

GERMAN YEARBOOK OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

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GERMAN YEARBOOK OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

After Nazism:
Relaunching Careers in Germany and Austria

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Introduction: Three Shades of Brown

The Nazi Past and Postwar Careers in Germany and Austria

THOMAS SCHLEMMER AND SUSANNA SCHRAFSTETTER

A History of Blunders?

In the histories of West and East Germany and the Second Austrian Republic, the continuity of Nazi elites in politics, society, economy and culture constitutes a central analytical challenge. In the three states that emerged from the Greater German Reich, following a brief period of denazification, large numbers of former National Socialists were allowed to continue their professional careers, even though all three of these states seriously distanced themselves from the so-called Third Reich. The Cold War, the focus on economic reconstruction, the shortcomings of denazification, the need for qualified personnel, and the extent of popular support for National Socialism before the end of the Second World War all facilitated the widespread professional, social, and political reintegration of former Nazis.¹ This fifth volume of the *German Yearbook of Contemporary History* is devoted to the reintegration of the *Funktionseliten*—elites defined by their functions in various areas of society, such as politics, the civil service, military, the economy, culture, science, law, and religion—and the relaunch of their careers in postwar Germany and Austria.²

The processes of reintegration were negotiated differently in West Germany, East Germany, and Austria, as the three states that emerged from the Reich embarked on different paths into the postwar world. All three states struggled with issues of legitimacy while seeking broad popular support for new models of society as well as international respectability. To achieve these goals, West Germany cast itself as a bulwark against communism and a firm supporter of European integration. Economic success would boost the popularity of democracy.³ For its part, the reestablished Austrian republic was to remain neutral in the Cold War and had to redefine Austrian nationalism

and identity. Leaving behind both National Socialism and the polarization of the First Republic, the Second Republic's elites sought a political climate of consensus and cooperation that was facilitated by a widely appealing historical narrative of Austria as Hitler's first victim.⁴ East Germany's legitimacy was based on its identity as an anti-fascist state—having eradicated the capitalistic roots of fascism—and its appropriation of the pre-1945 anti-fascist resistance. All Germans in the East were invited to join the struggle against fascism, which was portrayed to be alive and well in the West.⁵

Denazification took different forms in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), and Austria, but in all three states the occupying powers' interest in carrying through the process faltered quickly.⁶ Partly buying into the notion of Austria as the first victim of Hitler, the Allies showed little appetite for denazification in Austria. By 1946 they tasked the Austrians with the continuation of the process “and limited themselves to a supervisory role.”⁷ By 1948 an amnesty for *Minderbelastete* (lesser offenders) meant that denazification was finished for 90 percent of former National Socialists, and by the early 1950s most of the small number of *Belastete* (offenders) were either pardoned, or they had served their short sentences.⁸

In the Western zones of Germany, the temporary exclusion of former *Funktionseliten* from political and economic life through internment by “automatic arrest” or denazification was reversed in the *Spruchkammerverfahren* (proceedings of the denazification courts). Yet the denazification courts did not merely serve as *Mitläuferfabriken* (“factories” producing fellow travelers), as Lutz Niethammer has claimed. After all, they imposed substantial fines, they took former National Socialists out of circulation during the crucially important immediate postwar period, and they made the crimes of the Nazi regime public. These are important points to consider, even though, ultimately, the denazification courts “worked toward a swift rehabilitation of the great masses of the population”⁹ and allowed many major offenders to get off lightly. In the socialist zone of occupation, 1948 marked the dissolution of the denazification commission. While the purge of elites was more thorough under the Soviets, especially in certain fields such as law, the state bureaucracy, or education, nominal Nazis were needed to build socialism and were given an opportunity to do so.¹⁰

Yet what the process of denazification meant for Nazi *Funktionseliten* was an unexpected—albeit ultimately temporary—end to their bourgeois lives and professional careers. This temporary shock generated not so much moral soul-searching as the development of multiple strategies to obfuscate, white-

wash, and justify one's past.¹¹ The ugly stains of Nazism on the fabric of democracy damaged the legitimacy of the Federal Republic domestically, and even more so internationally,¹² but they did not pose any threat to the stability of democratic institutions. The former elites were generously reintegrated into the Federal Republic but, in return, they had to commit themselves to the anti-totalitarian consensus on which the republic was based. Anyone violating that consensus had to expect sanctions. This pressure to play by the rules of parliamentary democracy steadily increased in the second half of the 1950s and led *Funktionseliten* of the Nazi state to display a "cowering opportunism" which was both "an expression of, and a precondition for, the political neutralization of this group."¹³

In all three successor states to Nazi Germany, political parties competed for the votes of former National Socialists. Even in the anti-fascist GDR, they were given a political home in the shape of the nationalist National Democratic Party (NDPD, *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*).¹⁴ One of the so-called *Blockparteien* that were represented in the *Volkskammer*, but locked into a position of continuous inferiority to the ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED, *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*), the NDPD was designed to appeal specifically to former soldiers and Nazi supporters and mobilize their support for the socialist state. In Austria, former Nazi Party members were found in all political parties, but those who (secretly or openly) were nostalgic about the Nazi past found their political home in the Federation of Independents (VdU, *Verband der Unabhängigen*) and later in the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ, *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*).¹⁵ In West Germany the small Socialist Reich Party (SRP, *Sozialistische Reichspartei*) was banned in 1952. Appealing to a clientele as diverse as its ideas and regional organizations, the Free Democratic Party (FDP, *Freie Demokratische Partei*) represented the interests of former National Socialists. Under the slogan of *nationale Sammlung* ("national rallying"), FDP party officials in North Rhine-Westphalia voiced their opposition to denazification and called for an amnesty for all imprisoned German war criminals.¹⁶ By the early 1950s a network of former employees in Goebbels's Reich Ministry of Propaganda had subverted the FDP in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and was about to take over the party organization.¹⁷

What were the limits to this reintegration of former National Socialists? The attempted takeover of the FDP by former National Socialists was forestalled in 1953 when the British arrested the ringleaders. While British action highlighted German inertia in 1953,¹⁸ the Allies intervened only this one time. If the re-employment of Hans Globke, *Ministerialrat* in Hitler's Ministry of

the Interior, co-author of a legal commentary to the Nuremberg Laws, but never a member of the Nazi Party, pushed the limits to integration in the Federal Republic, that of Franz von Papen, instrumental in putting Hitler in the saddle in 1933 and serving as the Führer's vice-chancellor, lay beyond those limits.¹⁹ While Chancellor Konrad Adenauer appointed Globke to be chief of staff in his chancellery, Papen's postwar political ambitions were thwarted in the Bonn Republic. The practice of where exactly the line was drawn depended on multiple factors and was by no means limited to the issue of earlier membership in the Nazi Party and other Nazi organizations. These factors played out differently in different countries, in different fields of employment, and at different points in time.²⁰ For example, in the West German Ministry of the Interior, the bar for employing Nazi-era civil servants was lowered under Minister Robert Lehr, who succeeded Gustav Heinemann in 1950.²¹ This example also shows that top officials in the Adenauer government held different views on who was considered to be reusable and who was not.²² This is how disgraceful careers "which never should have been allowed" and which, to this day, cast "a shadow on the beginnings of the Federal Republic" became possible.²³

In the 1950s, elites returned to their positions as civil servants in ministries, as generals in the armed forces, as journalists and pundits in the media, as managers in industry, as lawyers and judges in the courts, and as professors at the universities. However, a variety of factors led to a growing concern over the suitability for office of people who had been active in the Nazi period. In a political climate of increasing liberalization, debates about the limits to the reintegration of such persons intensified. These debates were also influenced by the GDR campaigns against former Nazis in the FRG and the publication of the *Braunbuch* ("Brown Book") in 1965—a who's who of former National Socialists in West Germany.²⁴ The Eichmann trial in 1961, which raised questions internationally about how Germans dealt with their Nazi past, was another factor, and so was the generational change of the 1960s. While the *Brown Book* was dismissed as cheap propaganda in the Cold War, the basic validity of the book's central point could hardly be negated.²⁵ In 1968 Beate Klarsfeld's famous slap in the face of Chancellor Kiesinger was controversial, but Germans did discuss whether a member of the Nazi Party from 1933 to 1945 was an appropriate choice for the office of chancellor of the Federal Republic.²⁶

By the time the Social-Liberal coalition government was formed in 1969, the limits of what was considered acceptable had come to be defined more narrowly. However, even under Chancellor Willy Brandt the practice of promoting highly incriminated individuals was not abandoned completely,²⁷ and many of those who had been reintegrated in the 1950s remained in their

positions. The generation of elites who started their professional careers in the 1930s did not retire until the 1970s. Also, many of these highly incriminated individuals had missed the change of the political and social climate: “Was damals Rechtens war [. . .], das kann heute nicht Unrecht sein” (“What was lawful then [. . .], cannot be unlawful today”)²⁸ is how in 1978 the *Ministerpräsident* of Baden-Württemberg, Hans Filbinger, justified a death sentence he had issued against a deserter in 1945 in his then function as a military judge. Revealing a remarkable lack of understanding of the moral wrongdoing on his part, Filbinger had to step down a few months later.²⁹ Those still in office in the 1970s were confronted with both a change in standards of what was considered acceptable and the beginning of scrutiny of their careers by historians.

History and Historiography

It is perhaps not surprising that historians have only recently started to analyze the question of continuity and discontinuity in Nazi careers in postwar Germany and Austria. While the beginnings reach back to the 1970s, most of the work was produced in the 2000s. Historical studies that were published early attracted the wrath of former Nazi *Funktionseliten* who were still alive or even professionally active. For example, when Hans-Jürgen Döscher published his critical study of the Foreign Office in 1987, he was fiercely criticized by (former) diplomats and older pundits.³⁰ After the end of the Cold War more documents became available beyond the former Iron Curtain, and more and more Nazi-era official documents and personal papers were opened for research by German archives. Other factors, however, still hampered historical analysis. In history, and in other fields, a younger generation of scholars proved unwilling to scrutinize the Nazi pasts of their revered academic mentors. The controversy over the role of political scientist Theodor Eschenburg during the Nazi period is indicative of these conflicts.³¹

Research into the *Belastungsgeschichte*³² (the history of the burdens resulting from the legacy of Nazism and the Holocaust) of postwar Germany and Austria began with critical inquiry into the process of denazification. Works by Lutz Niethammer and Dieter Stiefel laid the foundation³³ and were followed by a large number of studies, often with a regional or comparative approach.³⁴ Following this focus on denazification, individuals and entire professions came under scrutiny by historians. Studies of the legal profession under Nazism and of doctors who had participated in the so-called Nazi euthanasia program were among the first, appearing in the 1980s.³⁵ These early works triggered

numerous case studies of individuals, networks, professions, and institutions, a trend that has continued,³⁶ with more recent research including, for example, soccer clubs and carnival societies.³⁷ In Austria, the Waldheim Affair of the late 1980s and early 1990s chipped some cracks in the founding myth of Austria as the first victim of Nazism.³⁸ In the wake of the scandal over President Kurt Waldheim's military record and his potential implication in war crimes, historians published pioneering work on Austria under National Socialism and also more broadly on the continuities between National Socialism and the Austrian Second Republic.³⁹ A large chunk of the latter focused on the rising star of the FPÖ, the party's controversial populist leader Jörg Haider.⁴⁰

Following the end of the Cold War, American class action lawsuits against companies that had employed slave labor and had benefited from "Aryanization" not only triggered belated payments of restitution to victims of Nazism, but also forced the German global players of industry to deal more openly with their companies' history under National Socialism. In fact, many CEOs hired individual or entire teams of historians to research and write the histories of their companies.⁴¹ This trend, which started in the 1990s, has produced numerous publications—among them histories of German banks, insurance companies, food producers, and automobile manufacturers, to name just a few.⁴² This careful scrutiny of the private sector preceded systematic investigation of state bureaucracies. Some studies of German ministries under Nazism began to appear in the 1970s but for a long time they remained limited to a handful of books.⁴³ It was only in 2003 that a major controversy within the German foreign ministry (*Auswärtiges Amt*) prompted Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer (Green Party) to announce the formation of an historians' commission to examine the role of his ministry during the Nazi years. Civil servants in the ministry had publicly criticized Fischer for his refusal to allow obituaries of diplomats who had been Nazi Party members to be published in the ministry's internal newsletter. As a consequence, Fischer commissioned comprehensive research on the history of the *Auswärtiges Amt* under Nazism.⁴⁴ Following the publication of the results in 2010,⁴⁵ other ministries followed suit, and most ministries have by now been subjected to detailed studies by historians.⁴⁶

While large-scale studies of individual ministries, companies, and institutions have generated important results, they have not been above criticism.⁴⁷ In some cases, the principals wanted to predetermine certain results. Typically, the studies were expected to appear quickly, the contracts went to a small number of influential academic chairholders in Germany.⁴⁸ One of the most glaring examples of the potentially problematic nature of commissioned re-

search was the appointment of an historical commission by Austria's FPÖ in 2018, in the wake of several scandals involving antisemitic Nazi songbooks circulating within the party and within rightwing student fraternities with close party connections.⁴⁹ The commission, consisting of handpicked individuals sympathetic to the FPÖ, presented a final report in December 2019, which was then scathingly condemned by professional historians.⁵⁰

Today, moral outrage over the levels of continuity across 1945 has contributed to a prolific application of the term "Nazi." But not all of those who willingly served the Nazi state in influential positions were active National Socialists or members of the NSDAP. Karl Hettlage, Albert Speer's right-hand man, who became state secretary in the Federal Ministry of Finance in 1959, may serve as an example. Hettlage had not been a member of the party.⁵¹ High-ranking *Wehrmacht* officers who participated in war crimes were not necessarily National Socialists. Moreover, among the party members there were true believers, opportunists, and nominal members. There were the *alte Kämpfer* (members of the old guard) who had joined the party before 1933, the ideologues whom Michael Wildt labeled the "uncompromising generation,"⁵² and anti-republican conservatives who often joined the party in 1933 or later. The percentage of former party members in the Federal Ministry of Finance in 1959 by itself, therefore, provides only limited insight into the nature of elite continuity. Hettlage, for example, would not be included in that number.⁵³ How many of them had been members of the SS or SA? When did they join the party? How many had worked in higher positions in the Reich Ministry of Finance? A close look at individual biographies is necessary to gain a nuanced picture of the depth, breadth, and nature of the continuity.

