausgabe des Grazer Volksblattes), 13 November 1928, p. 3; “Heimwehrkundgebung in Innsbruck,” Salzburger Chronik, 13 November 1928, p. 3.} A shouting match of “Heil!” and “Freundschaft!” occurred in Vienna between small groups of Nazis and workers, at which point the police stepped in and arrested some of the workers.\footnote{“Zwischenfälle,”Arbeiter-Zeitung, 13 November 1928, p. 3. The article noted that the police gave the Nazis preferential treatment.}

Although the government continued to hold military celebrations and presidential receptions and teas, the focus of the November 12 holiday in the following years was the conflict between the socialists and a diverse group of anti-Marxist and anti-republican forces, which included the *Heimwehr*, the Christian Socials, the Greater Germans, and the Nazis. Indeed, what was supposed to be a day to celebrate the republic’s founding increasingly became an occasion to call for its destruction, as well as the annihilation of the Social Democratic Party. The Austrian Nazis, who opposed the socialists, as well as the Christian Socials and the *Heimwehr*, used the 1932 holiday to stage a march of 9,000 Nazis through the thoroughfares of Vienna and to call for *Anschluss*, as well as the “finale of a fourteen-year-old politics of the system as the prelude for a better future under the victorious Sonnenrune of the swastika.”\footnote{Quote is from Dr. Alexander Schilling-Schletter, “14 Jahre Republik,” Der Notschrei, 12 November 1932 (issue 12), pp. 4 and 6, here 6. For coverage of the march, see “60.000 Sozialdemokraten, 9000 Nazi,” Wiener Sonn- und Montagszeitung, 14 November 1932, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalfeiertag (12. November).} In a collage entitled “14 Years of the Republic” that ran in *Der Notschrei*, the Nazis presented their argument as to why the republic needed to be destroyed. Pictures of “Jews,” murdered Nazis, and economic desperation contained text screaming, “Hunger,” “Red culture,” “Jewish Menace,” “Murder,” “Misery,” “Homelessness.”\footnote{“14 Jahre Republik,” Der Notschrei, 12 November 1932 (issue 12), pp. 8-9.} Likewise, the *Heimwehr* also saw the November 12 holiday as a platform to announce their views on what
the Austrian state should look like. At a Heimwehr rally in Graz for the 1929 anniversary of the republic, Rüdiger Fürst Starhemberg, the leader of the Upper Austrian Heimwehr, announced to over 17,000 Heimwehr members, “Today we demand that the current constitution, which the year 1918 has bestowed upon us, vanish and demand that we are given a constitution that is worthy of a Christian and German Volk. If the Marxists are not agreed, Chancellor Schober should call us. Then we will teach them and make them good Germans and Catholics.”

With many Christian Socials in the government directly lending their support to the Heimwehr and with the publications of both CSP and GDVP heaping praise on the Heimwehr’s rallies from 1929 onward, the socialists were no longer overstating the claim that they were the only defenders of the republic. They continued to “protest against fascism and monarchism” and “[a]gainst the rule of the capitalist reaction over the republic!” and to demonstrate “[f]or a true republic of the working Volk!” As the Heimwehr used their marches to show that the socialists’ “monopoly on the streets and plazas is broken,” the Social Democrats continued to stage large rallies on November 12. According to the report of the party leadership for Styria, it had staged the largest rally Graz had ever seen since the 1918-1919 revolution with around 25,000 workers and members of the Schutzbund attending the 1929 republic celebration. And, when the Nazis paraded through Vienna in 1932, the

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168 These were common refrains among the Social Democrats. For one example, see “Wir marschieren am 12. November!” , Arbeiter-Zeitung, 10 November 1932, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalfeiertag (12. November).
socialists assembled a contingent of around 60,000 workers as a counter-demonstration.\footnote{60.000 Sozialdemokraten, 9000 Nazi,” Wiener Sonn- und Montagszeitung, 14 November 1932, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalfeiertag (12. November).}

The SDAP also interpreted the federal government’s decision to reverse its ban on all marches on the 1932 holiday as a victory for the workers. It was, according to the \textit{Arbeiter-Zeitung}, “[i]n view of the resolute will of the Viennese working class, which would in any case celebrate the birthday of the republic in its own style, [that] the government has rescinded the ban on marches.”\footnote{“Wir marschieren am 12. November!”, Arbeiter-Zeitung, 10 November 1932, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalfeiertag (12. November).} Yet, in the end, the sizeable armies of workers marching on November 12 deceived the socialists about their real strength against the growing strength of the political right.\footnote{Hanisch, “Das Fest in der fragmentierten politischen Kultur,” 54. Anson Rabinbach makes a similar argument with regard to Red Vienna. Anson Rabinbach, \textit{Crisis of Austrian Socialism}.}

The very next year, the federal government, which had been led by the Christian Social Engelbert Dollfuss upon his assumption of the chancellorship in May 1932, banned all forms of commemoration for the fifteenth anniversary of the republic. By this point, Dollfuss had used a technicality to disband the parliament in March, and was seeking for ways to destroy the Social Democratic Party in order to fully establish a Catholic authoritarian state. Therefore, not only did the government cancel all government festivities except for a mass in St. Stephen’s Cathedral, but it also forbade any political demonstrations from taking place on November 12 by enacting a law regarding the maintenance of “public safety and the welfare of the public.”\footnote{For the cancellation of government festivities, see PrK 10922, Amtsveranlassung, 12. November, Nationalfeiertag des Jahres 1933, in ÖStA, AdR, PrK 10922/1933. For the police’s refusal to allow the SDAP to march on November 12, see Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, V.B.2/66/1933, Vienna, 2 November 1933, Untersagung einer Kundgebung der Organisation der Sozialdemokratischen Partei auf der Ringstrasse am 12. November 1933, in ÖStA, AdR, BKA, Berichte der Wiener Polizeidirektion, 1933/November, Kt. 34.} Although there was certainly reason to worry about violence breaking out on November 12, the use of this law was entirely cynical.
Only two months before, the government had helped to stage mass commemorations for the joint occasion of the *Allgemeiner deutscher Katholikentag* (General German Catholic Congress) and the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Vienna. The *Katholikentag* took place from September 7-12, and the government officials declared September 12, the day on which an army of Austrian, Polish and Bavarian troops defeated the Ottoman soldiers in 1683, an official state holiday. On September 12 alone there was a mass led by Polish clergy on the Kahlenberg, the place from which Jan Sobieski launched his attack on the Ottoman forces, that was attended by 4,000 people; the Ceremony of the Federal Government for the Memory of the Liberation of Vienna from Turks at the Heldenplatz, in which 12,000 took part; the third general assembly of the *Katholikentag* in the Viennese stadium with 15,000 participants; the Austrian *Heimatschutz*’s Celebration of the Liberation from the Turks on the plaza before city hall with 1,700 *Heimwehr* men and 5,000 onlookers; and, a closing ceremony for the *Katholikentag* in and around St. Stephen’s, which drew a crowd of 10,000 people. Government leaders, the army and the clergy took part in these events. Speakers at the various events addressed themes such as “Austria’s mission as the bulwark of the Catholic faith” and “German *Volksstum* from the strength of Christianity.” These festivities, celebrating Catholicism, corporatism, conservatism, authoritarianism, and Austria’s imperial past, amounted to a preview of the Austrofascist regime, which would fully assume power after the Social Democrats were defeated in the brief Civil War of February 1934.  

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175 Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, Pr.Zl. IV-6566/22/33, Vienna, 12 September 1933, in ÖStA, AdR, BKA, Berichte der Wiener Polizeidirektion, September 1933, Kt. 32.
November 12, 1933 therefore stood in stark contrast to the September celebrations. In an attempt to circumvent the ban on parades and gatherings, the SDAP organized “walks” through the city. Workers were to wear red carnations, carry red flags, and release red balloons as they walked through the city as a way to protest the current government and show their support for the republic. This action resulted in the police moving against the walkers. The police made numerous arrests, 225 people in Vienna alone. Among those detained by the police were Karl Renner and Friedrich Adler. Moreover, the police used force and beat the socialist protesters with their batons, causing many injuries.\textsuperscript{177} And, in Linz, members of the \textit{Heimwehr} attacked the 67-year-old socialist mayor during the “walks” there. According to the \textit{Arbeiter-Zeitung}, the police did nothing and the mayor had to be saved by socialist youths.\textsuperscript{178} The 15\textsuperscript{th} and final anniversary of the republic should therefore be seen as one of many steps taken by the government to deliberately undermine the Social Democrats in Austria.

The state holiday for the republic in Austria looked quite different from the de facto Constitution Day in Germany. Indeed, the two celebrations point to a number of key differences between the political cultures of interwar Germany and Austria. The desire and ability to stage a popular holiday for the Weimar Republic was due to a democratic consensus created by the parties of the Weimar Coalition. Their members were willing to work across class, political, and confessional divisions to support and celebrate the republic. In seeking to create a \textit{Volksfest}, they sought to be inclusive of all Germans in their attempts to win over skeptics and opponents of the republic. Although a number of political groups


on both the right and left of the political spectrum refused to support the republic and celebrate its constitution, the republicans, until 1931, made progress in achieving their goals. Austrians, on the other hand, not only remained within their particular Lager, but also purposefully sought to antagonize their political opponents. Rather than a popular holiday, the republic’s birthday became a site where the various parties and paramilitary groups fought over the current form and future of the state. On the last Republikfeier, the socialists and Christian Socials accused one another of having prevented the creation of a popular commemoration, again displaying the primary reason why the holiday had never become a Volksfest.179

Cross-Border Connections and the State Holidays

Although the celebrations of August 11 and November 12 were vastly different, the republicans in both countries saw the holidays as platforms to voice their support of the großdeutsch idea and an Anschluss. In celebrating their separate republics, German and Austrian republicans expressed sympathy for the challenges of their neighbors and the desire for the two republics to become one. During Constitution Day, speakers and publications often made mention of the plight of the Austrians in the aftermath of the war and the peace treaties. “An adverse fate,” Otto Hörsing wrote for a Reichsbanner publication on the occasion of the 1928 Constitution Day, “has excluded our Austrian sisters and brothers from

179 The Arbeiter-Zeitung pointed out how both Czechoslovakia and Turkey had successful, popular national holidays, prompting it to conclude, “So suchen auch bürgerliche Republiken, an ihren Staatsfeiertagen in Volkstümlichen Massenkundgebungen die Verbundenheit des Volkes mit seinem Staae, die Einheit des Volkes mit seiner Republik zu demonstrieren.” The implication here was that the Austrian bourgeoisie had prevented such a commemoration from occurring. Writers at the Reichspost responded to the Arbeiter-Zeitung’s piece, arguing, “Gerade die Sozialdemokratie und nur sie ist schuld daran, daß der Staatsfeiertag nicht zu einem Volksfest werden konnte und daß unser Volk überhaupt in der Republik nie recht froh zu werden vermochte.” See “Staatsfeiertage,” Arbeiter-Zeitung, 4 November 1933 and “Staatsfeiertag und Sozialdemokratie,” Reichspost, 5 November 1933, both in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalfeiertag (12. November).
their fatherland.” Calls for “a German republic from Aachen to Vienna,” to use the words Walter Kolb during the 1926 holiday, were a frequent trope at Constitution Day celebrations. Republicans also used August 11 to promote their großdeutsch defense of the colors black-red-gold, as well as to elaborate on the connections between a großdeutsch tradition and democracy. Much of the republican rhetoric cited in Chapters One and Two was drawn from Constitution Day material.

The großdeutsch idea found a place not only in texts produced for Constitution Day, but also in the staging of it. There was a conscious effort to use commemorations as a way to build and display a transborder German community. In a piece entitled “Constitution Day as the Expression of German Festival Culture,” Redslob explained, “Because what more strongly ties the Auslandsdeutschen [Germans outside of the Reich] to their tribes [Stämme] and to the territory of their homeland [Heimatgebiet] than the community of festivals and of the forms in which the German celebrates his festival.” Hence, in the performance of “Germany’s River,” when the children representing the Danube ran onto the field, the accompanying musicians played Strauss’s “Blue Danube.” Redslob did not, however, leave any doubt that the Danube was representing Austria for the major “German” city he chose to represent the river was Vienna symbolized with St. Stephen’s Cathedral. In its coverage of the spectacle in the Berlin stadium, the Berliner Tageblatt gushed, “The cheers increased to

enthusiasm, which also spread to the spectators, as the river of our Austrian brotherland flowed in: the Danube, accompanied by music from dear Johann Strauss!”