Multiple studies of companies and ministries notwithstanding, there still remain some important lacunae in the research on the continuity of Nazi *Funktionseeliten* into the post-1945 societies.

While several studies have undertaken comparisons of East and West German ministries,⁵⁴ and others have focused on continuities between the *Wehrmacht* and the East German *Nationale Volksarmee*,⁵⁵ the GDR has not been scrutinized to the same extent as its West German counterpart. In the area of economics, Frank Bajohr and Johannes Hürter have pointed out that, below the level of multinational companies, little work has been done on German businesses and business leaders during the Nazi and postwar years.⁵⁶ And despite some existing studies of provincial (*Länder*) ministries in West Germany, more work is needed on continuities on the regional level.⁵⁷ With regard to Austria, to what extent did national ministries or government institutions such as the *Verfassungsschutz* employ former National Socialists?

These questions still demand answers. In 1998 the Austrian government tasked a commission to examine all forms of expropriation of property in Austria during the Nazi period, as well as the extent of compensation and restitution after 1945. The research produced almost fifty volumes of results, but this rigorous study was an exception for Austria, where the kind of *Auftragsforschung* (commissioned research) that has gone on in Germany has been lacking (as it has also been in Italy).⁵⁸ Austrian historians have begun to address personnel continuities in the major political parties, but much work remains to be done.⁵⁹ Given the current political context, Margit Reiter's study of the origins of the FPÖ published in 2019 serves as a model for where future research on the Austrian case should lead.⁶⁰

An additional gap in the relevant historiography is an assessment of how political, social, and regional milieus and mentalities allowed or hindered the reintegration of former elites. Which social networks facilitated reintegration and which networks opposed it?⁶¹ Individual case studies can shed light on specific milieus and mentalities, gauging the continuity of mentalities and the limits placed on the acceptance of implicated individuals.

These questions are tied to the fundamental question about the long-term success of democracy in Germany and Austria. Axel Schildt has posed the central question for the writing of West German history as a *Belastungsgeschichte*: “given the depressing material and moral burdens, how could a civilized and democratic polity emerge that today seemingly naturally fits in with normal international standards?”⁶² Answering this question requires an analysis of a multitude of individuals, networks, and institutions and mindsets.

The Nazi Past and Postwar Careers

This volume seeks to address some, but by no means all, of the lacunae described above by examining and contextualizing four individual biographies. It presents in English translation four articles that originally appeared in German in the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*. In addition, it presents three commentaries, written specifically for this volume, that expand on the central themes, facilitate comparison, and consider the current political relevance of these issues. In our view it is particularly important to publish these works in English, as most of the recent works about the careers of Nazi functional elites in postwar Germany has appeared exclusively in German. With the exception of the study of the Foreign Office, research on German ministries has mostly been conducted without input from scholars outside of Germany. By contrast, much of the pioneering work in the field appeared originally in English, having

been produced by colleagues based in the United States, Britain, and Israel. Some of it has recently been (re)discovered.⁶³

At the heart of this volume are case studies of four individuals—Kurt Ziesel, Otto Brunner, Anton Reinhaller, and Max Frauendorfer—and three overarching, central themes. The first theme involves the different strategies pursued by highly incriminated individuals after the war for dealing with their checkered pasts. The second theme concerns the limits to postwar reintegration. The third theme relates to the impact on postwar Germany and Austria of the continuity of a certain set of ideas among *Funktionseeliten*. These ideas consisted of a fusion of National Socialist, *völkisch*, nationalist, and conservative strands of ideology that slowed down the process of social liberalization, or what Ulrich Herbert has called the *Lernprozess* (learning process) of *Liberalisierung*.⁶⁴

The strategies of dealing with a checkered individual past were manifold in postwar Germany and Austria. Most commonly, people tried to obfuscate past positions and responsibilities, seeking to resume professional success quietly, without drawing too much attention to their pre-1945 careers.⁶⁵ Others sought the political limelight despite a high degree of *Belastung*, regardless of the risks and the scandalizing potential of such a move. Some members of this second group established themselves as “troublemakers” who diverted criticism by pointing the finger at Germans or Austrians belonging to the first group, those who covered up compromising pasts, in an effort to facilitate their own return to positions of influence.

One example of such a “troublemaker” was the author and journalist Kurt Ziesel, who had joined the Nazi Party in 1931. He had served as editor of the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* and written for several Nazi papers, including the *Völkischer Beobachter*. Having moved to Germany after 1945, Ziesel faced problems while trying to regain a foothold in journalism. In response, he lambasted the adaptability and hypocrisy of liberal writers and pundits who had been supportive of the Nazi regime. In his contribution to this volume, Axel Schildt analyzes Ziesel’s strategy of systematically exposing embarrassing Nazi-era biographical details about editors of major newspapers and prominent writers. Ziesel used this strategy to claim that all those conservative writers and intellectuals who had remained true to their convictions were victimized by opportunists at the altar of a new, liberal zeitgeist. Schildt demonstrates that those who were attacked by Ziesel proved unable to defend themselves effectively. But, as Schildt shows, Ziesel’s case also illustrates the limits of reintegration, as Ziesel, despite receiving applause from the right wing of the Christian Democrats, was unable to resume his career as editor of a major

newspaper or magazine. The scandalizing potential of exposing the pre-1945 Nazi allegiances of postwar liberal elites has not abated, as the example of writer Günter Grass has demonstrated.⁶⁶

Commenting on Axel Schildt's case study of Ziesel, Mary Fulbrook argues that Ziesel and others who scandalized the Nazi pasts of prominent individuals, whether as a critique from the left or, more unusually, as in the case of Ziesel, from the right, overlooked the central question. Given the reintegration of former elites on such a massive scale, the key question was whether it made a difference for postwar German society. For example, what did the continuity in mentalities among German judges mean for the perpetrators of Nazi crimes and for their victims? While the Nazi-era careers of prominent individuals were discussed critically in an increasingly liberal public sphere, it was the continuity of ideas and mindsets that had real practical consequences for German society.

Hans-Henning Kortüm's article about the historian Otto Brunner contributes to our understanding of continuities in higher education and, more specifically, in the field of history.⁶⁷ A revered *Ordinarius* for medieval and early modern history and rector at the University of Hamburg in 1959/60, Brunner had been dismissed from his professorship at the University of Vienna in 1945 because of his close affinity for National Socialism. While Brunner had been considered unacceptable as a professor of history in postwar Vienna because of his Nazi past, his powerful professional mentor Hermann Aubin—also steeped in National Socialism—made Brunner's postwar career in Germany possible. Kortüm not only details the extent of Brunner's enthusiasm for Nazism, but also shows how Brunner's work remained deeply influenced by *völkisch*-nationalist thought after 1945. Brunner's depictions of medieval society were only contested in the 1980s, testifying to the longevity of interpretations of history based on Nazi ideology. Brunner thought of himself as belonging to the German *Volk* and gladly left behind the Second Austrian Republic. Both Brunner and Ziesel serve as examples of the migration of *Funktionseliten* from Austria to Germany, which was in part a strategy for obfuscating their pasts, and in part an expression of their ideological attachments to a Greater Germany.

Thomas Schlemmer's contribution examines the limits to reintegration in the realm of West German politics. Focusing on the case of Max Frauendorfer, who had headed the Labor Division (*Hauptabteilung Arbeit*) in the German administration of the General Government of Nazi-occupied Poland and held a high SS rank, Schlemmer shows that the bar to reintegration was higher in politics than in other fields. A member of the Bavarian Christian Social

Union (CSU, *Christlich-Soziale Union*), Max Frauendorfer was not content with quietly pursuing a successful career in the insurance industry. He also ran for political office. Hoping to be nominated as a CSU candidate for the Bavarian Landtag and the Bundestag, he presented his Nazi past as one of early disillusionment with Nazism. He remained silent about certain incriminating facts and played up contacts to members of the resistance. This strategy proved to be unsuccessful, not only because the press reported critically about the case, but also because some leading members of the CSU who had opposed Nazism felt uncomfortable with the degree of Frauendorfer's *Belastung* and the way in which he had misrepresented the facts. Schlemmer's contribution includes the minutes of the tumultuous discussions within the leadership of the CSU district in Munich about Frauendorfer's candidacy. Frauendorfer had powerful supporters, including Franz Josef Strauß, as well as uncompromising opponents such as Dr. Josef Müller and Dr. Erwin Hamm. The CSU leadership and the party's base comprised both supporters and opponents of Nazism. Frauendorfer was too tainted by National Socialism to be acceptable to the latter group, and media scrutiny of the case also caused the CSU leadership to discourage his candidacy.

By contrast, Margit Reiter shows that the FPÖ was formed as a reservoir for former National Socialists and did not recognize limits to reintegration. In the immediate postwar period, many Austrian National Socialists who remained true believers joined the VdU, a short-lived political party that collapsed from internal factionalism in 1956, a mere seven years after its formation. Reiter shows how Anton Reinthaller, a high-ranking National Socialist, managed to become a charismatic leadership figure among supporters of National Socialism, and in 1956 established the newly founded FPÖ as their political home. As *alter Kämpfer*, SS officer, and Nazi minister, Reinthaller commanded authority among Austrian National Socialists. Having sought a compromise between traditional conservatives and supporters of Hitler before 1938, he had a reputation as an integrative figure. Reiter highlights the significant contribution of Christian conservatives to the denazification of supposedly "moderate" National Socialists like Reinthaller. The formation of the FPÖ as a major political party also suited the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP, *Österreichische Volkspartei*). As a third force in Austrian politics, it could prove itself a valuable ally against the main rival, the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ, *Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs*).

In his commentary "The Limits of Integration," Gerald Steinacher expands the discussion to address many issues raised by Reiter's and Schlemmer's articles. As Steinacher shows, Frauendorfer's case was unusual. Many

individuals with a similarly high degree of *Belastung* shied away from the political limelight, instead pursuing highly successful careers in industry, where the level of public scrutiny was much lower. Steinacher also points out that, in the German case, the limits to integration were ultimately set by the Allies, whereas in Austria the Allies did not continue to monitor political developments. There were few limits to integration, with the exception of the necessity not to openly challenge the postwar political realities. The hard core of the Austrian National Socialists did not subscribe to the integrating narrative of Austria as Hitler's first victim but regarded the Second Austrian Republic, separated from Germany, as an historical abomination. These sentiments could only be expressed in a veiled manner. But within this community of like-minded individuals mindsets and mentalities were passed on to future generations. In the 1990s, the rise of Jörg Haider proved that Nazi ideas remained acceptable within the party. These long-term consequences are particularly important given more recent developments in Austria, such as the inclusion of the FPÖ in a coalition government in 2017.