The *Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold* also repeatedly invited Austrians to Constitution Day events, and even entitled its 1925 celebration in southwestern Germany, “Constitution Day and *Großdeutsch Congress.*” General Theodor Körner, an Austrian Social Democrat and one of the leaders of the *Schutzbund*, was a prominent speaker at a 1924 Constitution Day in Weimar and again in 1926 in Munich; Julius Deutsch, the Social Democrat parliamentarian and founder of the *Schutzbund*, also took part in a 1926 celebration in Nuremberg and the 1929 Constitution Day in Berlin; and Renner participated in the 1926 Nuremberg commemoration. Additionally, the rank and file of the *Schutzbund* travelled to the Reich to join in the Constitution Day celebrations. For example, among the 150,000 republicans expected to attend the 10th anniversary of the constitution in Berlin, the *Reichsbanner* was anticipating a “strong delegation from the Austrian *Schutzbund*.” With the two republican paramilitary organizations joining forces to celebrate the republic, they hoped to demonstrate their argument that a *Großdeutschland* would lead to a strengthening of democracy. “They [the *Reichsbanner* and the *Schutzbund*] are united in the idea that the German *Volk* can only achieve its national unification under the banner of the republic and democracy,” Deutsch stated at the 1926 Constitution Day in Nuremberg. “The creation of

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Großdeutschland would ensure that the ghost of the royal houses flies away for ever and that the German Volk developed itself upward and forward within the free, democratic republic. That’s why the Republikanische Schutzbund of German-Austria stands for the idea of the Anschluss and it will therefore use the Constitution Day celebration in Nuremberg in order passionately to demonstrate for it.”186 The Reichsbanner also reciprocated and travelled to Austria to help the Schutzbund celebrate the November 12 holiday in 1925.187

In Austria, the use of großdeutsch themes on November 12 was more varied due to the involvement of all political parties and paramilitary organizations in the commemorations. It was commonplace for speakers of all parties at the very least to mention Austrians’ Germanness, if not advocate for an Anschluss, at government events. Although many of the speeches at the government commemorations spoke generally about the injustice of the Entente denying Austrians self-determination, the political groups possessed different understandings of national belonging and divided attitudes toward the Anschluss. A large contingent of both the Heimwehr and the Christian Socials spoke of the desire to create a Christian-German state, which really meant an Austria independent from Germany and free from “Jewish” and Marxist influences, as the statements above from Orel and Starhemberg illustrate. The Austrian Nazis, like their German counterparts, called for an Anschluss in hopes of creating a Third Reich. Similar to the Heimwehr and Christian Socials, their concept of Germanness excluded Jews and socialists. The socialists, by contrast, linked the Anschluss to national feeling, the defense of democracy, and the creation of socialism.

There were two transborder groups which set out to organize politically neutral commemorations to celebrate Article 2 of the Austrian republic’s declaration: “German-Austria is a constituent part of the German republic.” One of these was none other than the Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund, the non-partisan association run by Löbe and Neubacher that was discussed in Chapter One. The other was the Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutscher Landmannschaften, an organization for German minorities living outside of the boundaries of the Reich. For the tenth anniversary of the Austrian republic, the Volksbund sent postcards to numerous politicians of all parties, government officials and bureaucrats, public intellectuals, artists, and academics, asking them to sign it in support of the second article. The Volksbund then facsimilated the signatures and ran them in a commemorative issue of its publication, Der Anschluss. Aside from the reference to “the German republic” in the second article, the entire issue was politically neutral.\(^{188}\) The Volksbund also wrote to many cities and towns in the Reich with the request that any street name that was a reminder of the Hohenzollern’s defeat of the Habsburgs should be changed to one that “suggests the feelings of togetherness between Austria and Germany” as a way to commemorate the second article of the November 12 declaration.\(^{189}\)

Additionally, both organizations attempted to stage commemorations for the occasion. The Arbeitsgemeinschaft wanted to hold a commemorative ceremony in the Reichstag for the 10\(^{th}\) anniversary of the Austrian republic and broadcast it on the radio; ultimately, however, the German Foreign office advised against both due to foreign policy

\(^{188}\) Even a piece by Julius Deutsch did not mention socialism or democracy. See Der Anschluß, 2. Jahrgang, Folge 11, 12 November 1928, in PAAA, R 73303, II Oe 1874.

\(^{189}\) Although the article states that many communities agreed to do so, it is unclear whether any municipalities actually followed through. “Feier des 12. November in Deutschland?”, Arbeiter-Zeitung, 21 April 1928, in Wienbibliothek, Tagblatt Archiv, Nationalfeiertag (12. November).
concerns. Nonetheless, the following year, the Volksbund and Arbeitsgemeinschaft staged a joint Anschluss gathering in the Reichstag to commemorate the anniversary of the second article of the declaration of the Austrian republic. While the speakers at this ceremony recognized the difficulties of the domestic political situation in each country, the assembly’s speakers included members of opposed political viewpoints: Löbe of the SPD and the Christian Social Karl Drexel. Because these commemorative activities focused broadly on the Anschluss, they were able to draw support and participation from across party lines. As the next chapter will demonstrate, when the Anschluss idea was combined with cultural commemorations, the political divisions pointed to by the state holidays in both countries could be temporarily erased.

190 I do not have further information as to whether any ceremony took place. The organization had written to the German Foreign Office to ask if the radio broadcast would be problematic. The Foreign Office advised against it, and also recommended that the ceremony not take place in the Reichstag due to concerns that it the Anschluss gathering would appear official, causing countries like France to object. For the full exchange see PAAA, R73303, II Oe 1576.
191 “Große Anschlußkundgebung in Berlin,” 6-Uhr-Blatt des Grazer Volksblattes, 11 November 1929, p. 1. Also see documents in PAAA, R73304, II Oe 1507/1929.
Chapter 5

Composing the \textit{Volk}: Cultural Commemorations with Political Implications

During the late twenties and early thirties, a string of historic death anniversaries for German-speaking cultural luminaries took place in Germany and Austria: the 100\textsuperscript{th} anniversaries of Beethoven’s, Schubert’s and Goethe’s deaths in 1927, 1928, and 1932 respectively, along with the supposed 700\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Walther von der Vogelweide’s death in 1930. Each of these anniversaries prompted a flurry of activity. These commemorations, however, were not simply designed to celebrate these men’s lives and work. For many organizers and participants alike, these festivities served as opportunities to address and overcome both the sociopolitical hardship and fragmentation of the post-World War I period. By analyzing this series of cultural celebrations, one gains insight into how Germans and Austrians hoped to (re)form communities and identities destabilized by the war and its consequences.

Whereas the previous chapter pointed to the partial successes and failures of the political commemorations, specifically the state holidays undertaken by the new republics, this chapter explores what happened when Austrians and Germans commemorated cultural figures and works of those thought to belong to a shared canon of German culture. By focusing on cultural creators and artifacts predating the Great War, these festivals appeared to provide more stability and to build greater consensus, at least until 1932, than did Constitution Day in the Weimar Republic and the Republic Day in the First Austrian Republic. As the Austrian Ministry of Education explained with regard to the Schubert commemorations, “[...] Music is that cultural element, which above all connects countries in
peaceful cooperation through the feeling of togetherness it inspires. In particular, the
German song is that undervalued element, which typifies the feeling of togetherness of all
German-speaking people and makes the bond of togetherness tighter. That Austria and
especially Vienna were chosen as the setting for this great manifestation, at which
delегations from all parts of the world will appear, is a mark of recognition for Austria and
Vienna in this area.”¹ According to this way of thinking, culture – music, in this case – was
thought to possess transcendental qualities instrumental in bringing people together.
According to the historian Celia Applegate and the musicologist Pamela Potter, “Music, by
virtue of its ‘community-building powers’ (gemeinschaftsbildende Kraft der Musik), was
widely promoted as holding the key to healing the wounds of a fractured society and
promoting feelings of camaraderie” in the wake of the Great War and the ensuing
fragmentation.²

So, exactly what types of community did contemporaries hope cultural festivals could
(re)build and embody? To return to the Austrian Ministry of Education’s statement, it is
clear that participants in the celebration of music (and literature) promoted three different
forms of community. Reversing the order of the quote, this chapter will first address how
Austrians used these celebrations to renegotiate their national identity in the wake of the
Habsburg Empire’s collapse. As this section will show, Austrians sought to connect their
cultural productions with “nature” – conceived in terms of both the natural land and aspects
of human temperament – in order to come up with positive attributes for the new state of

¹ Amtserinnerung. 10. Deutsches Sängerbundesfest in Wien; Empfang des Bundesministers für Unterricht in
Schönbrunn, in Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (AVA), Unterricht
Allgemein (U. Allg.) 3258, 22049/1928.
² Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, ‘Germans as the “People of Music”: Genealogy of an Identity’, in Music &
German National Identity, ed. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago and London: Chicago University
“Austria.” At the same time, they used the focus on a commonly accepted German-speaking cultural canon to discuss their membership in a larger German nation. In this way, it will be argued, the Austrians thus largely saw their country as a region inside of a Greater Germany. Identifications with “Austrianness” during this period should therefore be classified as expressions of a regional, rather than a national, identity.

This German cultural canon was not simply at the disposal of Austrians seeking to ground their particular identity. The next section examines how Germans and Austrians of various political persuasions used these festivals to talk about and to stage a großdeutsch community that included Austrians. By picking up on certain precedents from the mid-nineteenth century – particularly, the formation and growth of choral associations and the staging of the Schiller festival of 1859\(^3\) – the celebration of musical and literary achievements became central forums for discussing a transborder Kulturnation that could transcend social, regional and political divisions, as well as the perceived injustices of the Paris Peace Conference. Moreover, the celebrations for Beethoven, and particularly those for Schubert and Walther, demonstrate that this desire for greater German unity went beyond the realm of culture, as many participants also called for an Anschluss.

Lastly, the Beethoven anniversary prompted governments and organizations around the world both to organize their own celebrations and to participate in Austrian and German

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ones with the aim of promoting the idea of a peaceful international community. This internationally-minded celebration, however, was tinged with German nationalism. Austrians and Reich Germans used their cultural legacy to assert that the universalism of cultural works was a German quality.\(^4\)

These efforts at community-building allude to the fact that the celebration of culture did not exclude the unavoidable presence of politics. Indeed, as the histories of reception (Rezeptionsgeschichte) demonstrate, cultural products and their creators were (and still are) often interpreted and used in ways that promote specific political and social agendas.\(^5\) Whether trying to erase political divisions or advocating for an *Anschluss*, the cultural commemorations analyzed here also moved into the realm of politics. In doing so, they provide insight into the complexities of how Germanness was both culturally and politically understood. More important, widespread participation in these festivals from across the political spectrum provides further evidence that transborder German nationalism was not simply the work of discontented Austrians and right-wing radical nationalists on either side of the border, but also took in broader social and political groups.

**Attributes of Austrianness**

From the second half of the nineteenth century forward, Franz Josef and a multinational empire served as primary sources for an Austrian identity, particularly among


the empire’s German speakers. With the destruction of this particular Austrian Staatsidee, the citizens of the new republic had the difficult task of (re)defining the content of “Austria” and Austrian identity in the absence of its most powerful symbols. The new state holiday to commemorate the founding of the republic, as the previous chapter demonstrated, did not provide a consensual occasion for Austrians to work through their national identity crisis. This annual commemoration not only highlighted the division of Austrian society into political camps, but it also pointed to the new state’s problems in winning the loyalties of its citizenry.

“For us there remains nothing else than to question ourselves, who we are and what we have achieved in the past,” acknowledged Austrian President Michael Hainisch during a 1928 ceremony for Schubert after listing the upheavals caused by modernization and the First World War. Hainisch provided one answer to his question: Austria’s musical achievements could serve as a source of stability and consolation. Using a line from Goethe’s Faust to refer to the legacies of Mozart, Haydn and Schubert, he claimed that “the genuine lives on from age to age,” and thereby also through the great changes of the early twentieth century.

The festivals for Beethoven, Schubert, Walther and even Goethe will illustrate that Austrians turned to their cultural heritage in an effort to find positive attributes for their new state.

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In particular, Austrian speakers at these events coupled their admiration for their chosen cultural icons with praise for Austrian land and landscapes. To take another remark from Hainisch’s speech at the Schubert commemoration, “One could raise the question whether it is not by chance that Austria has produced so many genial musicians. But that’s out of the question. Great men, as well as great composers, do not fall like luminous meteors from the sky; they are children of the Volk and of the soil in which they grow.” The establishment of a link between specific historical figures and the Austrian people and land allowed Austrians to celebrate themselves and their country in the present day. By relating the artists to the territory of the current state, Austrians could declare that the country they often claimed to be unviable still possessed valuable qualities. The fact that Vienna was no longer the seat of a great empire did not, in the eyes of contemporaries, change the fact that it would “once more become the intellectual capital of the world” due to a “strong commitment to culture, which radiates from Austria.” With such statements, Austrian participants were seeking to make the most of what little territory was left over. In other words, although the Austrian economy was suffering, Austrians in the First Republic could still lay claim to cultural capital. Furthermore, by drawing a close connection between musical genius of the past and the territory of their present day, Austrians could find consolation and hope for future greatness. In the eyes of Austrian contemporaries, because great men like Schubert, “emanat[e] from the Volk and native soil [Heimatboden], we may expect that still other

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8 The text of Hainisch’s speech can be found in “Die Schubert-Gedenkfeier,” Wiener Zeitung, 20 November 1928, in ÖStA, AdR, PrK 9015/1928. The quote from Faust reads, “Das Echte bleibt der Nachwelt unverloren.” It is line 74 of the German version of the play. In this case, I have used Walter Kaufmann’s translation of this line found in Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Goethe’s Faust: The Original German and a New Translation, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), 71.

diverse musicians will emerge as interpreters of our inner life [...]. And this confidence is able to help us overcome a dismal mindset and the small worries of the everyday.”

These celebrations of cultural icons therefore became celebrations of “Austria.” Hence, when the Bavarian government installed a bust of Schubert in Walhalla, Hainisch wrote to the Bavarian Premier to thank the province “on behalf of Austria, with all my heart, the honoring of the great son of our *Heimat*.” Hainisch continued by stating that “we feel the installation of Schubert’s bust in Walhalla not only as a tribute to the immortal composer, but also as an accolade for our country.” Indeed, the act of celebrating these cultural greats, according to Austrian politicians, fulfilled “a patriotic [patriotische] duty” and displayed “higher and patriotic [vaterländischer] sentiments.” Politicians saw the commemoration of an illustrious cultural past as a way to promote a sense of loyalty to the rump “state, which no one wanted.” As these federal officials argued, by the late 1920s, Austrians should love their country.

For contemporaries, it was not simply a positive view of “Austria” as a territory that these celebrations promoted, but also of the so-called character of the people living there. The notion of an Austrian character had become a familiar idea before the founding of the First Republic. Writers from Hugo von Hofmannsthal to Robert Musil and Karl Kraus all addressed the topic of an Austrian character most often in ironic fashion, contrasting it to a Prussian character. In 1917, Hofmannsthal famously came up with a chart contrasting the

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11 Letter from Austrian President to the Bavarian Premier Dr. Heinrich Held, Vienna, 13 November 1928, in ÖStA, AdR, PrK 8407/1928.
two ideal types entitled, “Prussians and Austrians.” According to his formulation, Austrians were more closely linked to God and nature, love of the home, piety, humanity, individualism, traditionalism, self-irony, vanity, pleasure-seeking and nonchalance than the Prussians.\(^{15}\)

Such self-characterizations continued after the upheavals of the war, and thereby served as another source of Austrian identity. Hence, the music of Schubert, the only one of these four figures who spent his entire life in Austria, expressed Austrians’ “most profound essence,” according to an article in the Viennese *Volks-Zeitung*. His songs revealed, “Our joy of living; our jovial laughter; our restrained sorrow; our sensitive soul, up one minute and down the next; our Germanness, authentic and sincere, yet substantially different from the more severe character of the north.”\(^{16}\) The thirteenth-century minstrel Walther von der Vogelweide, who was allegedly born in Tyrol and had worked in the town of Mödling, was also seen as displaying certain Austrian characteristics: joie de vivre, mental agility, and humor. These attributes, according to the keynote speaker at the Mödling celebration, were due to his “ancestry from Austrian stock [*seine Herkunft aus österreichischen Stamme*]”\(^{17}\).

Even Goethe, who had never lived in Austrian territories, the Austrian President Wilhelm Miklas argued, exemplified many Austrian characteristics although he was “indeed of a


\(^{17}\) Ansprache des Professor Eibl auf der Burg Mödling, in ÖStA, AdR, PrK 7742/1930.
different tribe [Stamm].” Goethe’s universalism, imaginativeness, creative intuition, often misunderstood happy nature, and cosmopolitanism were all a “mirror of the Austrian soul.”

As the appropriation of Goethe shows, Austrian participants and spectators at these commemorations did not simply define themselves in terms of specifically Austrian places and particularities. Although they rejoiced in the significance of a place like the Wiener Wald, they also saw themselves as inhabitants of a greater German space. The teachers of the public commercial school in Salzburg, for instance, took their students on a field trip to an alpine meadow to celebrate the life and work of Walther von der Vogelweide. After singing songs, listening to a selection of Walther’s poems, and being instructed about Walther’s life, the director of the school “in view of the looming mountains, exhorted the students to vow their loyalty to the German homeland [Heimat], to foster their German character [Wesen] and always to be mindful of their descent [Abstammung].” The director’s statement demonstrates a development that had become increasingly common for a number of German-speaking Austrians in the latter half of the nineteenth century: a dual identification with Austrianness and Germanness.

For Austrians, the relationship between the two identities was complex. To take one example, the Austrian education minister, Richard Schmitz, highlighted this ambiguity in 1928 when he remarked, “We Austrians love Schubert above all else because his music reflects the Austrian Heimat and the speech of the Austrian Volk. We love and honor him, and alongside honoring us Austrians, we honor the entire German Volk because the German

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20 Haas, “Staats- und Landesbewußtsein in der Ersten Republik.”
soul, the German mind speaks so vividly to us from his melodies.”21 Schmitz’s view of Schubert’s work as simultaneously expressing particular Austrian qualities alongside broader German ones is indicative of the “the ambivalence of identity.”22

Indeed, by situating a still uncertain Austrian identity within an established German one, Austrians could further seek to legitimate their rump state. According to the gesamtdeutsch (all-German) thinking of the time, it was because of Austria’s special geographic place within a German space that Austrian regional identity took on a renewed importance in the redrawn map of central and eastern Europe. Karl Seitz, the socialist mayor of Vienna who was usually wont to proclaim Austromarxist slogans, described Vienna as “the old German city [...], the bulwark of German culture to the east.”23 Josef Jaksch, the chairman of the Tenth German Singers’ League Festival described Vienna as “the old bulwark of the German spirit.”24 And Austrian President Miklas characterized Austria as “the post of German culture pushed toward the East.”25 No longer part of a great empire, Austrians now emphasized their special role as the guardians of German culture in a region of newly created Slavic states.

As the above examples demonstrate, it is not easy to characterize the multifaceted web of identifications and loyalties that Austrians possessed during the First Republic. Even so, some scholars have argued that before the development of a distinct Austrian national idea after 1945, two German nations had existed since the nineteenth century: a Reich

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22 Peter Thaler, *The Ambivalence of Identity: The Austrian Experience of Nation-Building in a Modern Society* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2001). Thaler maintains that this ambiguity between German and Austrian identities is the case even after 1945, when an Austrian national identity really took hold.
German nation and an Austrian German nation. This approach, however, is misguided when given the self-perceptions of Austrians during this period. Very few people at the time suggested that Austria constituted a nation that was completely separate from a German one. Even those intellectuals and politicians who were against an Anschluss and attempted to create a strong Austrian identity – one based on Baroque principles and cosmopolitanism – still viewed Austrianness as part of a wider German culture. In the eyes of most Austrians, they were a constitutive part of a German Kulturnation. Moreover, many Austrians from the end of the First World until at least the takeover of Nazism in Germany, desired to make the borders of the Kulturnation match those of a Staatsnation.

Therefore, I would argue that Austrian identity in this period amounted to a regional rather than a national identity. Historian David Luft has already suggested such an approach for the study of Austrian cultural and intellectual life from 1900 to 1933. He “regard[s] Austria as a region of German culture both to assert its distinctiveness and to acknowledge its shared heritage with other regions of German culture.” Luft’s argument is important in initiating a new way to think about the relationship between Austria and Germany, although he limits his focus to the ways in which artists, writers, and intellectuals at the time participated in German culture. Using theories about regionalism, exemplified by the work

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26 Steinberg, *Austria as Theater and Ideology*. Ernst Bruckmüller takes a more qualified approach arguing that in period from 1871-1918 there were two German nations: a Reich German nation and a nation of “österreichischen Deutschen.” He makes this argument on the basis that Germans in the Reich did not include Austria in their conceptualization of their particular German nation, and Austrian Germans displayed an Austrian patriotism based on the Habsburg monarchy. According to Bruckmüller, after 1918, there was an “Entösterreicherung des deutsch-österreichischen Bewuβtseins.” Ernst Bruckmüller, “Die Entwicklung des Österreichbewusstseins,” in *Österreichische Nationalgeschichte nach 1945: Die Spiegel der Erinnerung: Die Sicht von innen*, vol. 1, (ed.) Robert Kriechbaumer (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar: Böhlau, 1998), 369-396; Bruckmüller, *The Austrian Nation*.

27 Suval, *The Anschluss Question*, especially the last four chapters; Steinberg, *Austria as Theater and Ideology*. According to Steinberg, for figures like Hofmannsthal and Bahr, who desired to preserve a separate Austrian state, such a redefinition of Austrian identity depended on the idea that “German Austria (Deutschösterreich) embodied not only an authentic German cultural heritage, but the most authentic one” (21).

of Celia Applegate and Alon Confino, in the Austrian case provides the framework to move beyond the realm of intellectual history to the history of national identity.29

In particular, scholars working on the relationship between ideas of the region and nation in German history have highlighted the importance of the concept of Heimat. As Applegate has pointed out, “For almost two centuries, Heimat has been at the center of a German moral – and by extension political – discourse about place, belonging, and identity.”30 Focusing on regions within the Reich, the studies by Applegate, Confino and others have examined the discourses and activities related to the idea of Heimat in order to show that loyalty to the region helped to mediate loyalties to the abstract entity of the German nation (and the first German nation-state of 1871). Furthermore, they have demonstrated the capacity of national identity “to represent the nation without excluding a host of other identities.”31

Although regional studies have concentrated on regions within nation-states to grasp how and why individuals came to identify with the idea of a nation, the approach can be successfully applied to the more complex interwar Austrian situation, in which a region of a particular nation lay outside the borders of the nation-state and even constituted its own country. Although never part of a German nation-state except for the Nazi period from 1938 to 1945, Austrians were also active participants in this discourse concerning Heimat, as the quotations above (and further ones below) illustrate. These cultural commemorations served


as opportunities to promote, discuss and actually explore the particularities of Austrian landscapes, of an Austrian *Heimat*. And, just like the Pfälzers and the Württembergers of Applegate’s and Confino’s works respectively, Austrians used the idea of *Heimat* not only to instill a sense of pride in their region, but also to demonstrate and concretize their membership in a German nation.

Furthermore, the speeches given at the cultural commemorations indicate that Austrians took part in another important discourse that German-speakers employed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to discuss the connections between particularistic and national identifications: the discourse about *Stamm* (tribe). Whereas the term *Heimat* referred to a community bound together by its connection to a specific territory, the term *Stamm* most often referred to a particular ethnic community that lived within this specific region. Like the idea of *Heimat*, the notion of *Stamm* was flexible and multivalent. Hence, although certain contemporaries injected the term with racial meaning, German speakers before 1933 fundamentally envisioned a *Stamm* as a group of people joined by common descent or, at the very least, a common history. However, as was the case with *Heimat*, the notion of *Stamm* did not simply refer to the particular. In the eyes of contemporaries, each tribe – whether Bavarian, Austrian, or Jewish to name a few demarcated by German speakers of the time – was part of a larger German community. Or, as Franz Slama, the Austrian Minister of Justice from 1928-1930 and member of the Greater German People’s Party explained in a speech thanking the Bavarian government for installing a bust of Schubert in Walhalla, the Bavarian “*Volk* is the closest relative of the Austrian *Stamm* in the great

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German family.” The widespread use of terms like Heimat and Stamm by Austrians in these cultural commemorations illustrates that 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.

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. Nor is such a categorization meant to obscure other perceived markers of Austrianness. The Habsburgs, as Douglas Campbell has shown, remained a constitutive part of the definition of Austrianness even after their dethronement in 1918. Yet, from the end of the First World War until the end of the Second World War, ideas of Germanness and the reality of German Reich were equally, if not more important, in the process to (re)create a meaningful new form of Austrian identity. For citizens of the First Republic, their relationship to the German Volk and Reich – although conceptualized in numerous ways – became a fundamental aspect of being Austrian. Their use of the terms Stamm and Heimat articulated the centrality of Germanness and Germany to the diverse ideas about Austrianness.

33 Gedanken zu einer Rede für Dr. Slama, 22 November 1928, ÖStA, AdR, Neues Politisches Archiv (NPA), Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (AA), Karton 393, Liasse Deutschland 33/34 Schubertfeier, Bl. 222.
34 Douglas Patrick Campbell, “The Shadow of the Habsburgs: Memory and National Identity in Austrian Politics and Education, 1918-1955” (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 2006). Campbell argues that regardless of whether politicians regarded the Habsburgs nostalgically or disdainfully, a discussion about the legacy of the Habsburgs was central to Austrian identity in the First Republic (and beyond).
35 The notion of national indifference, which historians of the Habsburg period have recently been emphasizing, quickly began to vanish with the dissolution of the empire and the redrawing of boundaries to create nation-states. Pieter Judson and Marsha Rozenblit (eds.), Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005); Judson, Guardians of the Nation; Zahra, Kidnapped Souls.
Theaters for *Großdeutschum*

The imagining of a transborder German community was not simply the work of unhappy Austrians trying to rise above dissatisfactory postwar conditions. Citizens of the Reich also emphasized the importance of Austria in a greater German nation and enthusiastically participated in the formation of a *großdeutsch* community. As Redslob underlined, the Beethoven, Schubert and Walther festivities amounted to “a celebration of the commitment to *Gesamt-Deutschum*.”

Although one might assume that the Reich German commitment to Germans living beyond the borders of the Weimar Republic was mainly focused on the so-called lost provinces given to Poland by the Allies, Reich Germans paid attention to the predicament of the Austrians. Commenting in another piece on the Beethoven, Schubert and Walther festivities, Redslob again indicated how these celebrations showed “the intellectual togetherness of all Germans, but in particular point[ed] to the commonality between Germany and Austria.”

Indeed, organizers and participants on both sides of the Austro-German border saw these cultural commemorations not only as a way to celebrate the so-called genius of these men and to pay tribute to the specific places where these cultural heroes lived and worked, but also as opportunities to discuss and stage Austro-Reich German togetherness. The political commemorations for the republics, as the previous chapter showed, only touched upon this motif of transborder German community. With cultural figures and creations as the objects of celebration, organizers and participants now focused on the special relationship between Austrians and Reich Germans.

This attempt to use culture to address the unity of German speakers across political boundaries was not a new strategy in imagining a greater German community. Because there

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was no one political entity that could be categorized as a German state before the latter part of the nineteenth century, intellectuals, most famously Herder, developed the notion of a German nation based on a shared language and culture beginning in the late eighteenth century.\(^38\) Even after the establishment of a kleindeutsch state in 1871, which disregarded a purely cultural or ethnic understanding of the German nation due to its exclusion of Austria, the idea of a German Kulturnation persisted and spread to new social classes throughout Central Europe.\(^39\) In line with this tradition of thinking, speakers at the commemorations pointed to the existence of a shared language and culture as important factors which bound Reich Germans and Austrians together. “One language, one mind, one heart unites us into a lasting community of fate [Schicksalsgemeinschaft],” the President of the Würzburg Provincial Finance Ministry proclaimed on the occasion of the Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund annual meeting and Walther celebration in the town during the spring of 1930.\(^40\)

Additionally, as this statement about a single heart suggests, the Romantic conceptualization of the nation as an organic being continued to sustain attempts to showcase Austrian-Reich German togetherness in the Weimar era.