The volume concludes with a contribution by Andreas Wirsching, who, drawing on the results of a study of the West German Ministry of the Interior, examines two types of mental continuities. The first was the core National Socialist ideology, as espoused by true believers in Nazism, which resulted in the persistence of antisemitism and racism after 1945. The second was rooted in the long-term continuity of antidemocratic and anti-pluralist conservative thinking that had had its roots in Imperial Germany, had then been amalgamated into National Socialist ideology, and which remained widespread in the postwar German state bureaucracy. What ultimately ensured the success of parliamentary democracy despite these continuities were numerous learning processes that the *Funktionseliten* of the Federal Republic, and society more broadly, underwent in the late 1950s and 1960s. This continued collective learning anchored democracy and pluralism more and more firmly in Germany.

This fifth German Yearbook of Contemporary History, dedicated to the careers of National Socialist *Funktionseliten*, highlights the different shades of brown that persisted in Germany and Austria after 1945. Behind a large number of scandalous careers lay diverse strategies of adaptation and the persistence of mentalities. The impact of these continuities on the Federal Republic, as well as the belated learning processes initiated by the Allies, help elucidate the multifaceted nature of German and Austrian *Belastungsgeschichte*. The comparison between Germany and Austria not only underscores the differing role of the Allies when it came to creating and upholding an anti-totalitarian

consensus in the two countries. It also shows the varying degrees to which networks and sociopolitical milieus made the reintegration of former elites as well as the transgenerational preservation of mentalities outside this consensus possible—a process that continues to this day.

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December 1, 2020

Notes

1. A brief overview is provided by Andreas Maislinger, "'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, der DDR und Österreich: Psychologisch-pädagogische Maßnahmen im Vergleich," in *Deutschland-Archiv* 23, no. 8 (August 1990): 1358–67.

2. The term *Funktionseleiten* was originally coined by the sociologist Otto Stammer in the 1950s. Stammer wrote that the term "seeks to define the leading circles of society and state by their respective functions that they fulfill within the social and political interrelationship," Otto Stammer, "Elite und Elitenbildung," in Wilhelm Bernsdorf, ed., *Wörterbuch der Soziologie* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1969), 218. Ralf Dahrendorf defined the areas of state and society in which different *Funktionseleiten* operate. *Ibid.*, 219. See also Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1969), 208–09.

3. For an insightful overview of German reconstruction, the "economic miracle," western integration, and the ways in which Germany dealt with the Nazi past in the 1950 (including

bibliographical references) see Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte Deutschlands im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2014), 619–97.

4. See Margit Reiter, *Die Ehemaligen: Der Nationalsozialismus und die Anfänge der FPÖ* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2019), 17–18.

5. See Herfried Münkler, “Antifaschismus und antifaschistischer Widerstand als politischer Gründungsmythos der DDR,” in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 45 (October 1998): 16–29.

6. See Klaus-Dietmar Henke and Hans Woller, eds., *Politische Säuberung in Europa: Die Abrechnung mit Faschismus und Kollaboration nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991).

7. Reiter, *Die Ehemaligen*, 18.

8. *Ibid.*, 21–22.

9. Lutz Niethammer, *Entnazifizierung in Bayern: Säuberung und Rehabilitierung unter amerikanischer Besatzung* (Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer, 1972), 623; new ed.: *Die Mitläuferfabrik: Die Entnazifizierung am Beispiel Bayerns* (Berlin: Dietz, 1982).

10. See Helga A. Welsh, “‘Antifaschistisch-demokratische Umwälzung’ und politische Säuberung in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands,” in Henke and Woller, eds., *Politische Säuberung*, 84–107, here 86, 97.

11. On this consequence, resulting in particular from postwar internment, see for example Ulrich Herbert, “NS-Eliten in der Bundesrepublik,” in Wilfried Loth and Bernd-A. Rusinek, eds. *Verwandlungspolitik: NS-Eliten in der westdeutschen Nachkriegsgesellschaft* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 1998), 93–115, here 100–01; Christoph Strauß, “Zwischen Apathie und Selbstrechtfertigung: Die Internierung NS-belasteter Personen in Württemberg-Baden,” in Paul Hoser and Reinhard Baumann, eds., *Kriegsende und Neubeginn: Die Besatzungszeit im schwäbisch-alemannischen Raum* (Konstanz: UVK, 2003), 287–314, here 311–13.

12. See Ulrich Brochhagen, *Nach Nürnberg: Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Westintegration in der Ära Adenauer* (Hamburg: Junius, 1994).

13. Ulrich Herbert, “Als die Nazis wieder gesellschaftsfähig wurden: Vom raschen Wiederaufstieg der NS-Eliten und von der Frage: Wie konnte aus der Bundesrepublik dennoch eine stabile Demokratie werden?,” *Die Zeit*, January 10, 1997, 34.

14. For the foundation of the NDPD see Bernd Gottberg, “Die Gründung und die ersten Jahre der NDPD 1948–1954,” in Jürgen Frölich, ed., *‘Bürgerliche’ Parteien in der SBZ/DDR. Zur Geschichte von CDU, LDP(D), DBD und NDPD 1945 bis 1953* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1995), 73–87.

15. See Reiter, *Die Ehemaligen*, 12–13, and Margit Reiter’s contribution to this volume.

16. See Kristian Buchna, *Nationale Sammlung an Rhein und Ruhr: Friedrich Middelhaue und die nordrhein-westfälische FDP, 1945–1953* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010).

17. See *ibid.*; Norbert Frei, *Adenauer’s Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration*, trans. Joel Golb (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 277–302. The book was originally published as *Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 1996).

18. Frei, *Adenauer’s Germany*, 283–84.

19. For von Papen’s failed efforts to regain political influence, see for example Reiner

Möckelmann, *Franz von Papen. Hitlers ewiger Vasall* (Darmstadt: von Zabern, 2016), 411–13, 420.

20. On this point see for example Frank Bösch and Andreas Wirsching, “Einleitung,” in Frank Bösch and Andreas Wirsching, eds., *Hüter der Ordnung: Die Innenministerien in Bonn und Ost-Berlin nach dem Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018), 13–26, here 20–21, and the contribution by Gerald Steinacher in this volume.

21. See Frank Bösch and Andreas Wirsching, “Die deutschen Innenministerien nach dem Nationalsozialismus: Eine Bilanz,” in *ibid.*, 729–49, here 736.

22. See *ibid.*

23. Peter Graf Kielmannsegg, *Lange Schatten: Vom Umgang der Deutschen mit der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit* (Berlin: Siedler, 1989), 24.

24. See *Braunbuch: Kriegs- und Naziverbrecher in der Bundesrepublik*, ed. by Nationalrat der Nationalen Front des Demokratischen Deutschland (Berlin/East: Staatsverlag der DDR, 1965). On the Braunbook and the GDR campaigns against implicated judges and other officials in West Germany see Annette Weinke, *Die Verfolgung von NS-Tätern im geteilten Deutschland. Vergangenheitsbewältigungen 1949–1969 oder: Eine Deutsch-Deutsche Beziehungsgeschichte im Kalten Krieg* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002), 76–108, 141–60; Michael Lemke, “Kampagnen gegen Bonn: Die Systemkrise der DDR und die West-Propaganda der SED, 1960–1963,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 41, no. 2 (April 1993): 153–74; Manfred Görtemaker, “Die heile Welt der Rosenburg. Das Bundesministerium der Justiz und die NS-Vergangenheit,” in Stefan Creuzberger and Dominik Geppert, eds., *Die Ämter und ihre Vergangenheit. Ministerien und Behörden im geteilten Deutschland 1949–1972* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2018), 47–70, here 62–68.

25. *Ibid.*, 65.

26. See Philipp Gassert, *Kurt Georg Kiesinger, 1904–1988: Kanzler zwischen den Zeiten* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2006), 480–92, 648–59. For a detailed overview of the changes in 1960s and 70s see Torben Fischer and Matthias N. Lorenz, eds., *Lexikon der “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” in Deutschland: Debatten- und Diskursgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus nach 1945* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007).

27. See Eckart Conze et al., *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (Berlin: Blessing, 2010), 663–64; Susanna Schrafstetter, “A Nazi Diplomat Turned Apologist for Apartheid: Gustav Sonnenhol, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and West German Foreign Policy towards South Africa,” *German History* 28, no. 1 (March 2010): 44–66, here 59.

28. “Affäre Filbinger: ‘Was Rechtsens war ...’,” *Der Spiegel*, May 15, 1978.

29. See Wolfram Wette, ed., *Filbinger: Eine deutsche Karriere* (Springe: zu Klampen, 2006).

30. See Hans-Jürgen Döscher, *Das Auswärtige Amt im Dritten Reich: Diplomatie im Schatten der “Endlösung”* (Berlin: Siedler, 1987). On the attacks against Döscher, see Conze et al., *Amt*, 696–98.

31. See the contribution of Andreas Wirsching, footnote 7, in this volume.

32. The term *Belastungsgeschichte* was coined by Axel Schildt. See “Fünf Möglichkeiten,

die Geschichte der Bundesrepublik zu erzählen," *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* 44, no. 10 (October 1999): 1234–44, reprinted in: Frank Bajohr et al. eds. *Mehr als eine Erzählung: Zeitgeschichtliche Perspektiven auf die Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016), 15–28.

33. See Dieter Stiefel, *Entnazifizierung in Österreich* (Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1981); Niethammer, *Mitläuferfabrik*.

34. See Sebastian Meissl, Klaus-Dieter Mulley, and Oliver Rathkolb, eds., *Verdrängte Schuld, verfehlte Sühne: Entnazifizierung in Österreich 1945–1955* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1986); Klaus-Dietmar Henke, *Politische Säuberung unter französischer Besatzung: Die Entnazifizierung in Württemberg-Hohenzollern* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1981); Clemens Vollnhals, ed., *Entnazifizierung: Politische Säuberung und Rehabilitierung in den vier Besatzungszonen 1945–1949* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991); Timothy R. Vogt, *Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany: Brandenburg, 1945–1948* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Benita Blessing, *The Antifascist Classroom: Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany, 1945–1949* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Thomas Schlemmer, "Ein gelungener Fehlschlag? Die Geschichte der Entnazifizierung nach 1945," in Martin Löhnig, ed., *Zwischenzeit: Rechtsgeschichte der Besatzungsjahre* (Regenstauf: Edition Rechtskultur, 2011), 9–33.

35. See Ingo Müller, *Furchtbare Juristen: Die unbewältigte Vergangenheit unserer Justiz* (Munich: Kindler, 1987); Ernst Klee, *Was sie taten—was sie wurden: Ärzte, Juristen und andere Beteiligte am Kranken- oder Judenmord* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1986).

36. See Frei, *Adenauer's Germany*; Ulrich Herbert, *Best: Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft, 1903–1989* (Bonn: Dietz, 1996); Loth and Rusinek, eds., *Verwandlungspolitik*; Paul Erker and Toni Pierenkemper, eds., *Deutsche Unternehmer zwischen Kriegswirtschaft und Wiederaufbau: Studien zur Erfahrungsbildung von Industrie-Eliten* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999); Philipp-Christian Wachs, *Der Fall Theodor Oberländer (1905–1998): Ein Lehrstück deutscher Geschichte* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2000); Norbert Frei, ed., *Karrieren im Zwielficht: Hitlers Eliten nach 1945* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2001); Steven P. Remy, *The Heidelberg Myth: The Nazification and Denazification of a German University* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Markus Roth, *Herrenmenschen: Die deutschen Kreishauptleute im besetzten Polen—Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und Nachgeschichte* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009); Thomas W. Maulucci, Jr., *Adenauer's Foreign Office: West German Diplomacy in the Shadow of the Third Reich* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2012); David Messenger and Katrin Pähler, eds., *A Nazi Past: Recasting German Identity in Postwar Europe* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015).

37. See Marcus Leifeld, *Der Kölner Karneval in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus. Vom regionalen Volksfest zum Propagandainstrument der NS-Volksgemeinschaft* (Cologne: Emons, 2015); Stefan Goch, Norbert Silberbach, *Zwischen Blau und Weiß liegt Grau. Der FC Schalke 04 im Nationalsozialismus* (Essen: Klartext, 2005).

38. See Gerald Steinacher's contribution in this volume.

39. On the impulse provided by the Waldheim Affair see Cornelius Lehnguth, *Waldheim und die Folgen: Der parteipolitische Umgang mit dem Nationalsozialismus in Österreich* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2013), 13–15. For literature about the postwar continuities

see for example Anton Pelinka and Erika Weinzierl, eds., *Das große Tabu. Österreichs Umgang mit seiner Vergangenheit* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei, 1987); Oliver Rathkolb, *Führertreu und gottbegnadet: Künstlereliten im Dritten Reich* (Vienna: ÖBV, 1991); Gerhard Botz, ed., *Kontroversen um Österreichs Zeitgeschichte, verdrängte Vergangenheit, Österreich-Identität, Waldheim und die Historiker* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 1994); Brigitte Bailer-Galanda and Wolfgang Neugebauer, . . . *ihrer Überzeugung treu geblieben: Rechtsextremisten, "Revisionisten" und Antisemiten in Österreich* (Vienna: Stiftung Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, 1996); Hermann L. Gremliza, ed., *Braunbuch Österreich: Ein Nazi kommt selten allein* (Hamburg: KVV Konkret, 2000); Hellmut Butterweck, *Verurteilt und begnadigt. Österreich und seine NS-Straftäter* (Vienna: Czernin, 2003); Wolfgang Neugebauer and Peter Schwarz, *Der Wille zum aufrechten Gang: Offenlegung der Rolle des BSA bei der gesellschaftlichen Reintegration ehemaliger Nationalsozialisten* (Vienna: Czernin, 2005); Winfried R. Garscha and Franz Scharf, *Justiz in Oberdonau* (Linz: Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv, 2007).

40. Brigitte Bailer-Galanda, *Ein deutsches Land. Die rechte Orientierung des Jörg Haider. Eine Dokumentation* (Vienna: Löcker, 1987); Brigitte Bailer-Galanda and Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Haider und die Freiheitlichen in Österreich* (Berlin: Elefanten-Press, 1997); Hans-Henning Scharsach, ed., *Haider. Österreich und die rechte Versuchung* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2000); Anton Pelinka, Hubert Sickinger and Karin Stögner, *Kreisky—Haider: Bruchlinien österreichischer Identitäten* (Vienna: Braumüller, 2008).

41. See Andreas Wirsching's contribution to this volume.

42. See Hans Mommsen and Wolfgang Grieger, *Das Volkswagenwerk und seine Arbeiter im Dritten Reich* (Düsseldorf: ECON, 1996); Harold James, *The Deutsche Bank and the Nazi Economic War against the Jews: The Expropriation of Jewish-Owned Property* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); idem, *The Nazi Dictatorship and the Deutsche Bank* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Gerald D. Feldman, *Allianz and the German Insurance Business, 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); *Die Dresdner Bank im Dritten Reich*, ed. Klaus-Dietmar Henke, 4 vols. (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006); Johannes Bähr et al., *Der Flick-Konzern im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2008); Jürgen Finger, Sven Keller and Andreas Wirsching, eds. *Dr. Oetker und der Nationalsozialismus. Geschichte eines Familienunternehmens, 1933–1945* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2013).

43. See Christopher Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office: A Study of Referat D III of Abt. Deutschland, 1940–43* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1978); Lothar Gruchmann, *Justiz im Dritten Reich 1933–1940: Anpassung und Unterwerfung in der Ära Gürtner* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1988); Döscher, *Auswärtiges Amt im Dritten Reich*.

44. For details see Conze et al., *Amt*, 706–11.

45. See *ibid.*; Johannes Hürter, "Das Auswärtige Amt, die NS-Diktatur und der Holocaust: Kritische Bemerkungen zu einem Kommissionsbericht," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 59, no. 2 (April 2011): 167–92.

46. See Christian Mentel and Niels Weise, *Die zentralen deutschen Behörden und der Nationalsozialismus: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung* (Munich, 2016), <https://www>

.ifz-muenchen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Neuigkeiten%202016/2016_02_13_ZZF_IfZ_PM_BKM-Studie_FINAL_Neu.pdf, accessed April 6, 2020.

47. See Frank Bajohr and Johannes Hürter, “Auftragsforschung ‘NS-Belastung’: Bemerkungen zu einer Konjunktur,” in Bajohr et al., eds., *Meer als eine Erzählung*, 221–33.

48. See *ibid.*, 229–33.

49. These scandals became known under the name *Liederbuchaffäre* (songbook affair). In fact, there was more than one *Liederbuchaffäre*—a couple of remarkably similar scandals that happened in close succession. See <https://orf.at/stories/3142722/>, accessed March 16, 2020; “Neue Liederbuchaffäre: FPÖ sieht Schmutzkübelkampagne—Ein Liederbuch mit antisemitischen Texten einer steirischen Burschenschaft liegt bei einem Abgeordneten zu Hause,” *Der Standard*, October 31, 2019.

50. “Wissenschaftliche Stellungnahme zum FPÖ-‘Historikerbericht,’” <https://www.doew.at/neues/wissenschaftliche-stellungnahme-zum-fpoe-historikerbericht>, accessed March 16, 2020. See also the contributions of Margit Reiter and Gerald Steinacher in this volume.

51. See Susanna Schrafstetter, “Verfolgung und Wiedergutmachung. Karl M. Hettlage: Mitarbeiter von Albert Speer und Staatssekretär im Bundesfinanzministerium,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 56, no. 3 (July 2008): 431–66, here 432.

52. See Michael Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten: Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes* (Hamburg: Hamburger Ed., 2002), published in English as *An Uncompromising Generation: The Nazi Leadership of the Reich Security Main Office* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

53. In 2009 the Federal Ministry of Finance appointed a historians’ commission to examine the history of the Reich Ministry of Finance between 1933 and 1945. An overview of the commission’s work and the publications that have appeared to date can be found here: <http://www.reichsfinanzministerium-geschichte.de/>, accessed February 16, 2020.

54. See Bösch and Wirsching, eds., *Hüter der Ordnung*; Frieder Günther, “Verfassung vergeht, Verwaltung besteht? Die vier deutschen Innenministerien 1919 bis 1970,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 68, no. 2 (April 2020): 217–46; Creuzberger and Geppert, eds., *Ämter*.

55. See Peter Joachim Lapp, *Ulbrichts Helfer: Wehrmachtsoffiziere im Dienste der DDR* (Bonn: Bernard & Graefe, 2000); Henry Leide, *NS-Verbrecher und Staatssicherheit: Die geheime Vergangenheitspolitik der DDR* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005); Daniel Niemetz, *Das feldgraue Erbe: Die Wehrmacheinflüsse im Militär der SBZ/DDR* (Berlin: Chr. Links, 2006); Creuzberger and Geppert, eds., *Ämter*.

56. See Bajohr and Hürter, “Auftragsforschung,” in Bajohr et al., eds., *Meer als eine Erzählung*, 226.

57. See Frank Engehausen, Sylvia Paletschek, and Wolfram Pyta, eds., *Die badischen und württembergischen Landesministerien in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2019); Bernhard Gotto, “Demokratische Kultur und NS-Vergangenheit in Bayern: Ein neues Forschungsprojekt des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 65, no. 2 (April 2017): 273–84.

58. For the Austrian Historians’ Commission and its publications see <https://hiko.univie.ac.at/>, accessed November 23, 2020.

59. Some work has been done on the SPÖ but there is so far only one preliminary study of the ÖVP. See Maria Mesner, ed., *Entnazifizierung zwischen politischem Anspruch, Parteienkonkurrenz und Kaltem Krieg: Das Beispiel der SPÖ* (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2005); Michael Wladika, *Zur Repräsentanz von Politikern und Mandataren mit NS-Vergangenheit in der Österreichischen Volkspartei 1945–1980: Eine gruppenbiographische Untersuchung* (Vienna, 2018), <http://www.vogelsanginstitut.at/at/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/forschungsbericht.pdf>, accessed April 7, 2020.

60. See Reiter, *Die Ehemaligen*.

61. See Klaus-Dietmar Henke, “Die Grenzen der politischen Säuberung in Deutschland nach 1945,” in Ludolf Herbst, ed., *Westdeutschland 1945–1955: Unterwerfung, Kontrolle, Integration* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1986), 127–33.

62. Schildt, “Fünf Möglichkeiten,” 1240.

63. Christopher Browning’s study *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office: A Study of Referat D III of Abteilung Deutschland 1940–1943*, originally published by Holmes & Meier in 1978, appeared more than 30 years later in German translation as Christopher Browning, *Die “Endlösung” und das Auswärtige Amt: Das Referat D III der Abteilung Deutschland 1940–1943* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2010).

64. See Ulrich Herbert, “Liberalisierung als Lernprozess: Die Bundesrepublik in der deutschen Geschichte—eine Skizze,” in idem, ed., *Wandlungsprozesse in Westdeutschland: Belastung, Integration, Liberalisierung, 1945–1980* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002), 7–49.

65. On this point, Herbert, “NS-Eliten,” in Loth and Rusinek, eds., *Verwandlungspolitik*, 109.

66. See the contribution of Mary Fulbrook in this volume.

67. See Winfried Schulze and Otto Gerhard Oexle, eds., *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1999).

In Memoriam Jürgen Zarusky, 1958–2019



Jürgen Zarusky, our co-editor, passed away on March 4, 2019 following a short and severe illness. The managing editor of the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* at the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, Jürgen Zarusky was also the progenitor of this volume. In his view, examining the role of Nazi elites and the continuing effects of the persistence of Nazi ideology in postwar Germany and Austria was a central task of *Zeitgeschichte*. An expert on both National Socialism and Stalinism, Jürgen Zarusky took a keen interest in the long-lasting legacies of both dictatorships, as well as in their political and social significance for today. For Jürgen Zarusky—as historian, as editor, and as a voice for the preservation of memory and reconciliation across Europe—the past was current. To us, Jürgen Zarusky was more than a colleague and a co-editor in a joint project. He was a friend, a mentor, and a source of inspiration. He is greatly missed.

In the Crosshairs

Kurt Ziesel's Adenauer-Era Campaign to
Expose the Nazi Pasts of West German Intellectuals

AXEL SCHILDT

TRANSLATION BY SINÉAD CROWE

In late 1957, a book titled *Das verlorene Gewissen* ("The Lost Conscience"), written by the conservative, right-wing publicist Kurt Ziesel (1911–2001), caused a sensation in West Germany. Ziesel's work attacked the careers of many German intellectuals who, having been active in the Third Reich, embraced democracy and publicly supported liberal views after 1945, all the while concealing their highly problematic Nazi-era positions and publications. The article analyzes Ziesel's methods of exposing the pasts of these prominent writers, and examines their reactions to Ziesel's accusations. As author Axel Schildt shows, despite the support from prominent voices such as Heinrich Böll, Theodor Heuss and others, those targeted by Ziesel did not succeed in fighting the accusations effectively. Ziesel was nevertheless unable to turn his efforts into long-term political gains. While he received much applause from staunchly conservative circles, his campaign began to falter in the mid-1960s. However, his methods became part of the arsenal of political conflict in the Federal Republic.

Introduction

The last third of the 1950s saw the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) begin an extensive critical engagement with its Nazi past.¹ Tainted biographies were uncovered, and Nazi criminals who had adopted the roles of upstanding citizens in the postwar period were brought to justice in highly publicized trials. The public's growing interest in confronting the past is often attributed to the new generation of journalists who had begun working for West Germany's newspapers and broadcasters.² However, this explanation fails to take into account an important phenomenon that continues to attract media attention to this day, namely sensationalistic revelations made by right-wing conservatives about the careers of certain writers and journalists during the Third Reich. Not only had these writers and journalists settled comfortably into life in the FRG, but, without so much as mentioning their earlier political beliefs or of-

fering any explanation for their change of heart, they had become proponents of liberal positions. From the vantage point of 1978, Armin Mohler, a prominent advocate of traditional values and an intellectual heir to the conservative revolutionary movement, argued: “The fact that there is no conservative press worth mentioning in the FRG today is primarily the fault of a certain breed of journalists—a breed that enjoyed the benefits of the Third Reich and then tried to erase [their pasts] after 1945 by obsequiously adopting the catchphrases and buzzwords of reeducation.”³

Such polemics against “cowardly” conformity with the zeitgeist have been a recurring feature of debates about the German past since the late 1950s. During the “Fischer Controversy” of the early 1960s (a debate among academics about the extent to which Germany was responsible for the outbreak of the First World War), for example, national-conservative historians accused Fritz Fischer, a former Nazi careerist, of betraying nationalist historiography for opportunistic reasons. In personal correspondence, Fischer’s rival Gerhard Ritter scornfully referred to him as a “convert.”⁴

By contrast, figures who refused to adapt their views to the times were widely admired in the conservative postwar years. Carl Schmitt, the former “crown jurist” of the Nazi regime, was much sought after even by respectable media organizations, with the prestigious weekly *Die Zeit* among the newspapers that published his articles.⁵ In an interview in the mid-1960s the news magazine *Der Spiegel* allowed the philosopher Martin Heidegger, an unrepentant antisemite who had furthered the Nazi agenda in his position as rector of Freiburg University, to whitewash his past.⁶

In exposing the Nazi associations of certain intellectuals, conservative journalists were motivated neither by a genuine interest in shedding light on National Socialism, nor by a desire to highlight character flaws. Instead, their main goal was to fight the liberalism believed to be on the rise in the 1950s. It is hardly surprising, then, that the focus was on the Nazi pasts of those intellectuals who had joined the journalistic mainstream after the Second World War or who were seen as liberal or left-wing. Conservatives held such “hypocrites” and “opportunists” in utter contempt. Kurt Ziesel’s book *Das verlorene Gewissen* (“The Lost Conscience,” 1957) is a prime example of this type of conservative exposé.⁷

Kurt Ziesel (1911–2001): Biographical Details

The Innsbruck-born Ziesel joined the National Socialist German Students’ Association in 1930 and the Nazi Party in 1931.⁸ By then he was already

writing for the Nazi press, and he remained a regular correspondent for the *Deutschösterreichische Zeitung* in Vienna until it was banned in 1933. Ziesel then moved to the Prussian city of Königsberg to work as an editor for the *Preußische Zeitung*. In April 1934, after being accused of having a relationship with a Jewish woman, demonstrating “youthful arrogance,” and circulating “news about atrocities” (*Greuelnachrichten*), he was fired, remanded in custody for several weeks, and expelled from the Nazi Party. Ziesel, whose wife was expecting their second child, turned to Rudolf Heß for help. As a member of the party’s old guard (*alter Kämpfer*), Ziesel begged Heß not to allow him and his family to “starve to death.” As a result of Heß’s intervention, Ziesel’s expulsion from the party was lifted after a few months, in late 1934. In the fall of 1935, Ziesel found another editorial position in the Nazi press, this time with the *Westfälische Landeszeitung Rote Erde* in Dortmund, but friction soon led to his dismissal from this newspaper as well. At the time Ziesel also wrote for several other newspapers, including the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the *Westdeutscher Beobachter* in Cologne, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, the *NSZ-Rheinfront*, and the *Stuttgarter NS-Kurier*.