Participants also relied on the increasing popularity of biological – ethnic and racial – ideas to elucidate the underpinnings of the links between Reich Germans and Austrians. Invoking an ethnocultural definition of an Austro-Reich German community, Ludwig Landmann, the mayor of Frankfurt am Main and a member of the German Democratic Party (DDP), explained that “the bond of blood, history and culture” had brought about a “harmony

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\(^38\) For a more detailed overview of the development of a German national consciousness among intellectuals and elites, see James J. Sheehan, *German History 1770-1866* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), especially pp. 3-7; 160-174; 371-388; 836-852.

\(^39\) Applegate and Potter, “Germans as the ‘People of Music,’” 1-35.

\(^40\) Prugger, “Willkommen in Würzburg!,” Österreich-Deutschland (“Heim ins Reich”), May 1930, in BAB, R32/545, here Bl. 113 rs.
of feelings” between Reich Germans and Austrians at the Tenth German Singers’ League Festival. It is interesting to note, however, that the language of blood (usually associated with racial definitions of Germanness) did not surface frequently at these commemorations. Alongside cultural and linguistic definitions of transborder Germanness, ethnocultural ways of thinking about the national community, as the above discussion of the term *Stamm* indicates, were more prevalent than racial ideas among participants in these cultural festivals. Only during the Reich’s official 1932 Goethe celebration in Weimar did the Nazis, who by then occupied key positions in the provincial government of Thuringia, loudly voice their racial conception of the German nation.42

In the case of Beethoven and Walther, commemoration participants could also simply rely on the fact that the two men had lived in territories that could be found in both the Reich and the Austrian Republic to trumpet Austro-Reich German togetherness. Because Beethoven had lived in both Bonn and Vienna, it did not take much finessing for the mayor of Bonn to pronounce that the Beethoven festivities there had “strengthened the cultural bond between the two sister peoples *[Brudervölkern]*.” After all, the mayor emphasized, Beethoven was “the greatest musical hero, who belongs in the same way to Germany and Austria.”43 Similarly, Walther was reported to have lived in numerous areas that, according to the map of Central Europe after the First World War, included Austria, Germany,

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43 Letter from Mayor of Bonn (Johannes Falk) to the Austrian President (Michael Hainisch), Bonn, 9 June 1927, ÖStA, AdR, PrK 4204/1927. For similar interpretations, see speeches by Austrian President Michael Hainisch and the Austrian Ambassador to Germany Felix Frank reprinted in *Deutsches Beethovenfest zu Bonn 1927 anläßlich des 100. Todestages Ludwigs van Beethoven* (Sonderabdruck aus dem Städtischen Verwaltungsbericht 1927).
Czechoslovakia and Italy. Hence, in a radio address to be given to educate listeners about the importance of Walther, Reichskunstwart Redslob explained:

But also as a wanderer between the Danube and the Main, he has seen one thing for all times: the togetherness of Germany and Austria. We do not know with certainty whether his cradle stood somewhere between Bozen (Bolzano) and Meran (Merano) or in Franconia; but we do know one thing: his being, his heart belong as much to Tyrol as to Franconia, belong as much to Germany as to Austria, belong to the single German fatherland.  

Whereas today’s claims by Germans and Austrians to such figures lead to disagreements between citizens of these two countries, großdeutsch enthusiasts before 1945 highlighted the multiple homes of historical persons to further support their claims for the strong links between Reich Germans and Austrians.  

Even in the ceremonies for Schubert, who had only inhabited the area around Vienna, and for Goethe, who had only resided in places within the current borders of Germany, participants highlighted a common German culture. For many contemporaries it was self evident that commemorations for Schubert and Goethe were just as suitable as those for Beethoven and Walther in celebrating the idea of a national community spanning the border between Austria and Germany. “Everything which the German spirit [Geist] created,” Austrian Ambassador to Germany Felix Frank (GDVP) explained, “is the shared cultural treasure of all Germans regardless of citizenship.” Although he made this statement on the occasion of the Bonn Beethoven festival, it nicely sums up a particular view of the

44 “Rundfunkvortrag,” in BAB, R32/545, Bl. 5.
46 Text of Frank’s speech can be found in Deutsches Beethovenfest zu Bonn 1927 anläßlich des 100. Todestages Ludwigs van Beethoven (Sonderabdruck aus dem Städtischen Verwaltungsbericht 1927), 13-14, here 13.
relationship between cultural achievements and the idea of a German nation extending beyond various political boundaries. Dating back to the late eighteenth century, members of the educated classes began to interpret musicians and writers, as well as their creations, as representatives of the German *Volk*, even though these famous literary and musical figures did not necessarily regard themselves and their work as German in a national sense.\(^{47}\)

The rise of a literary culture in the late eighteenth century was one aspect in the development of a German national consciousness in the absence of a single “German” political or territorial entity. This development of a German national consciousness among educated elites was not only due to the work of intellectuals in uncovering an alleged essence of the German *Volk*, but also to the expanding print culture that enabled educated German speakers throughout Central Europe to engage in an exchange of ideas.\(^{48}\) Throughout the nineteenth century, writers such as Goethe became well-known and symbolic figures among the German-vernacular writing and reading publics. As Miklas pointed out in a speech at a 1932 Goethe ceremony in Vienna, Vienna had “the oldest German Goethe community, our Viennese Goethe association,” which was founded in 1878.\(^{49}\) Hence, regardless of dialect and place of residence, German speakers were connected by a shared literary language and canon.

The Schiller celebrations held in November 1859 also serve as a good example of both how widespread territorially a German literary culture had become and how far a German cultural canon had developed by the middle of the nineteenth century. Within

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German-speaking areas of Central Europe, celebrations were held in over 400 cities. By this point, writers had become revered personalities, who took on religious qualities for contemporaries. Furthermore, the three-day Schiller commemoration demonstrates the importance of festivals – in this case, in honor of cultural figures – in providing a forum for numerous sectors of society to participate in discussions about the nation and politics. Celebrants saw Schiller as a symbolic figure for a variety of different causes ranging from liberal demands for more political freedom to calls for German national unity. Despite the prevalent appeals for unity, participants in the 1859 celebrations diverged in their views of whether Schiller represented a kleindeutsch or großdeutsch “Germany.” In the Weimar period, commentators on the Beethoven, Schubert and Walther commemorations overwhelmingly viewed these figures, as well as the Schiller festival, through a großdeutsch lens. Redslob saw all of these commemorations as connected both in terms of symbolism and practice. On the occasion of the Walther celebrations in 1930, Redslob remarked that “the gross-deutsch idea time and again greatly influences the earlier celebrations honoring the intellectual leaders of our Volk, particularly up to the Schiller festival in 1859, as well as those since the recent festivities for Beethoven and Schubert.” He also emphasized that the current festivities were, like the cultural festivals in the middle of the nineteenth century,

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50 Noltenius, “Schiller als Führer und Heiland,” 239.
51 Noltenius, “Schiller als Führer und Heiland,” 239.
53 “[illegible] für [illegible] des Rundfunks. durchgesage 19.5.1930,” in BAB, R32/545, Bl. 2. Also see the text of “Wir feiern Walther von der Vogelweide,” where he also draws connections to the 1828 Dürer celebrations in Nuremberg and the Goethe festivities of 1850 (in BAB, R32/545, Bl. 6-19, here Bl. 7-10).
“popular [Volkstümlich]” and had “an active meaning.”

These celebrations drew people from various social and political backgrounds.

Alongside literary culture, music played an important role in the formation and definition of German national consciousness. In fact, Applegate contends that music was “quite possibly of more importance than German literature” in “the spread of German national feeling in the nineteenth century.” During this period, music scholars, critics, and singers’ associations, increasingly interpreted both classical music and folk songs from a nationalist point of view. They developed the idea of “German music” and “the German song (Lied)”, the notion that music produced by German speakers originated from a specific German national character and therefore amounted to an expression of the German soul. Such ideas continued to inform the views of festival-goers during the Weimar era. As German President Paul von Hindenburg, an honorary patron for the Tenth German Singers’ League Festival, wrote for the first issue of the event’s commemorative newsletter, “The German song [Lied] is the most beautiful and deepest expression of the German mind and the German essence.” Moreover, music and the Lied were seen as possessing a transcendental quality that could unite German speakers across Central Europe.

55 Celia Applegate, “What is German Music? Reflections on the Role of Art in the Creation of the Nation,” German Studies Review 15 (Winter 1992): 21-32, here 25. She makes this claim due to the fact that music was a “cultural form through which they [Germans] could participate actively, regularly, and intensively in a nation that denied them such participation in the political realm,” it extended beyond various political boundaries, and it “cuts across conventional distinctions between popular and elite culture” (30).
A German musical canon assembled since the nineteenth century reflected this notion that music could bypass the many political boundaries in German-speaking Central Europe, even those established in 1866 and 1871 which excluded Austria from Germany. Hence, in the 1920s, citizens of Germany and Austria could easily draw on an already established German musical canon that could disregard the political boundaries set by the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain. Continuing a nineteenth-century practice, German-speakers on both sides of the Austro-German border referred to the Viennese born-and-bred Schubert as “creator of the German song, […] the most endearing representative of Austrian Romanticism,”58 “grandmaster of the German song;”59 “the singer of the Heimat, of the Germans;”60 “the song prince of the German Volk.”61 As these references suggest, Schubert had become the crucial figure during the nineteenth century in constructing a German musical canon that reflected a großdeutsch vision of the German nation. Musicologist Helmut Loos has indicated, “If one defines the aspiration to Greater Germany as a Kulturnation, then all the important regions must be represented in the circle of German masters. As a native of Austria, Schubert was urgently needed as the representative of his region in this canon […]”.62 This special position occupied by Schubert helps to explain the

fervor of the celebrations for him – both the singers’ festival and the November celebrations on the anniversary of his death. In an era when many citizens of the Reich and Austria desired a revision of the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain, Schubert served as a rallying figure.

As scholars of Germany and Austria have highlighted, the persistent talk of unity was due to the fragmentation of cultural, religious, political, economic and social life in German-speaking Central Europe. During the interwar period, individuals advocating Austro-Reich German togetherness had to contend with a host of historical divisions, which persisted after the First World War. Regional differences – which stemmed from the existence of numerous (sometimes opposed) political entities, divisions between Catholics and Protestants, and many (at times, incomprehensible) dialects – created particular difficulties for those German speakers who wished to create a unified German nation and state. Culturally, the antagonism between a Protestant north and a Catholic south created a divide which was difficult to bridge. In the realm of politics, the debate about whether a future Germany should be a kleindeutsch or großdeutsch state, i.e., whether Germany should exclude or include Austria, formed the crux of the so-called German Question since the revolutions of 1848. With the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and the creation of a Prussian-led German Reich in 1871, the exclusion of Austria from a German state had become seemingly permanent. Even after the fall of the Hohenzollern and Habsburg monarchies, whose dynastic rivalries led to the nineteenth-century division, the Allied Powers ensured that the political boundary between the Reich and Austria remained in place.

On pragmatic and symbolic levels, the staging of the cultural commemorations provided a forum to demonstrate that the division between northern and southern German

63 James J. Sheehan, “What is German History?”; Sheehan, German History.
speakers could be overcome, although it is interesting to note that the difference in religious denomination was not mentioned in these four celebrations. The pragmatic side of the staging involved bringing together participants from both sides of the Austro-Reich German border, and beyond. In particular, the Tenth German Singers’ League Festival, held in honor of Schubert in Vienna in the summer of 1928, brought over 100,000 German speakers from around the world. This gathering of German speakers from various regions at the official festival events, as well as in pubs and landmarks around Vienna, encouraged them to interact and learn about one another. In response to a question posed by a Reichspost reporter, “How are you doing in Vienna?,” one singer from Wannweil near Reutlingen in Germany, Georg Sauer, commented with tears in his eyes:

> How should we be doing? This geniality, this love of the Viennese for us, allows us to overlook any inconveniences. However, everything is so, that it could not be better. Until now, we have not known the Austrians; we had no idea that such a Volk lives here. We could not have greeted ourselves more sincerely. We really feel ourselves as brothers among brothers.64

As Sauer’s emotional response demonstrates, contact between Reich Germans and Austrians fostered a feeling of familial togetherness.

Both the coordination of events and spontaneous exchanges between citizens of Germany and Austria prompted observers to declare that the historical antagonism between northern and southern German speakers had been overstated. Reporting on the crowning event of the Singers’ League Festival, a nine-hour parade with over 200,000 marchers and 700,000 spectators, the Neues Wiener Tagblatt rhetorically asked, “Are Vienna and Berlin really antagonistic cities as one generally assumes?” The paper’s answer was no because

“[a]lmost no German city received greater jubilation than Berlin.”

Also commenting on this enthusiastic reception of the Berlin singers by the (mainly Viennese) spectators, the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse* provided a more flowery explanation of this occurrence: “As though the crowd had instinctively felt it, we must provide evidence that all the legends about any antithesis between the characters of these two cities are libel. We must demonstrate that the capital of the German Reich is equally as dear and precious to us as the other great centers of the German character.”

It should not be entirely surprising that this festival provided fertile ground to show what another Viennese paper called the “avowal of brotherhood [*Verbrüderung*] between the German North and the German South.” After all, the founding principle of the German Singers’ League from 1862 stated that it would use the German *Lied* to unite the German *Stämme* (tribes).

According to the press coverage of the 1928 festival, this goal of unity appeared to be realized as there were numerous reports of “scenes of fraternization [*Verbrüderungsszenen*]” happening over the course of the four-day event. Even the most minor and seemingly unimportant occurrences were viewed as evidence of a coming together of Austrians and Reich Germans. For instance, the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* included an anecdote about a singer from Ulm, Germany, who asked a Viennese girl watching the parade to retie his shoes. Upon her doing so, the singer leaned down and kissed the blushing girl on the lips. This impromptu action on the part of the Ulmer singer became for the newspaper “the most

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beautiful kiss representing the avowal of brotherhood [Verbrüderungskuß] during the entire Tenth German Singers’ League Festival.\textsuperscript{70} Moreover, between organized events, this reconciliation continued in cafes and pubs. As the Austrian socialist \textit{Arbeiter-Zeitung} remarked, “The tables unite the tribal groups [Stammesgruppen].”\textsuperscript{71} The commemorative activities such as the singers’ festival which brought large numbers of Reich German and Austrian citizens together were viewed by celebrants as opportunities to dispel stereotypes that German speakers had about one another.

Although perceptions about one another shifted at these commemorations, there still existed the difficulty of communication experienced by German speakers from different regions. Some newspaper accounts of the July festival poked fun at the various dialects and the fact that not all German speakers could actually understand one another.\textsuperscript{72} As the saying, which can be found today on postcards in Austria, goes: A common language differentiates the Germans from the Austrians. Other articles emphasized that even this obstacle could be overcome. The \textit{Neue Freie Presse} reported that the native population was quickly able to teach Reich Germans the Viennese dialect, so much so that the visitors from Hanover or Danzig could eventually understand the ways that people in the districts of Hernals and Ottakring spoke. The paper also emphasized that the Viennese were quickly picking up other German dialects and that “one soon gratifyingly realizes that we already understand each other very well.”\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{71} “Das Sängertfest: Zweihunderttausend und zwei Millionen,” \textit{Arbeiter-Zeitung} (Vienna), 22 July 1928, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{72} For example, see the illustration “Was ein deutscher Sänger in Wien erleben kann,” \textit{Das Kleine Blatt} (Vienna), 22 July 1928. An article in the Arbeiter-Zeitung reported that Viennese children often had trouble understanding other dialects, but that adults could help. “Das Sängertfest,” \textit{Arbeiter-Zeitung}, 20 July 1928, p. 7.
Although most of the events scheduled for the Beethoven, Schubert, Walther and Goethe commemorations did not involve large numbers of Germans and Austrians interacting with one another, the organizers planned to demonstrate Austro-Reich German togetherness in a variety of ways. The involvement of both Austrian and Reich German high profile figures was a strategy often pursued by festivity planners. The Bonn Beethoven celebrations, as well as the Tenth German Singers’ League Festival, were both held under the patronage of Reich President Hindenburg and Austrian President Hainisch. Moreover, politicians, ambassadors and academics from the Reich attended ceremonies in Austria and vice versa. One of the most notable examples occurred during the November celebrations for Schubert when the municipal government of Vienna invited mayors from the Reich’s major cities – Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Dresden, Leipzig, Frankfurt am Main, Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Chemnitz, Magdeburg, Königsberg, Mannheim, and Essen – to attend commemorative events and to learn about the city’s public housing and works projects. This trip, according to organizers, participants and the press, also had a symbolic value in that it “should document in new, especially striking ways the intellectual and cultural togetherness of Germany and Austria.”


theme. To loud applause, Viennese Mayor Seitz of the Social Democratic Party of Austria concluded his speech at the welcoming ceremony:

As Viennese, we wholeheartedly thank you for coming. We Viennese generally like to see foreigners and they are always welcome. But, when Germans from the Reich come to us, then – excuse me if I become almost sentimental – our hearts burst and we are doubly happy. Wherever you stroll through the city, you will always be heartily welcomed. You will see the joy on account of this manifestation of our unity, our tribal brotherhood [Stammesbrüderschaft], our love of art, our reverence for the great common treasure of German culture.

And, at a ceremony at the Schubert Monument in the Stadtpark, Berlin Mayor Gustav Böß of the DDP announced, “I bring the greetings of millions of Germans, who in this minute feel one with their brothers in Austria.”

The Walther ceremonies held in Würzburg left little doubt that the purpose of the commemoration was to demonstrate the strength of an Austro-Reich German community. The Austrian-German People’s League decided to hold its annual meeting in Würzburg to coincide with the city’s celebration because, as Redslob put it, “Walther von der Vogelweide belongs jointly to Germany and Austria; he heralds the idea of togetherness through his figure and his work.” Officials from Germany, Austria and Bavaria also attended the city’s celebrations. Furthermore, a Reich German and Austrian youth weekend was held in honor of Walther on Pentecost.

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80 Letter from the Mayor of Würzburg Dr. Löffler to Reichskunstwart Redslob, Würzburg, 9 October 1929, in BAB, R32/545, Bl. 219 and r.s.; Stadtrat Würzburg, Merkblatt Nr. 1, betreffend Deutsch-Österreichisches Jugendtreffen an Pfingsten 1930, 21 March, 1930, in BAB, R32/545, Bl. 211-215.
Even in times when the staging of a transborder German community did not seem prudent, the idea of Austro-Reich German togetherness continued to be performed, but in a more subtle fashion. After the German Foreign Office sent out feelers to the Austrian government to see if it would be interested in having representation in the honorary committee for the 1932 Goethe celebrations in Weimar, Austrian officials decided against participation due to foreign policy worries and the fact that Austria would hold its own celebrations. Moreover, Austrian President Miklas ruled out attending the Reich’s official Goethe ceremonies for fear of repercussions in the realms of domestic and international politics. For the German ambassador to Austria, these setbacks would not completely rule out depicting a großdeutsch community. Although disappointed by Miklas’s decision, the ambassador remarked, “One has endeavored to grant Austria a particularly preferential position at this celebration.” Rather than being included later in the program with the “foreign academics,” Professor Hans Eibl from Vienna gave his address alongside Walter von Molo from Berlin and Erwin Kolbenheyer from Munich during an event entitled “Hour of the German National Community [Volksgemeinschaft].” Furthermore, the Viennese Burgtheater was the only theater company outside of the Reich to give a performance as part of the Weimar festivities. And, the Austrian government sent the education minister as an official representative despite worries about the economic means to do so. Thus, whether it was a trip made by mayors from the Reich to Austria, the official representation of Austria at the Weimar Goethe ceremonies, or the attendance of the German ambassador at the Mödling

81 See correspondences in ÖStA, AdR, NPA, AA, Kt. 207, Liasse Deutschland 33/13, Goethe-Feier, Bl. 264-292.
84 Bundeskanzleramt, Auswärtige Angelegenheiten, Z. 20478-13, Antrag an den Ministerrat, 1 February 1932, in ÖStA, AdR, NPA, AA, Kt. 207, Deutschland Liasse 33/13 Goethe-Feier, Bl. 265 and rs.
celebration for Walther, the presence of officials from the other country served as a way to surmount the imposed Austro-German border.

There were other concerted and well-planned efforts to transcend the legal boundary as well. To honor Schubert and literally place him in the company of other great German speakers, the Bavarian government installed a bust of Schubert in Walhalla. The official representative of the Austrian government at the ceremony, Justice Minister Franz Slama of the GdVP, proclaimed “that for us it is a gratifying and uplifting certainty that across the border, which exists only on the map but not in our consciousness, a friend and brother lives [...].”85 Making the idea of “two states, one Volk” tangible, Germany and Austria issued commemorative marks and schillings with the same illustration of Walther von der Vogelweide in 1930.86 Additionally, the planners of the Austrian commemoration for Goethe emphasized that they would broadcast the celebration in Weimar on the Austrian radio station (RAVAG) directly before the Viennese ceremony in order to establish a direct link between the German and Austrian events.87

Other ideas for depicting an Austro-Reich German community were aspired to but not realized. Redslob, for instance, had hoped to coordinate Walther celebrations to occur simultaneously in Berlin, Vienna, Innsbruck, Würzburg, Dux (Duchcov) and Eisenach. At the end of these ceremonies, he wanted to orchestrate a release of doves so that “not only the capitals and the sites devoted to Walther von der Vogelweide’s memory would

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85 Gedanken zu einer Rede für Dr. Slama, 22 November 1928, in ÖStA, AdR, NPA, AA, Karton 393, 33/34 Schubertfeier, Bl. 223.
86 The quoted phrase comes from Dr. Ottfried Neubecker (Berlin), “Gedenkmünzen für Walther von der Vogelweide,” Österreich-Deutschland (“Heim ins Reich”), January 1931, in BAB, R32/545, Bl. 356 rs. The original suggestions and support for the joint coin, as well as a joint stamp, came from the writer G.E. Brand, as well as the mayor of Würzburg Löffler and Redslob. Löbe and the Austrian Bundeskanzler Schober also approve the idea of a joint coin. See correspondences in BAB, R32/545, Bl. 84, 222, 224, 309 rs., 310, 316-317, 415, 456; 470.
commemorate him, but also that countless others, who see the flight of the doves and are advised of its meaning through the stories of teachers and the announcements in the press and on the radio, would participate in this celebration, which would simultaneously embody the cultural connection between Germany and Austria.” He thereby expected to “develop the fantasy not only of the onlooker, but also of the entire Volk.” Due to the increasingly desperate financial and political situations in both countries, however, these plans could not be carried out. Although commemorative events in Berlin and Vienna could not be arranged, celebrations did occur in Würzburg, Innsbruck, Eisenach, Mödling, Marienbad, and Dux, which still demonstrated the expanse of the German nation.

Individuals, associations and municipalities also came up with their own initiatives in order to join in the commemorations. Writing from Marienbad (Mariánské Lázně), Czechoslovakia, a retired general of the Austro-Hungarian Army, Rudolf Krauss, enthusiastically devoted himself to the cause of strengthening a transborder German community in Central Europe through a Walther celebration. His recommendations for ways to depict Gesamtdeutschum included the following: ensuring that a book about Walther was in every home; creating Walther national parks in all communities; naming streets, plazas, and forests after Walther; planting Walther linden; dressing people in folk costumes from Walther’s time at wreath-laying ceremonies; making a film of the ceremony; and, bordering on the absurd, naming all German boys born in 1930 Walther von der Vogelweide.

89 Letter from Reichskunstwart Dr. Redslob to the Austrian Ambassador Dr. Franck, 4 March 1930, in BAB, R32/545, Bl. 309 rs.
Some of these initiatives were in fact implemented, and appear to be especially important to German-speaking communities outside of the Reich as a way to prove their Germanness. A commemorative plaque was unveiled in Mödling, Austria for the “greatest German minstrel.”91 The municipal government of Salzburg named a street 

*Vogelweiderstrasse* “after this German.”92 In Marienbad, the local chapter of the League of Germans in Bohemia (*Bund der Deutschen in Böhmen*), various German associations, and Krauss led efforts to create a commemorative plaque for Walther. At the unveiling ceremony, a city councilor gave the monument over to the care of the city, remarking “that it may always be a reminder for the German population of Marienbad of their national loyalty.” Moreover, according to the *Marienbader Zeitung*, “Through the erection of a monument, Marienbad is, alongside the population of Dux, the only one of the German areas of the Sudetenland to have found the most dignified and impressive form which will also show future generations that the Germans of our *Heimat* uphold their national consciousness and the veneration of their intellectual greatness even in the most difficult of times.”93 By honoring figures considered to be German heroes, German speakers outside of Germany could become active members of the German nation.

For all these attempts to bring German speakers together, especially Reich Germans and Austrians, such festivities did not seek to present the idea of a homogenous German community. In the ongoing debate about whether the German nation should be characterized

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by the sameness or diversity of its members, the commemoration organizers, speakers, and many observers often emphasized and praised the latter of the two options. The frequent reference to *Stamm* and *Heimat* on the part of Reich Germans and Austrians at these commemorations demonstrates that they did not seek to erase regional differences for the sake of national unity. Visually, the parade at the singers’ festival provided the most striking representation of this idea. It did not seek “cultural totality and the resistance to fragmentation and ambiguity,” which Steinberg identifies as the fundamental and problematic characteristics of such events as the Salzburg Festival and the 1934 Nazi Nuremberg Rally. Marching according to region, the singers used signs, floats, symbols of their hometown and folk costumes to demonstrate both their pride in their regional specificities and their attachment to an overall German national community. As Seitz remarked, “We see before us the parade, a wonderful picture of the solidarity of all Germans. We see in the parade the variety of German work, German art, German intellect, and became strengthened anew in the vigor and in the self-assurance of our *Volk*.” According to this point of view, it was precisely the heterogeneity of the German *Volk* which contributed to its dynamism.

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95 Steinberg, *Austria as Theater and Ideology*, 225.

96 This parade has many interesting similarities and differences with the *Kaiser-Huldigungs-Festzug* held in 1908 in Vienna. Like the 1908 parade, the 1928 procession was organized around the symbols and traditional dress of various regions in an attempt to display both diversity and unity. However, whereas the 1908 celebration was to demonstrate that the various nationalities of the Habsburg Empire supported Franz Joseph and thereby Austrian patriotism, the 1928 festivities aimed to demonstrate the unity of the German nation regardless of state boundaries. This changed focus again highlights how radical the geopolitical transformations after the First World War were, especially for residents of the rump state of Austria. For information on the 1908 celebrations see Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism*, Conclusion.