Ziesel’s journalistic pieces centered mainly on “German culture’s” battle to defend itself from Jewish influences. From 1936 to 1939 he served as publisher and editor-in-chief for the *Hanseatendienst*, a Hamburg-based “news agency for the entire press” with a pronounced antisemitic agenda. After the Anschluss, Ziesel also became an editor for the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* in Vienna while continuing to contribute to Nazi newspapers in the “Altreich.” Written in a radically polemical style that one scholar has accurately likened to “verbal persecution of the Jews,”⁹ Ziesel’s articles repeatedly demanded that the party and the state take action against the “Jewish-infested petty bureaucrats” within organizations such as the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. The belligerent tone of his texts caused friction across the Nazi cultural industry. When one publisher refused to include one of his essays in a series because its scope was too narrow, Ziesel promptly complained to the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* (Reich Chamber of Literature) that “truly Jewish methods” were being used against him. He did not shy away from leveling antisemitic accusations even at prestigious authors who enjoyed the favor of the Nazi regime, such as Manfred Hausmann. As a result, during the Third Reich Ziesel became embroiled in a series of disputes, many of which came before the courts.

In the mid-1930s Ziesel began a literary career that ran parallel to his career as a political journalist. By 1943 his first novel, *Verwandlung der Herzen* (“Transformation of the Hearts,” 1938), had been reprinted twice and also

published in two editions designed for soldiers, bringing the total number of copies to 350,000, according to Ziesel himself. The novel's plot revolves around a courageous National Socialist soldier who is crippled at the front during the First World War. With its combination of light fiction and political propaganda, the novel exemplifies a popular genre of the time. Ziesel's second, equally successful novel, *Der kleine Gott* ("The Little God," 1939), which had been reprinted twice and published in two editions for the troops by 1944, also promoted "National Socialist ideology in the form of simple popular fiction."¹⁰ Here, Ziesel celebrated "the power of a woman's love" and motherhood as the ultimate realization of this love. The SS newspaper *Das schwarze Korps* praised the manner in which the novel brought the *Lebensborn* idea to literary life. A few contributions to literary anthologies cemented Ziesel's position as an extremely productive young writer who enjoyed regular acclaim in the literary pages of the newspapers. By the eve of the Second World War, the twenty-eight-year-old belonged to the highest echelons of the Nazi literary scene.

In 1940 Ziesel was called up for service in the *Wehrmacht*, where, in his role as a war correspondent, he proved himself adept at giving meaning to the war. That same year he celebrated another literary success with the 500-page anthology *Krieg und Dichtung* ("War and Literature"), in which he sought to make his own prose continue the venerable tradition of German classicism. In August 1941, just a few weeks after German forces launched their invasion of the Soviet Union, Ziesel wrote to the Reich Ministry of Propaganda requesting a car and a chauffeur. His plan, he explained, was to travel along the entire Eastern Front so that he could "examine the psychological experience of war" and "provide a unique impression of the whole front." In March 1942 he was detailed as a *Sonderführer*, or "specialist," to the Correspondents' Section of the Army High Command. It was there, in early 1943, that he discovered a new calling as an estate owner who would "command the countryside" and promote love for "the East" through his writings. In 1943 Ziesel had himself redeployed from the Eastern Front to the Balkans. He maintained his high fiction output until the end of the war.

Little is known about Ziesel's activities in the immediate postwar years, apart from a spell running an Austrian farm he had owned since the late 1930s. His books were banned in Austria, however, and he was prohibited from making speeches in public. This transitional period ended in 1948, and in the 1950s he moved to Munich, though he retained his residence in Austria.

Ziesel's attempts to find employment with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) were quickly thwarted, though how and by whom remains largely unclear. In

late 1951 the publisher Kurt Desch wrote the following lines to Max Steff, a well-known expert on the work of Adalbert Stifter, a librarian at the Bavarian State Library in Munich, and an authority on the local intellectual scene:

We've known for some time now that the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* feuilleton tries to pursue its political agenda in as subtle a manner as possible. The tactics are pretty simple: On the one hand, things that the gentlemen of the feuilleton would rather not see, hear, or read are omitted. This evades the notice of most readers. On the other hand, they allow dyed-in-the-wool Nazis to throw a couple of poison darts in the wrong (i.e. "right") direction every now and then. [. . .] In any case, it is gratifying to see that questions are indeed being raised thanks to our interventions, and that Dr. Schöningh has informed you that no sentence by Mr. Ziesel will ever be published in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* again.¹¹

There is no evidence of any articles attributed to Kurt Ziesel appearing in the SZ feuilleton in 1951. Between 1952 and 1963 Ziesel self-published the *Europäischer Kulturdienst* in Salzburg. The title of this publication alone, which translates as "European Cultural Service," prompted *Michael*, a Catholic weekly based in Düsseldorf, to associate it with the "neofascists" who had adopted "European" as their new buzzword. They had established the *Deutsches Kulturwerk Europäischen Geistes* (German Cultural Association for the European Spirit), the book distribution service *Die Europäische Nationale*, the magazine *Nation Europa*, and other initiatives featuring "Europe" in their titles to disguise their extremist views. The author of the article in *Michael* concluded by asking, "Has Mr. Ziesel joined the ranks of these idiots, or—dare we say it—does he simply lack character?"¹²

Ziesel's application to join the *Bayerischer Schriftstellerverband* (Bavarian Writers' Association) was also turned down. The explanation provided by the committee—namely, that his Austrian citizenship precluded him from joining—was little more than a feeble excuse, Ziesel claimed, given that he now resided in Munich.¹³ He maintained that his application had in fact been blocked by Max Steff, the selection committee's "political advisor," at the behest of the writer Hermann Kasack. These allegations were publicly denied by Steff, who said that the decision to reject Ziesel's application had been taken at a board meeting of the *Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller* (Association for the Protection of German Writers) in October 1954. Steff claimed that he had not informed Kasack of the decision until February 20, 1955, and so the latter could not have played any role in the matter.¹⁴

It is impossible to determine whether Kasack and Steff's account of events is

true. What is clear, though, is that by the mid-1950s Ziesel was widely seen as a right-wing troublemaker and unrepentant Nazi. According to Kasack, both Ziesel and the publisher Georg von Holtzbrinck—the majority shareholder of the conservative religious weekly *Christ und Welt*, whose own publishing house, *Deutsche Volksbücher*, had published some of Ziesel's novels—moved in the same “right-wing circles.”¹⁵ Ziesel was not prepared to take such attacks lying down. After learning that Steff had warned about Ziesel in a letter to Walburga Rucker, the wife of August Rucker, the Bavarian minister of education and cultural affairs, Ziesel sent Steff a registered letter repudiating the “vile slurs” and “outrageous” claim that he was “still propagating [his] old ideals.” In fact, Ziesel maintained, his writing was driven by a moral impulse: “The targets of my public battle are the people who attack those who made mistakes in the past, directing implacable hatred at them while using the exact same Nazi methods of psychological and economic terror and practicing the same anonymous smear campaigns that the Nazis did.”¹⁶ Ziesel issued an ultimatum: either Steff recant, in appropriate detail, the claims made in his letter to Walburga Rucker “and apologize for this defamation” within eight days, or the matter would be brought to court.¹⁷

In the 1950s Ziesel set out to repeat the success he had enjoyed in the 1930s by establishing a literary career that would run parallel to his political journalism, now a mixture of “Occidental” European ideology, radical anti-Bolshevism, and aggressive anti-liberalism. His novel *Der kleine Gott* was reprinted by an Austrian publishing house as soon as his publication ban was lifted in 1948, and his first postwar novel was published in 1952. Entitled *Daniel in der Löwengrube* (“Daniel in the Lion’s Den”), the novel jarred some observers and led them to believe that the author had undergone a baffling political and ethical transformation. It tells the story of a non-Jewish artist, Daniel Gurett, who accidentally stumbles into a Jewish ghetto, identifies with the people there, and is murdered alongside them. *Daniel in der Löwengrube* contained a mixture of faux philosemitism and antisemitic *ressentiment*. Ziesel held Hitler solely responsible for the Holocaust: what Hitler’s “murder of the Jews had done not just to them, but to us, the German people” was “unfathomable,” as Ziesel put it in a later work.¹⁸ Where it was reviewed at all, the novel was panned, particularly in the light of Ziesel’s own past,¹⁹ but this did not stop *Daniel in der Löwengrube* and his novels published between 1954 and 1957 from commanding five-figure print runs.²⁰

In later autobiographical statements, Ziesel liked to portray himself as a “fully recovered National Socialist”²¹ and to highlight the fact that he had been involved in numerous disputes during the Nazi regime. In characterizing

these disputes as acts of political resistance, Ziesel painted himself as a writer who, though briefly led astray in his youth, had become a morally upstanding opponent of the Nazi regime. While narratives like these were very common at the time, Ziesel went one step further. He claimed that he was being ostracized by the Federal Republic's most intellectually influential media organizations because the key positions in these organizations were occupied by opportunists who had once played the role of enthusiastic Nazis and were now posing as defenders of democracy. According to Ziesel, these "opportunists" formed the basis of a left-wing intellectual cartel which, "due to the inner putrefaction of West German democracy in its entirety," posed a danger to "the free world."²² He repeatedly bemoaned "the dubious nature of press freedom today," the "terror" unleashed by "this degenerate freedom," and the "systematic destruction of faith, values, national sentiment, and unsullied allegiance to one's state" caused by the "commentariat gangsters" of the "licensed press."²³ These "gangsters" had betrayed their true beliefs, Ziesel claimed, and they had been systematically boycotting him since the war ended; it was them whom he was determined to expose and undermine.²⁴

In what follows, I will outline Ziesel's argumentative strategies before turning my attention to the counterstrategies deployed by the intellectuals he attacked for their behavior in the Third Reich. Even at the time, the rows between Ziesel and the subjects of his revelations were difficult to keep track of, with numerous public spats and legal disputes taking place alongside more covert attempts to discredit and isolate Ziesel. These rows can be seen as part of a process of self-reflection undergone by those left-wing and liberal intellectuals who had supported National Socialism when they were journalists in the Third Reich and who now, more than a decade later, were being confronted with the texts they had once written.

Das verlorene Gewissen

Ziesel's opening salvo was *Das verlorene Gewissen*, an exposé that garnered the most public attention of all his books. First published in December 1957 by J. F. Lehmanns Verlag in Munich, *Das verlorene Gewissen* was on its second print run six weeks later, its fifth print run in the fall of 1958, and its eighth print run two years later.²⁵ In his monumental work on right-wing politics in the FRG, the American historian Kurt P. Tauber writes that, judging by the amount of controversy he generated, Ziesel ranked among West Germany's most influential right-wing journalists, and the impact of *Das verlorene Gewissen*, in particular, was "like a bomb-shell."²⁶

It is no coincidence that Ziesel's exposé begins with a relatively respectful discussion of Rudolf Pechel. At the time, the seventy-six-year-old was widely seen as a representative of the righteous resistance to Hitler and the Nazi regime. In his youth Pechel had moved in the conservative revolutionary circles associated with Arthur Moeller van den Bruck. In 1919 he joined the political and literary journal *Deutsche Rundschau*, first as editor-in-chief and then, until his arrest by the Gestapo in April 1942, as publisher.²⁷ Surprisingly, despite his close links with Carl Goerdeler and other figures in the conservative resistance, Pechel was acquitted by the Nazi *Volksgerichtshof* (People's Court) in February 1945 due to a "lack of evidence." After the war he helped establish the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU, *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*) in the Soviet Occupation Zone, but he soon became disillusioned and distanced himself from party politics. In 1946 he resumed his position as publisher of the *Deutsche Rundschau*, for which he had obtained a press license from the British authorities. During the Cold War, Pechel was a prominent advocate of Western freedom and a leading figure in the PEN Center, first in the all-German PEN Center, then in the West German PEN Center.²⁸ He also sat on the executive committee of the *Kongress für kulturelle Freiheit* (Congress for Cultural Freedom), which was established in 1950.²⁹ Pechel's radically anticommunist rhetoric—he compared East Germany to a concentration camp, for example—posited an equivalence between all forms of totalitarianism.³⁰ Most likely, his *Deutsche Rundschau* survived the 1950s only thanks to generous subsidies from the *Bundesministerium für Gesamtdeutsche Fragen* (Federal Ministry of All-German Affairs), which saw to it that copies were smuggled into the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and subscriptions from numerous Bonn-based agencies.³¹

As well as painting Pechel as a conservative revolutionary supporter of the Nazi seizure of power, *Das verlorene Gewissen* argued that Pechel's *Deutsche Rundschau* articles had served to "dispel any remaining doubts we young National Socialists may have had in Hitler and the Nazi revolution."³² In what was an attempt to justify his own career, Ziesel quoted from the April 1933 issue of the journal, in which Pechel had enthused about the "national revolution" and expressed satisfaction at the demise of left-wing and Jewish literary figures.³³

Indeed, Ziesel explicitly defended Pechel's stance toward National Socialism:

In all probability [Pechel] hoped that his journalism, which was critical in its support and always prepared to raise an admonitory finger, would

contribute to the ideal development of the new national state reflecting the ideals he had long fought for. Far into the war years, he courageously continued to object to injustices and threats to development while remaining fundamentally supportive of the whole course.³⁴

Given the selfless bravery Pechel had demonstrated during the Third Reich, it was difficult to understand why he had since joined the ranks of the opportunists who dragged decent men through the mud, Ziesel wrote:

Neither Kolbenheyer nor Hans Grimm, neither Zillich, Johst, Agnes Miegel, Alverdes, nor Ida Seidel, neither Carossa nor Jünger nor Benn ever glorified Hitler's crimes or committed crimes themselves. They believed in Hitler. It may be true that, after the path he had taken had become evident to even the most politically immature of these writers, they remained silent, telling themselves that everything would change once the war was over. But not one of them was a deliberate barbarian, warmonger, or murderer.³⁵

Ziesel complained that these writers' "books were now banned," that they were "driven out of their homes, put into camps," that "the venal opportunists of the press maligned them in the crudest terms," and that "low-rent writers whose oeuvre largely comprised pornographic rags and fashion magazines" were being allowed to hound them with impunity.³⁶ Ziesel's claims here were simply untrue, however. They did not apply by any stretch of the imagination to the media stars Ernst Jünger and Gottfried Benn, and even the other, less famous, figures he sympathized with soon found their (now mostly elderly) audience. But that was of little interest to Ziesel: the jumble of terms in a statement such as "deliberate barbarian, warmonger, or murderer" is characteristic of his montages of facts, lies, and half-truths. In reality no one had ever accused these writers of killing anyone, nor had it ever been claimed that they had "deliberately" become barbarians during the Nazi regime. What was true, however, was that some of them, like Ziesel himself, had lauded the Führer as a brilliant military strategist and extolled the beauty of his war.³⁷ To underscore his own supposed victim status, Ziesel quoted (without providing a page number) the following sentence aimed at Kolbenheyer from a 1956 issue of the *Deutsche Rundschau*: "The brown rats must be stamped out, once and for all."³⁸

Ziesel regarded Hans Friedrich Blunck as an opportunist nonpareil, though in this case Ziesel's accusations were not entirely unfounded. In 1957 *Die Zeit* had given Blunck, the former president of the *Reichsschrifttumskammer*, an

opportunity to absolve himself of any political responsibility in a letter to the editor.³⁹ But, according to Ziesel, Blunck was just one example of many writers who saw values such as “friendship, loyalty, trust, and conscience” only as “a means to an end.”⁴⁰ Ziesel also dredged up the past of the writer Jürgen Eggebrecht, who had been a member of PEN since 1958 and now developed intellectual evening programming for the public broadcaster *Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk* (NWDR) and worked for the northern German regional television station *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* (NDR). Ziesel claimed to have been close friends with Eggebrecht during the war, when Ziesel had served in a *Wehrmacht* propaganda company and Eggebrecht had been the “Armed Forces High Command’s high priest of censorship.”⁴¹ According to Ziesel, Eggebrecht had refused to authorize Ziesel’s novel *Der Vergessene* (“The Forgotten Man,” 1941) for the troops, and later, in his influential postwar position as a broadcast editor, saw to it that Ziesel’s publications never received any coverage.

Walter Hilpert and Wolfgang Weyrauch were two more players in this conspiracy of silence, Ziesel maintained. Hilpert, who prior to 1945 had worked for the regional Nazi radio station *Reichssender Königsberg*, joined NWDR in 1945 and was appointed the first director general of NDR in 1956. Meanwhile, Weyrauch, who had once given Ziesel a rave review in the Nazi newspaper *Das Reich*,⁴² had supposedly adopted a “new democrat” persona after the war, both in his position as editor at the publisher Rowohlt and as a member of the Grünwalder Kreis, a group of pro-democracy intellectuals.⁴³ Ziesel also characterized the feuilleton editors of some leading German newspapers as erstwhile acolytes of Hitler. One of them was Bruno E. Werner of the *Tagesspiegel*, who for more than a decade had been in charge of the cultural pages of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, until just before its demise in 1945. Ziesel described Werner as “one of the most loyal and zealous servants of Nazi cultural policies”; so loyal, in fact, that he had been “allowed to hold on to his position in spite of his ancestry, which was not purely Aryan.”⁴⁴ While Paul Hühnerfeld, who worked first for *Die Zeit* and then for *Die Welt*, was still too young in 1945 to have written embarrassing journalistic texts in previous years, his “dictatorial regime” as an editor was “no doubt [. . .] a remnant of his years in the Hitler Youth.”⁴⁵ *Die Zeit* editor Josef Müller-Marein, “one of the Luftwaffe’s star war correspondents,”⁴⁶ was not spared Ziesel’s ire, nor was his colleague Walter Abendroth (1896–1973), whom Ziesel depicted as an “exceptionally fanatical race and nationhood zealot in the musical sphere.”

Ziesel quoted from a 1939 essay by Abendroth for the periodical *Deutsches Volkstum* on the history of the relationship between intellectuals and the *Volk*:

It is quite a leap from such justified awareness of one's genuine superiority to the "wise guy's" arrogant sense of detachment from his *Volk's* natural bonds of blood, tradition, and fate and his snooty lack of interest in the work and struggles that sustained him and indeed made his very existence possible. But many "intellectuals" have had the effrontery to take this leap at decisive historical junctures. In so doing, they have become—whether wittingly or not—welcome victims of the Jewish strategy. For the Jew himself, intellectualism is an effective subversive tool, an explosive that divides the people he rules into impotent classes.⁴⁷

One of the most prominent intellectuals Ziesel attacked was Karl Korn, feuilleton editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ). For a short period Korn had held the same position at Goebbels's weekly *Das Reich*, where, according to Ziesel, he was well paid, could write his lofty prose, and was exempted from serving at the front: "And so they all came running [to the Nazis], all these 'inner emigrants': Mr. Korn, Mr. Stüskind, Mr. Petersen, Mr. Weyrauch, Mr. Schüddekopf, and whatever the rest of them are called, all these people who now claim to have been resistance fighters against Goebbels and Hitler."⁴⁸

For Ziesel, the *Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung* (German Academy for Language and Literature) was a hotbed of hypocrisy whose members—presided over by opportunistic Nazi-era careerists such as its president, Hermann Kasack, and the writer Kasimir Edschmid—had styled themselves as victims of the Third Reich. Ziesel maintained that this was a grotesque misrepresentation of their true roles.⁴⁹

The Public Reaction and the Responses of the Accused

With its explosive revelations substantiated by striking juxtapositions of quotes from before and after 1945, its withering contempt for opportunistic "converts" who were allegedly continuing to abuse their powerful positions in the media, and its praise for supposedly principled figures who had stood by their values, *Das verlorene Gewissen* caught the public's attention. Of course, it also caused great unease among those whom Ziesel accused, figures who, in the immediate postwar years, had become accustomed to not being questioned about their pasts.

Ziesel documented the reactions to his exposé in *Die Geister scheiden sich* ("Opinions Differ"), a book spanning more than two hundred pages

published just two years later by the same publishing house.⁵⁰ *Die Geister scheiden sich* makes it relatively easy to reconstruct the various responses. The first section provides samples of letters Ziesel received.⁵¹ Strikingly, all of the letters sent by politicians were from members of the government, including Franz Blücher, Max Becker, Ewald Bucher, and Hermann Schwann from the Free Democratic Party (FDP, *Freie Demokratische Partei*), as well as Werner Dollinger, Karl Theodor Freiherr zu Guttenberg, and Franz Josef Strauß from the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU, *Christlich-Soziale Union*). Strauß's congratulatory letter, which commended Ziesel on having the "courage to poke a wasp's nest," is typical of the positive responses. "I am convinced of the integrity of your intentions," Strauß continued, "as in view of the current situation in German literature and the German media—a situation you yourself have described—this book is likely to win you enemies as well as friends." Strauß congratulated Ziesel again on the publication of the second edition of the book, which, according to Strauß, provided a fuller picture, and again on the fourth edition, which proved "that your brave writing has struck a chord and met with a positive reception in all circles."⁵²

The majority of letters sent by writers were commendations from former members of the Third Reich's literary elite. Manfred Hausmann—who, as mentioned above, had been a target of Ziesel's criticism during the Nazi years—wrote: "I do not envy your Herculean labor in the Augean stables."⁵³ Bernt von Heiseler invoked the same image: "But the writer's courage deserves admiration and appreciation, what with the Augean stable boys maintaining that everything is in perfect order. It is not easy to say to their faces what condition the stables are really in."⁵⁴ Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer professed admiration for Ziesel's "brave attack on corruption."⁵⁵ Bruno Brehm, Hans Grimm, and a few others sent similarly enthusiastic responses.

Hans Werner Richter, a member of *Gruppe 47*, had also written to Ziesel. His letter was probably included to create an impression of objectivity:

I have read your book. I will provide a detailed response shortly. [. . .]
I wish to clarify all the points you raise in your book. For instance, you write about left-wing intellectuals' "depraved misrule." But when I look at the names of the journalists you attack in your book, nearly all of them are conservatives, or at least people who belonged to the conservative camp in 1933, when almost all "left-wing intellectuals" disappeared from the public eye. These intellectuals never really got anywhere after 1945, either—certainly not in any "dominant and powerful sense." [. . .]