Not everyone was happy with how this diversity was represented at the parade. Although Seitz, the Social Democratic mayor of Vienna, spoke only words of praise for the events at the festival, Austrian socialist papers in particular were critical of the use of imperial uniforms and songs, as well as folk costumes and scenes. “Heralds, accoutrements of knighthood, medieval times, Old Vienna,” commented Das Kleine Blatt, “a bit too much from back then, too little from today, and nothing at all that points to the future.” Yet, the festival and other commemorative events were not simply backward-looking. Alongside such traditional floats as those for Old Vienna and an Upper Austrian farmers’ wedding, singers from Zwickau portrayed a coal-mining scene and Dessau was represented with a small airplane. More nuanced reports observed the blend between the past and present found during the festival. As a writer for the Neues Wiener Tagblatt noted:

The space of the [Singers’] Hall – the aesthetics of engineering, the beauty of the purpose, the director on a tower, the gigantic deployment of the troops of singers, the transmitting station – [is] not just work, but modern work, work from 1928, which barely a year earlier could have been achieved properly. Modern and yet with ties to the past, to the traditional culture, which one loves about Vienna and which one searches for in Vienna.

The endeavors to build a transborder German community, therefore, did not advocate a flight from modernity. Rather, the festivities used modern technologies, as well as a mixture of older and modern symbols, to showcase the diversity and strength of a großdeutsch community.

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Although many commemorations aimed to demonstrate that regional variations and state boundaries could not prevent a show of cultural unity between Reich Germans and Austrians, organizers and participants still had to address postwar political divisions. State holidays and symbols, especially in Austria, often became flashpoints in the struggles between different political parties. That this was not the case for the cultural festivities can be quickly gleaned from a comparison of the number of violent, political incidents that occurred on the Ringstrasse for the state holiday on November 12 and the singers’ festival. Whereas many fights were reported between followers of the SDAP and supporters of conservative or right-wing organizations during November 12 celebrations, only one minor skirmish reportedly occurred during the festival. Indeed, for many of the cultural festivities, organizers tried to avoid association with a particular political party or ideology for they hoped that the focus on a shared literary and musical culture would allow for the increasing political polarization to be overcome. In a request for the Austrian president to be an honorary chairperson of the Singers’ League Festival, the leaders of the Ostmärkischen Sängerbund and the steering committee of the festival stated that they rejected any political affiliation. It was on these grounds the Austrian army decided to participate in the festival even though regulations stated that the military could not take part in private events. Additionally, in their suggestions for celebrating Walther, Krauss stressed “everything

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101 According to police reports, some communists and streetcar workers encircled a group of singers and tried to pull them from their cars and beat them up. Although the singers retreated, a crowd remained and was divided between those who were for and against the singers. The police were called and eventually broke up the crowd. Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, Pr.Zl.IV-1406/30/28, 10. Deutsches Sängerbundesfest, 26 July 1928, in ÖStA, AdR, BKA, Berichte der Wiener Polizeidirektion, Kt. 12.


unpolitical” and G.E. Brand emphasized that the festivities must be “nonpartisan.”

Because cultural figures were at the center of the celebrations, such lofty aspirations were not entirely unrealistic. The admiration for personalities such as Beethoven, Schubert and Goethe extended across party lines with everyone from Communists to Nazis showing an appreciation for these men and their works.

Agreement on the importance of recognizing these cultural accomplishments did not translate into a consensus on how these cultural figures and their works should be interpreted for the present day. Organizations with a certain political agenda arranged their own celebrations, which interpreted the cultural figures and the commemoration of them according to the association’s ideology. The Christian Social Workers’ Association (Christlichsoziale Arbeiterverein), for instance, combined the 36th anniversary of its founding alongside a celebration for Schubert. The speaker at the event decried the modern-day situation while looking back fondly at the time of Schubert, and described Schubert as “creator of authentic German and – as we must see for ourselves particularly in the German Mass – authentic Christian feeling.”

Newspapers that supported a particular political platform also reported on the large celebrations according to their viewpoint. In the pages of the press the battle between political viewpoints during the commemorations primarily took place. During the singers’ festival and the November Schubert celebrations, recriminations broke out between Austrian

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105 Examining the reception of Beethoven in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, David Dennis argues that various political parties interpreted Beethoven according to their ideologies and used him to promote their political agendas. Dennis, Beethoven in German Politics.

socialist-leaning newspapers, on the one hand, and the range of non-socialist publications on the other. Many of the socialist papers came to ambivalent conclusions about the meaning of the singers’ festival: they criticized the “lower-middle-class [kleinbürgerlich]” motives and motifs of the Singers’ League, but took pride in showing off the achievements of “Red Vienna” to the many visitors and reveled in the depictions of Großdeutschum. The liberal, German-progressive Neue Freie Presse accused the Arbeiter-Zeitung in particular of “perversity” for bringing in party politics, claiming the cause of Großdeutschum for the workers alone, and disdaining the lower-middle class. Again, during the November commemorations, a similar dispute took place when it came to light that a socialist member of the advisory board of RAVAG (the Austrian radio broadcast station) had criticized the station’s Schubert programming for having too much religious music and declared that Schubert was a proletarian.

Ideological interpretations of the cultural figures and the contemporary commemorations were almost exclusively confined to the press and were rarely voiced during the larger commemorative ceremonies. The plans for and speeches at the general commemorations were politically neutral. Moreover, for many of the celebrations, participants hailed from across the political spectrum. A few examples can be named. Although the German Singers’ League was a movement of the middle classes, Social Democratic leaders – Reich Minister of the Interior Carl Severing, Reichstag President Paul Löbe, Viennese Mayor Seitz – enthusiastically participated in the Singers’ League Festival.

107 For example, see “Sängerfeste,” Arbeiter-Zeitung, 20 July 1928, p. 1.
In its article critiquing the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*’s handling of the festival, the *Neue Freie Presse* made sure to point out this contradiction between the attitudes of the socialist leadership and party organs. The German mayors that traveled to Vienna for the November Schubert commemorations and the Austrian mayors that visited Würzburg to celebrate Walther represented various political parties. During the ceremony in Würzburg, both middle-class and working-class singers’ associations performed.\(^{110}\) This divergence between how the press covered the commemorations and what happened at the celebrations is due, in part, to the different audiences they were addressing. Whereas the newspapers were writing for a like-minded readership, the large commemorative ceremonies had to appeal to people from various social and political backgrounds.

Also crucial to understanding the ability of such commemorations to draw a wide range of social and political actors together was the fact that many of the festivities were celebrating the idea of a *großdeutsch* nation. “In any case, the entire city was out and about,” the German ambassador to Austria stated in his report on the parade at the Singers’ League Festival, “great enthusiasm dominated, the decisive source being the common German [gemeindeutsch] feeling.”\(^{111}\) That such a politically and socially divided city as Vienna could be brought together in this instance was possible because the imagining of a transborder German community was not exclusive to the extreme political right during the Weimar era. With the exception of the communists, individuals from across the political spectrum participated in the commemoration of this greater German cultural nation. In this sense, the idea of *Großdeutschtum* functioned in a similar way to the concepts of *Heimat* and


\(^{111}\) Letter from Deutsche Gesandtschaft Wien (Lerchenfeld) to the Auswärtige Amt Berlin, A. 345, Vienna, 24 July 1928, in PAAA, R73302, II Oe 1280.
Stamm. Scholars who have investigated the idea of Heimat have emphasized the concept’s flexibility and ambiguity.\(^\text{112}\) And although historians Adelheid von Saldern and Eric Kurlander too narrowly define Stamm as an exclusively völkisch and conservative idea, Till van Rahden provides a useful corrective by demonstrating how minority groups, such as Jews, used the term to participate in the national community, emphasizing the term’s association with democracy.\(^\text{113}\) After all the preamble of the Weimar Constitution stated that the German Volk was “united in its tribes.” All three ideas could be defined and employed by a variety of social and political actors for different ends. Hence, when it came to celebrations of a großdeutsch nation, leaders and members of various political parties were eager to participate in order to show their commitment to the cause. Although each political and social group filled the idea of Großdeutschum with distinct content, the idea crossed party and class lines, just as it did the division between northern and southern German cultures.\(^\text{114}\)

**Rehearsals for Anschluss**

For many supporters of Großdeutschum, there still existed a further division that prevented the full realization of unity between Reich Germans and Austrians: the Entente-enforced boundary between Germany and Austria. The community which various organizers and participants sought to embody at the celebrations was not simply that of a Kulturnation united by language, culture, history, and in some cases blood. Whether explicitly stated or


\(^{114}\) Also see Suval, *The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era.*
not, they hoped to overcome the disjuncture between imaginings of a German cultural nation and the political realities of two separate states. Even after the victorious powers outlawed an *Anschluss* between the two countries, support for it remained strong on both sides of the border. Whereas some *Anschluss* advocates lobbied and prepared for a political union with detailed treatises on the coordination of the two states’ legal and economic systems, others saw a shared culture, history and experience as the principal building blocks for a future *Anschluss*. For the Walther celebrations in Würzburg, an unnamed writer explained, “The first thing is deep feeling” because economic and political unity would follow from the “will of the heart.”¹¹⁵ Or, as Karl Hosius, rector of the University of Würzburg commented, “If peoples of the same language, same culture, and centuries-long solidarity live next to each other, then the will to a united state [*Einheitsstaat*] is a matter of course […].”¹¹⁶ As a consequence of this type of thinking, certain cultural commemorations – especially the singers’ festival, as well as the Walther von der Vogelweide ceremonies in Würzburg – provided fertile ground for *Anschluss* demonstrations.

Not content simply to say that the Austro-Reich German border did not exist in people’s consciousness, as Slama did at the Walhalla ceremony, organizers and participants at these commemorations boldly declared that they wanted the legal boundary to be eliminated. In welcoming the Austrian-German People’s League to Würzburg, Mayor Hans Löffler stated that “Walther’s spirit […] makes clear that the border markers between the Germans in the east and the west must be loosened and lifted up as soon as possible.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Karl Hosius, “Willkommen in Würzburg!,” *Österreich-Deutschland (“Heim ins Reich”)*, May 1930, in BAB, R32/545, Bl. 113 rs.
Furthermore, at this commemoration, Löbe, Redslob, the mayors from Graz, Linz, Salzburg and the deputy mayor from Innsbruck all declared themselves in favor of an *Anschluss*. The former chancellor of Austria, Ernst Streeruwitz, a Christian Social, closed his 1930 speech with the words: “One Volk, one Reich.”

The Tenth German Singers’ League Festival in 1928 was even more spectacular in its promotion of these ideas. Due to the festival’s large scale, as it was broadcast to millions of radio listeners in Austria and the Reich, as well as the uproar it prompted at the international level, the remainder of this section focuses on this event.

From the early planning stages of the festival, the organization’s leaders saw the *Anschluss* as a central component of the celebrations and made no secret of it. Already a year in advance of the celebrations, the chairman of the German Singers’ League wrote in the first issue of the commemorative newsletter, “Both main performances are dedicated to the German song and the German fatherland. Never before was this great aim so obviously embodied as in the honoring of the German song prince Franz Schubert and in the rally for the *Anschluss* idea.” The parade, he continued, would fulfill the organization’s “task of the mental preparation of the entire German *Volk* for the coming union [Zusammenschluss].”

The organizing committee even went so far as to name the third main performance “*Anschluss*-Rally.” And, as one might infer from the festival’s success in bolstering a sense of *Großdeutschum*, the planners’ expectations to stage an *Anschluss* demonstration were not disappointed.

For those who witnessed it, almost every detail of the festival pointed to the desire for and potential success of a future *Anschluss*. “Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles”

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118 “‘Ein Volk, ein Reich,’ *Vossische Zeitung*, 13 May 1930, in BAB, R32/545, Bl. 73.
permeated the air during the festival at the main events, as well as open-air concerts held by the various regional singers’ associations. Reporting on the “Anschluss-Rally” performance, the Wiener Neueste Nachrichten, stated that whoever “heard the Deutschlandlied, sung from one hundred thousand people, [...], had the impression that Greater Germany [Großdeutschland] has actually already been created and everything in the future is only the work concerning implementation.”\(^{120}\) Toward the beginning of the parade, flag swingers offered viewers a performance involving black-red-gold flags and red-white-red flags. If there were any doubts of the political implications of this staging, one only had to look at a design by Secession artist Franz Wacik for the official commemorative ribbons: a young man was standing on a platform with the insignia of the German Singers’ League and holding up the two countries’ flags. A streamer coming from one of the flags proclaimed “Anschluss!”\(^{121}\) The attendance of political leaders from the Reich and Austria at the events also provided a striking visual of a special relationship between the two states. One report by the Austrian president’s office pointed out how the Austrian president, his wife, the Austrian chancellor, the Reich minister of the interior and the Viennese mayor were all seated together at the opening event. It added that, “naturally,” the German ambassador sat in the president’s box and not in the diplomats’ section.\(^{122}\)

In the eyes of many participants, the visual pageantry of the weekend exceeded the organizers’ goal of staging an Anschluss rally. In a speech at the Viennese city hall, Löbe declared, “After the great experience of the festival and particularly after the nine-hour


\(^{121}\) For this design, as well as four others, see “5 offizielle Erinnerungsbänder,” Festblätter für das 10. Deutsche Sängerbundesfest Wien 1928, Folge 10, Juli 1928, 277.

viewing of the parade, it is for me a certainty that this day has become the greatest rally for Anschluss and the unity of Germans that the world has ever seen.”\textsuperscript{123} The size and success of the various festival events also provided observers with proof that the political union of the two states could occur successfully. “The hundreds of thousands, which came together this week in Vienna, have proved that Greater Germany [Großdeutschland] is no longer just a dream, a desire, but it has become firmly rooted in the consciousness of the Reich German and Austrian peoples as a living idea,” a Berlin-based illustrated weekly wrote.\textsuperscript{124}

If there remained those who were wary of an Anschluss, prominent political figures tried to put their doubts to rest. Nuremberg Mayor Hermann Luppe, a member of the DDP, attempted to allay the fears of both Reich German and Austrian skeptics. He assured Reich Germans, who worried that Austria could be a political or economic “burden,” that “on the contrary, we [democratic politicians] consider the Austrian Volk as a very valuable acquisition if one surveys the diversity of the German tribes [der deutschen Stämme].” Valuing this diversity, he cited the example of the parade to assure unconvinced Austrians that “that which concerns the particularity of its [Austrian] culture, will also be preserved in the great German Reich.”\textsuperscript{125} During a visit to Eisenstadt after the singers’ festival, Löbe proclaimed that the events in Vienna, as well as Anschluss rallies in Eisenstadt and Graz, proved that the Anschluss movement was not simply “a north German doing.” Rather, Reich Germans and Austrians pursued a shared goal of political union.\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{123} “‘Die größte Kundgebung für die deutsche Einheit.’ Eine Rede des Präsidenten Loebe im Rathaus,”\textsuperscript{124} Neue Freie Presse (Abendblatt), 23 July 1928, in ÖStA, AdR, PrK 5149/1928.\textsuperscript{125} “Das Wiener Sängerfest,”\textsuperscript{126} Hackebeils Illustrierte: Aktuelle Wochenschrift (Berlin), 2 August 1928, in ÖStA, AdR, PrK 5149/1928.\textsuperscript{125} Quoted in “Die Feststadt Wien und der Anschlußgedanke. Äußerungen der Oberbürgermeister von Nürnberg und Frankfurt,”\textsuperscript{126} Neue Freie Presse (Abendblatt), 23 July 1928, p. 6, in ÖStA, AdR, PrK 5149/1928.\textsuperscript{124} “Das Burgenland will heim ins Reich!”\textsuperscript{125} Wiener Neueste Nachrichten, 26 July 1928, enclosed in letter from the Deutsche Gesandtschaft Wien to the Auswärtige Amt Berlin, A 364, Vienna, 31 July 1928, in PAAA, R73302, II Oe 1327.
Festivals were not confined to the realm of culture when it came to the national question; they moved firmly into the realm of politics just as the nineteenth-century commemorations had. In both cases, the honoring of cultural figures turned into calls for national unity. Unlike the events of the previous century, however, the commemorations of the late 1920s and early 1930s were not directed against the participants’ governments. Rather, organizers and participants held these rallies in opposition to the Paris Peace Settlements and the foreign governments that supported these treaties. They called for, as Chapter Two also highlighted, the revision of the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain on the grounds that the German right to self-determination had been violated. “We want to be a united German Volk!,” Löbe exclaimed in his speech at the Viennese city hall during the Singers’ League Festival, while also clarifying that he had come to the event as a private citizen and not as the president of the Reichstag. “Should today not also be for all foreigners a sign? Can one permanently deny a seventy-million people what every other people is guaranteed? No one is capable of this, little could have been done to prevent the Italian unification and the independence of the Slavic people. Still even less will one be able to prevent the German Volk from achieving its right to self-determination,” he continued to stormy applause.127 Although not all attendees of the festival made such demands, a prime example being Seipel, the greater part of festival-goers challenged the postwar settlement in no uncertain terms.

Alongside opposition to the forbiddance of an Anschluss, participants also protested the awarding of South Tyrol to Italy and the French occupation of the Rhineland, Ruhr and

127 “Die größte Kundgebung für die deutsche Einheit.’ Eine Rede des Präsidenten Loebe im Rathaus,” Neue Freie Presse (Abendblatt), 23 July 1928, in ÖStA, AdR, PrK 5149/1928. These are excerpts from one reported version of the speech. The Neues Wiener Tagblatt carried another version of the speech in which the language was different, but the message was the same. See “Empfang im Rathause,” Neues Wiener Tagblatt, 23 July 1928, p. 5, in ÖStA, AdR, PrK 5149/1928.
Saarland. According to newspaper and police accounts, throughout the weekend and especially at the parade, one heard the frequent singing of “Wacht am Rhein” and the “Andreas-Hofer Lied,” a song from 1831 commemorating the deeds of a Tyrolean patriot who had led battles against Napoleonic forces. Singers from these regions at the parade also provided visuals to make their political desires clear. A group from the Saar dressed in black and carried a sign that read “Saarland, back to the fatherland.” To symbolize the loss of South Tyrol (and perhaps due to the inability of the South Tyroleans to travel to the festival), there appeared only three men in folk costume followed by a large gap where the South Tyroleans should have been marching. Additionally, floats from Tyrol were decorated with black flags, as well as the coats of arms of South Tyrolean cities.128 The representation of these areas in the open-air concerts and the parade reportedly elicited a supportive and emotional response from the hundreds of thousands of spectators. Singers from the occupied territories were greeted with particular enthusiasm and sympathy, as well as calls of “Hail the free song and the free Rhine!”129 When the lone representatives of South Tyrol marched by, everyone spontaneously rose from their seats and stood in momentary silence. The crowd greeted the Tyrolean references to South Tyrol with “Hail South Tyrol,” as well as a few individuals calling out “Boo Italy” and “Back to the fatherland.”130

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Just as singers’ associations used opposition to foreign enemies as a “new legitimative and integrative principle” to bolster their calls for national unity among different social and political groups during the nineteenth century, \(^{131}\) so too did participants in the singers’ festival of 1928. In other words, alongside the more abstract idea of *Großdeutschum*, calls for the revision of the peace treaties created a common cause for people from various political and social milieus. Although contemptuous of the middle-class origins of the singers, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* granted that these political divisions could be overcome through the common goal of an *Anschluss*. “Other political, other cultural ideals preoccupy us than those of the lower-middle-class singers, which gather in Red Vienna,” the newspaper stated, “but one idea, one will unites us with them, the idea of a great republic of the entire German *Volk*.”\(^{132}\) The Bavarian press, whether on the right or the left of the political spectrum, also enthusiastically endorsed the *Anschluss* displays according to a report by the Reich’s representative to the province.\(^{133}\)

Furthermore, the *Anschluss* rallies physically brought together members of political parties that would under other circumstances not choose to associate with one another. A reporter for the Berlin-based liberal *Vossische Zeitung* pointed out that parliamentary representatives from the Christian Social, Greater German, and Rural Federation parties attended the “*Anschluss*-Rally” alongside the socialists Seitz, Löbe and Severing.\(^{134}\) And when members of the Schwabian Singers’ League passed through Tyrol on their way home from the festival in Vienna, a representative from the Württemberg Landtag pointed out that

\(^{131}\) Klenke makes this a main point in his discussion of the singers’ associations. For the quote, see Klenke, *Der Singende “Deutsche Mann”*, 96.


\(^{133}\) Letter from the Vertretung der Reichsregierung München to the Reichskanzlei Berlin, A. Nr. 273, Munich, 25 July 1928, in PAAA, R73302, II Oe 1299.

an Anschluss gathering in the Burgenland had shown how desire for a greater Germany prevailed over party politics. “Next to the German National People’s Party member with the Stahlhelm emblem stood the Social Democrat with the Reichsbanner emblem and spoke about the great, German unified Reich [Einheitsreich],” Dr. Walther Hölscher of the DNVP announced. “There, for perhaps the first time, the idea of the Reich publicly bridged the separating divide of the parties.” Hölscher’s statement highlights the ability of cultural celebrations, which were connected with Anschluss demonstrations, to bring together members of openly hostile political organizations that, in the context of Constitution Day, would not appear with one another.

Not only did the Singers’ League Festival enable participants and observers to speak about the transcendence of political divisions, but it also gave republicans – socialists and liberals alike – an opportunity once again to emphasize the connection between an Anschluss and democracy. Whereas those further right on the political spectrum stressed that an Anschluss would lead to a greater Reich or state, the democrats underlined that the desired political union would be between two republics. For example, at the end of his speech in which he challenged the Allies to recognize the German people’s right to self-determination, Löbe “finally raised his glass to the lively calls hailing the großdeutsch republic of the

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136 For example, a dispute erupted between the Reichsbanner, the Stahlhelm, and the federal government over the Stahlhelm’s possible participation in a parade for the 1927 Constitution Day. The Stahlhelm refused to march in a parade for the republic, which prompted the government to almost cancel the parade. The Reichsbanner protested, arguing that the Stahlhelm actively fought to undermine the republic and therefore should not be included.

future.” An Austrian socialist newspaper, which displayed ambivalence about the fact that the singers were from the middle classes, still enthusiastically saw the festival as “an impressive rally for Austria’s Anschluss with the great, German republic.” As the leaders of a more general Anschluss movement during the Weimar period, socialist and liberal democrats believed that an Austro-German political union would help to stabilize and strengthen the republican form of government in both countries. Landmann, the DDP mayor of Frankfurt, expressed such a view in hoping that the widespread display of the Weimar Republic’s contested colors of black-red-gold during the singers’ festival would lead to “the attitude towards the new Germany experiencing a fundamental intensification” among Reich Germans.

Republicans hoped that their support of an Anschluss would aid them in demonstrating their sincere national convictions at a time when the nation had become a primary source of identification for many Europeans. The statements about Großdeutschum and Anschluss by various socialists and liberals once again highlight the existence of “democratic nationalism” and “democratic revisionism” during the Weimar period. Thus, unlike the Anschluss accomplished by Hitler, republicans sought to create a Greater Germany based on tolerant and democratic principles. For example, during an Anschluss rally in Wulkaprodersdorf, a town with a sizeable Croatian population, the

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140 Suval, The Anschluss Question. Jürgen C. Heß also makes this point with regard to the DDP. See Heß, “Das Ganze Deutschland soll es sein”, especially 204-221.
142 Suval, The Anschluss Question; Heß, “Das Ganze Deutschland soll es sein”.
143 For a good summary of the tenets of “democratic nationalism,” see Heß, “Das Ganze Deutschland soll es sein,” 351-357. While pointing out the differences between democratic and right-wing nationalism, he acknowledges that democratic nationalists could also at time include unsavoury characteristics in their views of the nation and state.
socialist Löbe, standing with members of the DVP and DNVP, stressed that “the Croatian minority, when the union [...] with Germany is executed, will, in the great German republic, enjoy all those rights which they can lay claim to as a minority.”

The participation of numerous Social Democratic leaders in these festivals also underlines the fact that the nationalism on the part of many Austrian and German socialists was not simply due to the fact that they viewed Germany as the birthplace of the Social Democratic movement. Their pronouncements at the commemorations for the musical and literary figures also point to their belief in a German nation predicated on a cultural community and traditions. Whether socialist or liberal, the proponents of this “democratic nationalism” demonstrate that scholars should not solely view the phenomenon of German nationalism from the standpoint of the Nazi period. Although liberals and even socialists at times included unsavory elements in their statements about the nation, the

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144 “Anschlusskundgebung in Burgenland,” Neue Freie Presse, 26 July 1928, enclosed in II Oe 1327, PAAA, R73302.
145 Maync, “For a Socialist Europe!,” chapter 6. Maync talks about “SPD chauvinism” and even touches upon the nationalism of some SPD members, but every time links it back to social democracy.
146 Steinberg makes such an argument with regard to Renner and Bauer. Steinberg, Austria as Theater and Ideology, 120. One could also look at Löbe’s chairmanship of the Berlin branch of the Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund, an organization which promoted Anschluss but not on socialist or even democratic grounds. It brought together leading personalities of all political persuasions. The Viennese chairman, for example, was Hermann Neubacher, who would later become the mayor of Vienna after Nazi-led Anschluss. In a memoir written after the Second World War, Löbe described many of the proponents of Anschluss in the period from 1918 to 1933 as having a “healthy national feeling” compared to the “bullish nationalism” of the Nazis. Löbe, Der Weg war lang: Erinnerungen (1949; reprint Berlin: arani-Verlag, 1990), 132. I would also disagree with Maync that Löbe’s participation in Count Coudenhove-Kalergi’s Pan Europe meant that he was not a nationalist, for individuals often reconciled internationalist aims with nationalist ones. See Maync, “For a Socialist Europe!,” 346-348.
147 For scholars who display this tendency, see Liah Greenfeld, Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); George Mosse, The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich (New York: H. Fertig, 1975).
148 Eric Kurlander argues that German liberals increasingly declined a nationalism based on “universalist” ideals in favor of one founded on “völkisch” values. He even contends, “Indeed, German liberals prepared the ground for Nazism, not merely in their passive role as unsuccessful defenders of the Weimar republican order, but by affirming and simultaneously exploiting the ethnic preoccupations of their middle-class constituencies” (5). For Kurlander, any nationalism which privileges an ethnic or cultural community, even if it also promotes democratic institutions, is “völkisch.” Kurlander, The Price of Exclusion: Ethnicity, National Identity, and the Decline of German Liberalism, 1898-1933 (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006).
characterization of German nationalism as “bad” nationalism fails to take into account the
nuances of German nationalism during the Weimar period. From 1918 to 1933, there existed
numerous understandings of who, what and where could be categorized as German.