Or are you claiming that people like Zehrer, Wirsing, Süskind, Sperr, Korn, etc. are “left-wing intellectuals”?⁵⁶

Ziesel received letters from conservative and national liberal politicians, functionaries from German expellee organizations, and right-wing Catholic writers such as Emil Franzel and Herbert Graber, editor of *Deutsche Hochschullehrerzeitung*, a publication for people who had been “driven out of office” after the war. Strikingly, however, hardly any well-known intellectuals or contemporary authors wrote to him. Hans Werner Richter was one exception; another, more surprising, exception was Kurt Hiller, a left-wing intellectual who had achieved prominence in the Weimar Republic as a radical pacifist, independent socialist, and contributor to the weekly news magazine *Die Weltbühne*.⁵⁷ Ziesel presented Hiller’s letter of praise as if it were a trophy, publishing it beneath the heading “Emigrant, Jew, Left-Wing Socialist”:

Dear Mr. Ziesel, You and I work from diametrically opposing stand-points. But that does not prevent me from applauding many things: your determination to reveal the truth; the soundness and integrity of your hatred; your genuine (from your perspective) patriotism; and your articulateness. I am your opponent, not your enemy. And I was especially gratified by the powerful, sober manner in which you exposed those gentlemen who—partly due to what I know about them, partly due to gut instinct—have always sickened me.⁵⁸

Hiller, himself no stranger to controversy, charged into the fray to defend Ziesel. In response to a letter from the editor-in-chief of the SZ, Werner Friedmann, who had described Ziesel as a “defamer,”⁵⁹ Hiller wrote that he welcomed Friedmann’s decision to sue Ziesel. If Ziesel lost, he would be finished, Hiller admitted, but this outcome was unlikely:

The schmuck who can write right or write left depending on who is paying him did not die out with Gustav Freytag. Should fate present us tomorrow with a clerical fascist dictatorship, yesterday’s babbler in *völkisch* ideas and today’s serious liberal democrat will tomorrow start singing a clerical fascist tune. And should Nazism reemerge the day after tomorrow, he will once again start spewing Nazi drivel. And, needless to say, should Ulbricht rule all of Germany the day after tomorrow (something the UN or Juno would hopefully not allow to happen), this same schmuck will toe the Communist Party line. It nauseates me more than Hitler, Ulbricht, and Adenauer combined.⁶⁰

In the meantime, Hiller passed Friedmann's letter on to Ziesel, who then threatened to sue Friedmann, as a result of which the latter was forced to retract his claim that Ziesel was a "defamer."⁶¹ When Friedmann subsequently reproached Hiller for his disloyalty in passing the letter on to Ziesel, Hiller merely continued his diatribe against opportunistic intellectuals. He wrote that he would stick by his "friend Ziesel," a person "with whom I may have several political differences, but with whom I have a great deal in common when it comes to morals. [. . .] Give me someone with strength of character from the right over a left-wing swine any day."⁶²

Ziesel and Hiller, two troublemakers from opposite ends of the political spectrum, continued to correspond regularly for a decade after Hiller first contacted Ziesel in February 1958. In his second letter, Hiller invited Ziesel to Hamburg to discuss the question of "whether, leaving aside any shared character traits, it is possible to build an ideological bridge between decent people from the right and decent people from the left."⁶³ Ziesel was "greatly moved" by this conversation, which took place in Hamburg in the spring of 1958. He sought to repay Hiller for passing on Friedmann's letter by attempting to persuade Lehmanns to publish an updated edition of Hiller's booklet *Rote Ritter* ("Red Knights"), a settlement of scores with German communists living in exile.⁶⁴ Ziesel also invited Hiller to write short glosses for his *Europäischer Kulturdienst*, though he warned Hiller that he could not really offer a proper honorarium.⁶⁵ In March 1961 Ziesel went so far as to propose that Hiller, a committed leftist, write a regular column for a "major new German news magazine" of which Ziesel would be editor-in-chief. In his letter Ziesel reiterated the view he shared with Hiller: "I wish to embolden [. . .] the decent people of all parties and all directions and to scalp the swine of both the left and the right."⁶⁶ However, the news magazine, which was supposed to be launched in May 1961, never materialized.

It was probably through Hiller that Ziesel found a surprising forum in the shape of *Konkret*, a Hamburg-based monthly magazine read by many intellectuals and, until 1964, clandestinely subsidized by the GDR.⁶⁷ Ziesel expressed delight at having the opportunity to contribute to a publication whose "leanings are in many respects the opposite of my own cultural and political views." In "offering people with different views the space to share their opinions," Ziesel wrote, *Konkret* demonstrated a sense of "fairness and integrity that has become rare in contemporary journalism [and that] fills me with respect."⁶⁸ This did not stop *Konkret* from also publishing reviews of those earlier works in which Ziesel had worn "his brown coat."⁶⁹

Though he was loath to admit it, Ziesel was disappointed by the press coverage of *Das verlorene Gewissen*. Several newspapers had initially reported that an injunction would prohibit the book from entering a second print run, thereby creating the impression that Ziesel's work was not to be trusted and that there was therefore no need for reputable publications to review it. But these reports were premature or indeed outright false, and *Das verlorene Gewissen* was reprinted just a few weeks later. Ziesel himself claimed that his book had received positive reviews in 70 percent of German newspapers, though he admitted that none of these were major titles.⁷⁰

In reality, with the exception of a sympathetic review by Walter Görnitz in *Die Welt*—albeit one that barely engaged with the book's content⁷¹—there were hardly any noteworthy press reactions for Ziesel to document in *Die Geister scheiden sich*, a fact that no number of reviews from second- and third-rate publications could disguise. *Das verlorene Gewissen* was not covered in the *SZ*, *Die Zeit*, the *FAZ*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, or the *Rheinischer Merkur*. Even *Der Spiegel*, which had received the galleys and was usually reluctant to let a scandal pass it by, demonstrated no interest in covering the book. Ziesel bemoaned the “radio silence” also maintained by the country's influential public broadcasters,⁷² of which only Radio Bremen discussed *Das verlorene Gewissen*. Some publications whose editors Ziesel had personally attacked—including Wilhelm Westecker, arts editor of *Christ und Welt*—published disparaging articles.⁷³ In general, however, the media regarded Ziesel as a conceited braggart and maligner who ought not to receive publicity.

Not even members of the Social Democrat press were prepared to exploit the attacks on their conservative colleagues. In the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD, *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) newspaper *Der neue Vorwärts*, Rolf Schroers, a member of *Gruppe 47*, called Ziesel's book a “smear campaign” and “diatribe” that revealed “the author's pathological defect.” Meanwhile, the *Hamburger Echo* compared Ziesel's tone to that of a “thug from the SA.”⁷⁴ Even the *Weltbühne* in East Berlin professed that it did not “wish to capitalize on Ziesel's pamphlet.” At the same time, however, the *Weltbühne* opposed any attempts to “hush up” the past. In a response to a letter from Rudolf Pechel praising the restraint of the “respectable press,” the *Weltbühne* asked why, exactly, the “respectable press” was remaining silent, and suggested that it was because people did not wish to confront potentially embarrassing realities.⁷⁵

The press had almost entirely closed ranks, with publications either refusing to even mention *Das verlorene Gewissen* or else failing to address its key point, the incriminating pasts of the West German journalistic elite. But the

book was nonetheless read behind closed doors, particularly in intellectual circles. Hans Werner Richter therefore decided that a strategy of silence was not enough; he wished to refute Ziesel's claims. Ziesel had written to Richter in the mistaken belief that the latter had allowed *Das verlorene Gewissen* to be slammed in *Kultur* by Josef Winckler,⁷⁶ a writer with Nazi links who had previously lambasted Ziesel's novel *Daniel in der Löwengrube*. "If, however, this mentorship or responsibility no longer exists," Ziesel wrote, "I believe it is high time for a man like you to finally stand up and object to the depraved misrule imposed by the left-wing intellectuals of our Federal Republic's consumer cooperative. Decent people on all political sides, including your own, have long been waiting for you to do so."⁷⁷

In his friendly reply, Richter pointed out that he had stopped working for *Kultur* one year previously. His promise to provide a more detailed response to *Das verlorene Gewissen* strengthened Ziesel's hope of organizing "a revolt by upstanding people across the entire political spectrum."⁷⁸ In the end Richter invited Ziesel to a discussion of *Das verlorene Gewissen*, which Ziesel accepted along with Richter's conditions: "It will be private, not public. It will not be exploited for journalistic purposes either by you or by us. [. . .] I will invite between twenty and thirty members of the Grünwalder Kreis to participate. [. . .] Once again, I would ask that we avoid any media fuss for the time being. I will oblige all participants to adhere to this rule."⁷⁹

Richter explained his strategy in a letter to Jürgen Eggebrecht, whom Ziesel had attacked particularly virulently. In this letter Richter subtly criticized the manner in which Ziesel's allegations had been handled up to that point:

Dear Jürgen, after lengthy consideration, I have come to the conclusion that it is no longer possible to maintain our long silence on Ziesel. As there has been no response from the direct targets of his allegations, I will respond. The book is not just being read in right-wing circles, it is being read everywhere, and unfortunately it is receiving a positive response, even from many leftists. It is therefore dangerous. Here are some preliminary thoughts:

1. I will appear here on the *Bayerischer Rundfunk* [public broadcaster] with a response of around thirty minutes. Could you do the same on NDR?
2. The Journalists' Club⁸⁰ has decided that it is crucial to write an "anti-Ziesel." Kuby is already in talks with Ullstein, but Desch is another possibility. I would write this "anti-Ziesel" myself, with everyone's help, of course. My assistant would be Theo Pirker.

3. Ziesel has written to me. He is ready to engage in a discussion with the Grünwalder Kreis. I am considering it. The discussion would take place in private here in Munich (probably within the next fourteen days). Would you be interested in taking part?⁸¹

Richter invited mainly Munich-based journalists to the meeting, which took place at eight o'clock on the evening of March 12, 1958, in the Hotel Platzl. Most of the invitees, including the journalists Erich Kuby and Rudolf Pechel, were from Richter's own circle of political acquaintances.⁸² In his invitation to Pechel, Richter made a case similar to the one made to Eggebrecht, arguing "that the time has come to touch Ziesel, even if we need to use a ten-foot pole."⁸³ In a subsequent letter to Pechel, who was unable to make up his mind about whether to accept Richter's invitation and confront Ziesel in person, Richter wrote:

I continue to believe that this "discussion" must be followed by a journalistic war on Ziesel. This cannot be a defensive war, however; it must be offensive and waged on all fronts. We have no choice but to use his own defamatory methods against him as aggressively as possible. I will do whatever I can in this regard. I am well aware that the motive behind Ziesel's attacks is to attract publicity, but he has already achieved that by now anyway. His book is not just being widely read, it is also, unfortunately, widely believed. [. . .] He is a swine, a kind of Freisler of journalism, but he is wreaking havoc, utter havoc.⁸⁴

The outcome of the meeting on March 12, 1958, does not appear to have been documented, so it would appear that the participants honored their promise of confidentiality. They would subsequently encounter Ziesel at the odd event in the city, and Steff even continued to write to him for a while. In one densely typed six-page letter, Steff explained why he had not wanted to go for coffee with Ziesel after one of the latter's public lectures. Ziesel had delivered a "miniature Sportpalast speech," Steff complained, in which the word "intellectual" had been used as a term of abuse and Ziesel had vilified his critics, not for being Nazis, but for "having betrayed Nazism." Moreover, Steff continued, Ziesel's attacks on left-wing intellectuals had been disingenuous, given that he had failed to define what he meant by "left": "Is Mr. Korn left-wing? Mr. Süs-kind? Mr. Weyrauch? Is the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* left-wing? Is the SPD left-wing?" Ziesel had attacked the "pseudo-left" in order to "damage the left," Steff maintained.⁸⁵ But by this point, with opinions hardened on both sides, there

was nothing to be gained by arguing any further. In the years that followed, all disagreements were handled by lawyers.

In the last chapter of *Die Geister scheiden sich*, Ziesel comments on the reactions of the central figures exposed in *Das verlorene Gewissen*—Rudolf Pechel, Hermann Kasack, Bruno E. Werner, Karl Korn, W. E. Süskind, and Werner Friedmann—and tears apart with relish their attempts to justify themselves. Pechel was the only one of these men to make public statements in his defense. The arguments he made, in his own *Deutsche Rundschau* in February 1958 and later in a letter to the *Weltbühne* in the GDR, were easily refutable. Pechel characterized Ziesel's "toxic book" as a "rotten-egg omelet that rehashes numerous long-disproved accusations." As proof, Pechel recalled meeting Hitler in 1922 and being left with "such a lasting sense of the inferiority of the man" that he was unable to harbor "even a moment's sympathy for this movement."⁸⁶ However, this rather desperate diversionary tactic merely allowed Ziesel to point to a series of *Deutsche Rundschau* articles from spring 1933, in which Pechel had celebrated the Nazi seizure of power and welcomed the exclusion of Jewish intellectuals.

The unearthing of these articles sowed doubt even among Pechel's allies. Pechel noted with some bitterness that Joachim Günther, the editor-in-chief of *Neue Deutsche Hefte*, whom Pechel had known well since the 1930s, took Ziesel's side in this matter. Pechel saw this as a black mark "not just against his [Günther's] judgment, but also against his character, and for me it signifies the complete breakdown of our relationship."⁸⁷ Pechel's final years were overshadowed by the defamation action he had brought against Ziesel. In a rather mawkish letter to President Theodor Heuss, whom he knew well, Pechel announced his decision to move to Switzerland:

I have always felt an affinity with you due to our shared opposition to certain trends. So you, of all people, will understand why, after a long period of fighting on the front line, I now wish to withdraw from the front and gain some distance from the insults and slander directed at me over the past few years. All the dirt thrown at me does not really hurt. It is just irksome that the courts move so slowly and that the dirt remains unrefuted in the public sphere. To avoid any suspicions of interfering with an ongoing case, I am unable to refute in my journalism all the nonsense.