**Universalism and Nationalism on the International Stage**

Some festivals moved beyond showcasing a transborder German community. Although the *Anschluss* demonstrations at the singer’s festival raised the ire of many European countries, especially France and Czechoslovakia, participants at other commemorations sought to create an international community, or at least a European one. As the opening suggests, contemporaries believed that music could not only unite German speakers, but that it could also bring together people from around the world. Since the nineteenth century, (instrumental) music was viewed as possessing a universal quality. The works of classical composers, according to this line of thinking, could cross state and national boundaries and affect people regardless of where they lived. Picking up on this tradition, the Austrian Justice Minister explained at a ceremony for Schubert, “[t]he tones of music are able to penetrate the deepest depths of the human soul, depths which are inaccessible to the sound of language, even thought itself. For this reason, music becomes

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149 Some foreign papers and diplomats – including those from the United Kingdom, Latvia, Holland, and Romania – recognized the merit of democrats’ arguments that an *Anschluss* would help the cause of democracy and saw the political union as a way to strengthen democracy. Furthermore, they agreed that Wilsonian principle of self-determination had been violated when the Allies prohibited an *Anschluss*. Others, especially France and Czechoslovakia, were extremely upset by the political implications of the Sängerbundesfest. The French tended to argue that the Sängerbundesfest showed that Reich Germans still held onto a prewar German imperial ambition and that the peace of Europe was at stake. The Czechoslovaks also viewed the Sängerbundesfest as a threat to peace, but argued that the Austrians were mainly responsible. For documents related to foreign opinion, see PAAA, R 73302. Also consult, letter from the Austrian Embassy in Prague to the (Austrian) Chancellor, Prague, 28 July 1928, in ÖStA, AdR, NPA, AA, Karton 108, Liass Deutschland I/1, Anschlussbewegung 1926, Bl. 557-561.
the common instrument for understanding and contact among all civilized peoples.” In its allegedly universal appeal, music could overcome the barriers of language and serve as a means to unite listeners around the globe.

Following the devastation caused by the Great War, the celebrations of classical music became an opportunity to demonstrate that the scars of the war were healing. The most significant commemoration in this regard was the official Austrian celebration of Beethoven, which was held in conjunction with an international music history congress in March 1927. “The Beethoven commemoration is,” Hainisch stated, “perhaps the first opportunity since the catastrophe of 1914 to bring together all civilized peoples in a unified spirit and for a common purpose: to pay homage to the greatest master of musical art.”

One glance at the lists of honorary committee members and attendees highlights the scope of this attempt at international reconciliation. Representatives from countries as diverse as Uruguay, the United States, France, Romania, the Soviet Union, Turkey, Persia, China and Japan – to name just a few – participated in this commemoration. This celebration could draw such a large crowd because, by this time, a worldwide audience regarded Beethoven as “the great, ingenious master” and “the new Prometheus, who in his creations gave humanity the imperative for brotherly love and truth.” And in assembling such an international crowd of admirers, George Eastman, the founder of the Kodak Film Company and chairman

150 Gedanken zu einer Rede für Dr. Slama, 22 November 1928, ÖStA, AdR, NPA, AA, Karton 393, 33/34 Schubertfeier, Bl. 222.
153 First quote come from a telegram sent by the Nordvaestra Skanes Orkesterfoerening in Helsingsborg, Sweden. The second statement is an excerpt from a longer description by the rector of the Glazunov Conservatory in Leningrad. Full texts can be found in Exekutivkomitee der Feier, Festbericht: Beethoven-Zentenarfeier, 22.
of the Columbia Phonograph Company’s Beethoven Week, concluded that “a forward step is taken for international goodwill.”

Internationalist inclinations did not negate or even supersede nationalist interpretations of cultural heroes and their works. For Austrians and Reich Germans, the international recognition of the greatness of Beethoven, Schubert, and Goethe provided another reason to proclaim the greatness and uniqueness of the German nation. Even though speakers at these commemorations would readily state that these men and their creations “belong today to the entire world and humankind,” they simultaneously emphasized that each figure “is one of our own.” As the first two sections of the chapter demonstrated, contemporaries argued that composers and writers were representatives of the nation. According to this idea, in praising Beethoven’s music as having transcendent qualities, one was really honoring German music. “Just as art in general,” a speaker at the Bonn Beethoven festival commented, “German music in particular is an instrument of fraternization and reconciliation among peoples.”

Although the use of universalism to promote nationalism might appear contradictory at first glance, scholars have convincingly shown that the two ideas were intimately connected for German speakers living in the nineteenth and earlier parts of the twentieth centuries. As Bernd Sponheuer points out with regard to universalism, “The universalist concept as an expression of a purely ‘human’ and supranational quality can hardly be separated from claims of German musical superiority (the Germans as ‘homin…”

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155 Quotes taken from a speech given by German Chancellor Wilhelm Marx of the Centre Party, which can be found in Beethovenfest zu Bonn 1927 anlässlich des 100. Todesstages Ludwigs van Beethoven (Sonderabdruck aus dem Städtischen Verwaltungsbericht 1927), 9.
156 Deutsches Beethovenfest zu Bonn 1927 anläßlich des 100. Todesstages Ludwigs van Beethoven (Sonderabdruck aus dem Städtischen Verwaltungsbericht 1927), 14.
homines"). Just as Chapter One showed with regard to politics that one could be a German nationalist while supporting the idea of Pan-Europe, the same held true for the realm of culture.

Whether trying to promote cultural figures as a means for international reconciliation or attempting to find new content for a sense of Austrianness, German nationalism was a, if not the, principal element in the effort to reestablish a sense of community in a time of extreme upheaval. Yet, it would perhaps be more accurate to speak of German nationalisms, for, as this dissertation has shown, there were numerous definitions of Germanness. Until the National Socialist and the Austrofascist usurpation of power in 1933 and 1934 respectively, no one political or social group controlled the textual and visual discourses related to German nationalism. With the exception of the communists, groups from the left to the right of the political spectrum participated in the (re)definition of what it meant to be German, as well as Austrian. Due to the idea of a shared culture, the cultural commemorations provided an opportunity different than that of political commemorations: individuals from varied and opposing viewpoints could voice their particular ideas about the German nation while still rallying around a common cause, whether the honoring of cultural heroes or the desire for an Anschluss.

The ability to achieve a minimum level of consensus while still maintaining a multiplicity of opinions diminished over the years spanning these four festivals. Whereas the Beethoven and Schubert commemorations occurred during a period of “relative stability,” the Walther and Goethe anniversaries took place after the stock market crash and in the face of growing economic troubles and political radicalization. With the 1932 Goethe ceremonies in Weimar, the commemoration tended to highlight polarization rather than unity. In a matter

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157 Sponheuer, “Reconstructing Ideal Types,” 41.
of months, the diversity of opinions and the celebration of national diversity would violently be put to an end.
Conclusion

“I got in the elevator and went out onto the Ringstrasse. I didn’t recognize it anymore: everywhere there were swastikas and storm troopers marching and singing the Horst Wessel Song, ‘the streets belong to the brown battalions etc.’,” recollected Leon Askin in 1988. Fifty years had passed since the tumultuous events of March 1938, when the Austrofascist Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg resigned and numerous Austrians enthusiastically greeted the arrival of the German army.\(^1\) As a Jew, Askin decided to flee Austria, first going to Paris and eventually to the United States. Even in the brief time before he escaped, a wave of violence was unleashed against Austrian Jews. For Franz Danimann, an official of the Catholic Youth Front who was sent to Auschwitz in 1942, the humiliation of Jews in the streets of Vienna made a lasting impression. “Within a few days,” Danimann recounted in 1987, “the shameful measures against Jewish citizens began. […] Immediately after 11 March 1938 they [Jewish citizens] were driven onto the street by Nazi functionaries, given toothbrushes, and told ‘to clean the streets.’ The Nazi leader remarked mockingly that ‘the Jews would finally learn how to work.’”\(^2\) These juxtaposed scenes of jubilant crowds and antisemitic violence dating from Hitler’s annexation of Austria in the spring of 1938 became synonymous with the word \textit{Anschluss} from that point forward.

Although it was Hitler who accomplished the \textit{Anschluss}, this dissertation has emphasized that there was no direct line from 1918 to 1938, nor to 1933/34 for that matter. During the Weimar period, republicans were the most vocal proponents of an \textit{Anschluss}. By


calling for a political union between Germany and Austria, republicans – socialists and liberals alike – sought to prove their national credentials to skeptics and opponents. In turn, they hoped that a future *Anschluss* would help to stabilize the republican form of government in both countries. They promoted an *Anschluss* as a way to strengthen democracy in Germany and Austria and argued that it would be an important step in creating a unified Europe. German and Austrian republicans stressed their peaceful intentions, insisting that they would only work through the League of Nations to achieve an *Anschluss*. Using this particular argument, they contrasted their peaceful goals with the Allied powers’ unjust denial of Austrians’ right to national self-determination: postwar Germany and Austria, they said, had become the true defenders of democracy.

The radical right and conservatives were therefore not the sole voices of German nationalism in the Weimar and First Austrian Republics. Instead, citizens of both countries passionately debated the boundaries of a German nation in their attempts to protest and support the newly established republics. While the German and Austrian political right argued that democracy and its supporters were un-German, republicans vociferously refuted their opponents’ claims. This dissertation has shown that republicans endeavored to create their own version of German nationalism distinct from that of conservatives and the radical right. Rather than adopting the antisemitic, racial, anti-democratic, and militaristic tenets of right-wing nationalism, republicans emphasized that their German nationalism was inclusive and peaceful. Most importantly, they mobilized their own form of German nationalism to bolster the cause of democracy in German-speaking Central Europe. Only by examining these multiple and conflicting attempts to speak in the name of a German *Volk* can we see the
energetic efforts made by republicans to create and defend democracy in the wake of military defeat.

As this dissertation has underlined, the großdeutsch idea – both in its historical and postwar manifestations – was central to the republican conception of German nationalism. To demonstrate that democracy was not a foreign imposition, republicans turned to the nineteenth-century history of the German national movement. The events of 1848-1849, particularly the National Assembly held at St. Paul’s Church in Frankfurt, formed the climax of this republican historical narrative. Both German and Austrian republicans emphasized that the parliamentary gathering in Frankfurt had not only included Austrian representatives and had voted to form a großdeutsch state, but also had sought to create a German nation-state with a parliamentary system. Republicans therefore pointed to the legacy of 1848 in order to illustrate that a historically justified democratic, national tradition existed in German-speaking Central Europe. By both firmly rooting democracy in German history and backing an Anschluss, republicans aimed to nationalize democracy. In other words, they sought to show that democracy and Germanness were intimately connected in order to counter right-wing attacks on the republics.

Großdeutsch nationalism was thus at the heart of republican attempts both to legitimize democracy and to undermine their opponents on the right of the political spectrum. The debates about state symbols further bear this out. In both the German Flaggenstreit and the Austrian anthem debate, the großdeutsch idea and cross-border interactions were of paramount importance to the republican cause. It was after all an Austrian representative to the National Assembly in Weimar who had convinced the framers of the constitution to select black-red-gold as the Reich’s official colors on the grounds that the imperial black-
white-red would alienate Austrians. As the primary advocates of an *Anschluss* throughout the Weimar period, German republicans also took up this argument and carried it into the 1920s. In their view, black-white-red remained symbolically linked to the Hohenzollern dynasty, whose rivalry with the Habsburgs had led to the exclusion of Austria from a German nation-state in 1866. National unity, according to republicans, could therefore only happen under the colors black-red-gold because they represented a democratic form of government, which put national interests above particularistic ones. To back up this claim, they turned to their historical narratives and pointed to the use of the black-red-gold tricolor by the early nineteenth-century German national movement and the Frankfurt Parliament. In Austria, the Social Democrats advocated singing “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,” the Weimar Republic’s anthem, as a way to protest the Christian Social government, which was increasingly displaying authoritarian tendencies. This move on the part of the SDAP once again points to the important connection that republicans in both Austria and Germany made between *großdeutsch* nationalism and the support of democracy.

Debates about symbols unquestionably signaled intense political conflicts in both countries. Nevertheless, this dissertation has argued that they should not be interpreted merely as a sign of insurmountable political fragmentation nor as a harbinger of the failures of the republics. Rather, the fights over the German flag and anthem offer a window into the practices of citizenship. In their letters to the German and Austrian governments, as well as testimonies given at trial, individuals and associations represented an engaged citizenry that embraced its formative role in a democratic state system. They asked officials to listen to their ideas and believed that their opinions and suggestions would be taken seriously. Moreover, they conceived of their actions in terms of the rights and responsibilities of
citizens living in a democracy. Those loyal to democracy frequently emphasized their duties to the republic; however, their opponents strategically claimed democratic rights to advance their cause while rejecting the notion of democratic responsibilities.

In comparing the interactions between citizens, political parties and the state, this dissertation has also revealed significant differences between the German and Austrian experiments with democracy. Whereas Austrians showed a growing hostility to those outside their ideological camp in the course of the anthem debate, Germans displayed a willingness, especially in their proposals for a Unity Flag, to compromise over the divisive issue of the Reich’s colors. These distinctions between German and Austrian political culture became especially apparent in the attempts to create and stage new state holidays for the republics. Although the Weimar Republic never had a legally declared state holiday, government officials, the parties of the Weimar Coalition, and private organizations made a concerted effort to stage popular and participatory forms of commemoration. Until 1931, these groups made significant strides in forging an inclusive, democratic culture. In Austria, efforts to institute a legal holiday played out differently. The smooth passage of a law declaring November 12 to be an official holiday did not translate into a successful commemoration. The new holiday soon devolved into conflict. It showcased Austria’s political strife as the Christian Socials and right-wing paramilitary groups clashed, sometimes violently, with socialist workers. Through a comparison of the two republics, this dissertation contributes to a growing body of literature that stresses the possibilities of achieving a democratic consensus in Germany, and upends older arguments that the republic was doomed to fail. By bringing together the comparative and entangled histories of the First Austrian Republic and the Weimar Republic, this dissertation not only contributes to an
understanding of German history beyond the borders of the nation-state, but it also addresses nation-(re)building, the creation of democracy, and the practices of citizenship.
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