To make matters worse, my complaint against Ziesel and the publisher Lehmann[s] has been redirected to the public prosecutor's office in Munich, [. . .] which appears to be reluctant to take legal action against

former Nazis, seeing as [its] decision has been pending for more than half a year now. I will try to leave Germany without bitterness, though it entails the risk of cutting myself off from the rest of the world.⁸⁸

Pechel did not write a single sentence explaining or attempting to justify the articles celebrating the “national revolution” of 1933 that had been the catalyst for Ziesel’s invective. He did not win his libel suit against Ziesel. On December 29, 1960, the Munich public prosecutor’s office ordered the dismissal of proceedings. Even before this, Pechel’s lawyer had given him the following advice: “Please don’t get too worked up. There’s no point, and Ziesel is not worth it. That bothersome foreigner will get what’s coming to him one day, and I will try to see to it that he is thrown out of the country.”⁸⁹ Pechel died in Switzerland a year later.

The Case of Karl Korn

Karl Korn was another journalist greatly troubled by Ziesel’s revelations, though these were initially a little vague in his case. It was already common knowledge that Korn, the FAZ “high priest of culture,” had once been the “literary star” of *Das Reich*.⁹⁰ But *Das verlorene Gewissen* focused on articles published in the Nazi newspaper in 1942, by which point Korn was no longer responsible for the arts pages.⁹¹ As a result, Ziesel’s criticism of Korn’s involvement with *Das Reich* was rather indirect. Ziesel brought up Korn’s *Wehrmacht* career, pointing out that Korn had participated in the development of ideological training material for the *Wehrmacht* and held the rank of *Sonderführer*. His colleague Margret Boveri, whom Korn had met when she was a trainee at the *Berliner Tageblatt* in 1934,⁹² wrote that she was “greatly saddened” by Korn’s decision to take legal action against Ziesel:

Apart from his book, has he done anything to you? I’ve read almost all of the book (got a copy from Heuss), and as Ziesel attacks you only for being a “high priest of culture” without quoting anything you’ve written, I didn’t think it was that bad. I met Fracklers in Munich in September, and he told me that Süskind hasn’t taken any action against Ziesel. And he would have more reason to do so than you.⁹³

Korn also informed Theodor Heuss, whose term as federal president was due to end in a few weeks’ time, of his decision to sue Ziesel and asked Heuss “to confirm in a letter what you know about the journalist Karl Korn in the Third Reich.” Heuss sought to reassure Korn in a letter dated August 5, 1959: “Fairly

regularly in the Soviet Zone press, and later in the cheap nationalism that has reemerged in some German magazines, I myself have been denounced as one of Goebbels's accomplices, all because of a few book reviews and three essays I published in the 'Reich.'" Heuss pointed out that it was Korn and Boveri who had initially invited him to write for *Das Reich*, but that he had stopped after Goebbels turned the newspaper into his personal platform.⁹⁴ In circumstances that remain unclear, Heuss's letter ended up in the hands of Ziesel, who then published it in his *Europäischer Kulturdienst*.⁹⁵

There was no shortage of support for Korn in other quarters, either. Though he was not particularly well acquainted with Korn, Kasimir Edschmid, secretary-general of the West German PEN Center—the country's most prestigious writers' association—wrote to express his solidarity. Without even mentioning Ziesel's name, Edschmid, who had also been mentioned in *Das verlorene Gewissen*, recalled the experience he and Korn had shared as writers in the Third Reich. Such an experience, Edschmid insisted, could be judged only by those who had been there:

Many people today find it difficult to grasp that, back then, it was understood that you had to do certain things for the sake of self-preservation and disguise. But everyone knew who they were dealing with, who was writing. Of course, when wrenched from the climate and the circumstances of the time, sentences can have a completely different meaning for people who read them in bad faith.⁹⁶

Ernst Niekisch, a one-time national revolutionary once imprisoned by the Nazis and largely boycotted in the postwar FRG due to his membership in the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED, *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*), offered more words of reassurance. He advised Korn to keep calm: "I know how sensitive you are, and I fear that you will allow Ziesel's actions to upset you more than is necessary."⁹⁷ In his reply Korn admitted "that this vile episode with Ziesel is gnawing away at me":

My friends and I believe that I myself am not the real target here—Ziesel is not interested in me. He wants to create an initial breach so that he can then bring everyone else down. He wants to get the people who were young and unexperienced under National Socialism but who are now entirely cured. Your words have done me good. I may not have been a hero, but I was not a villain either.⁹⁸

In an attempt to contest biographical inaccuracies, Korn filed for an injunction at the Munich Regional Court. The injunction was only partly granted,

however, as the court found that most of the statements Ziesel had made about Korn were based on verifiable facts.⁹⁹ Ziesel's publisher, Lehmanns, immediately publicized the court's decision, against which Korn swiftly appealed. *Die Welt* was the first newspaper to report on Ziesel's victory.¹⁰⁰ Korn's fellow editor at the FAZ, Erich Welter, eventually managed to dissuade Korn from publishing his own account of the case, arguing that this would merely provide Ziesel with even more publicity. However, other newspapers soon covered the case.

One of the unwanted side effects of Korn's lawsuit was that it prompted observers to take a closer look at his articles for *Das Reich*. In the fall of 1959, *Der Hoffjude* ("The Court Jew"), a 1940 article by Korn with inexcusable antisemitic content, circulated among fellow journalists. A discussion of Veit Harlan's film *Jud Süß*, the article was filled with antisemitic clichés. For example, it invoked the specter of "an alien race" penetrating "the framework of the German economy," and lamented "the thirst for revenge of an underworld that has twisted the 'chosen' people's sense of mission into Talmudic nihilism." These developments bore the danger of "Jewish hunger for power and Talmudic hatred" forming an alliance with a "ruler alien to the *Volk*." Finally, at a time when the mass murder of Europe's Jews was under way, Korn stated, "This film gives one a tangible sense that the Jewish problem in Germany has been overcome internally."¹⁰¹

A deeply concerned Korn sent a copy to Theodor Heuss, who had just completed his presidential term, in the hope that Heuss would again come to his defense. He refused to provide any justification for the article, however: "I do not wish to have anything to do with this *Jud Süß* business," he wrote, adding that while he would like to defend Korn from "subalterns running amok," he was not prepared to be a "key witness."¹⁰² Korn hoped to receive a more positive reaction from his friend Walter Dirks. In response to Korn's request for advice, Dirks wrote:

I must say in all honesty that your text shocked me. It has not changed my attitude to you or to the problem in any way, but having read the article, I see that the situation is graver than I thought. I still think that one's only option is to put one's cards on the table, though of course you are limited in that respect as the courts are involved, and there you must fight tooth and nail to defend yourself. Nevertheless, I think it would help your just cause if you could find a way of indirectly indicating that you have distanced yourself from the article. [...] Out of threefold sol-

idarity based on democracy, our profession, and friendship, I feel compelled to help you, and I am constantly thinking about how I can best do this. Would you consider at some stage an “open letter” addressed to you? For publication in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*? Or the *Frankfurter Hefte*?¹⁰³

Dirks did not elaborate on his shock at Korn’s antisemitic article. Instead, he focused entirely on how Korn ought to handle this new crisis in public and in his legal action against Ziesel. Dirks and Korn, journalists of the same generation, had known each other well since the 1930s, and it would appear that a show of collegiality was Dirks’s priority. Korn was appreciative of Dirks’s advice, but replied that he did not wish to offer “Mr. Ziesel an exposed flank” ahead of his injunction appeal hearing.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, he wrote, he was hoping to put forward an interpretation of his article “that, legally, cannot and may not be associated with the dreadful things that took place during the so-called Final Solution.” In fact, Korn claimed, when he wrote his review of *Jud Süß*, he had “genuinely believed that with a few ambivalent phrases” he would be able to “provide an overall analysis of the film that would be helpful to those who were being persecuted” by creating the impression that everything had been finished long ago.¹⁰⁵

One month later, Korn’s article was mentioned in the press. After Korn wrote an article for the FAZ denouncing the desecration by neo-Nazis of a recently consecrated synagogue in Cologne over Christmas 1959, the *Deutsche Zeitung und Wirtschaftszeitung* quoted a few sentences from Korn’s *Das Reich* article.¹⁰⁶ In his response to the *Deutsche Zeitung*, Korn repeated the arguments he had made to Walter Dirks, claiming that his aim in writing the article had been to prevent even worse things from happening. This was followed by the publication of a reply from the *Deutsche Zeitung*’s editors along with letters to the editor, including an abridged one from Walter Dirks.¹⁰⁷ Though there were no other press reactions to Korn’s *Das Reich* article, the matter was now public knowledge. An angry Erich Welter rebuked Korn for having responded to the *Deutsche Zeitung*, opining that in doing so Korn had given its “hack” editor, Hans Hellwig, “a veneer of respectability.”¹⁰⁸ In the second *Frankfurter Hefte* issue of 1960, Walter Dirks addressed the scandal, publishing in full both Korn’s article on the desecration of the synagogue and Dirks’s own letter to the *Deutsche Zeitung*. Dirks maintained that his position was rooted in Christian compassion. He did not wish to defend or justify “those words from 1940,” but to demonstrate “solidarity with their author and with anyone who opposed

the Nazis yet nonetheless made some mistakes back then, for I know they now feel guilt and regret.” Dirks castigated journalists for losing all sense of proportion in “comparing a journalist who made one mistake to the moral authors of Nazi antisemitism.” Such “witch hunts” and “pharisaic attacks on those who were complicit” would only cement “our enmeshment in that guilt” rather than “freeing us from it,” he argued.¹⁰⁹

For Korn, Dirks’s support was “important and reassuring”:¹¹⁰

It was with great happiness that I read and reread your noble declaration of solidarity. Being so considered and helpful and accurate, it is exceptionally welcome and useful, particularly in the light of my upcoming legal disputes. The whole incident is extraordinarily illustrative of how, without me doing anything at all, a completely isolated text can suddenly fall under the shadow of Auschwitz and the years can roll back.¹¹¹

Dirks received another positive response to his article from Theodor W. Adorno, who felt compelled “to tell you that I agree with every word you wrote, right down to the smallest nuance.” He and Dirks would likely agree on a point that Dirks had not mentioned, probably for “strategic reasons,” Adorno added: “that the people behind these things are irredeemable Nazis who cannot bear the fact that Korn—a decent man to the core—is better than them, and so they vilify him for sins that they themselves committed.”¹¹² Adorno sent a copy of this letter to Korn in the hope that it would be the source of “a little cheer”: “And if you feel there is anything I could do in public to help you with this affair, please let me know. I have nothing substantive to add to what Dirks has already written; but perhaps my name could, god willing, exert some influence in abstracto.”¹¹³

In his letter of thanks, Korn wrote that the worst aspect of the whole affair was the “horrible moral ignominy.”¹¹⁴ He was probably aware that the FAZ editorial board was having difficulty deciding whether the newspaper should report on the outcome of his lawsuit or not. Dolf Sternberger, who believed that remaining silent would be “disastrous,” warned against “short-sighted loyalty to Korn.”¹¹⁵ One month later, however, Korn could breathe a sigh of relief. He wrote to Dirks with delight, “The battle is won for now! The Higher Regional Court of Munich has prohibited Ziesel from publishing eight malicious falsehoods, at least.” The appellate court, after adducing other articles by Korn to put his film review in *Das Reich* into perspective, had ruled that Korn could be referred to only as an “accessory to antisemitism.” With his nerves “fairly frayed,” Korn now needed some time to rest, he wrote.¹¹⁶

The 1960s: The Political Factions Form and the Controversy Dies Down

Ziesel's political stance in the Federal Republic's first decade—a stance that is evident in *Das verlorene Gewissen*—can be described as a mixture of Occidental and European ideology, radical anti-Bolshevism, and anti-liberalism. Ziesel shared his views with the hard right of German expellee organizations, the CSU, and the *Abendländische Akademie*, an organization dominated by conservative Catholics. Ziesel was not active within these groups, however, preferring to remain nonpartisan and retain his authorial independence. It was only toward the end of the 1950s that he began to become involved in loose associations.¹¹⁷ In 1958, the year his exposé caused such a sensation, he co-founded *Deutscher Kreis 58*, a right-wing conservative alliance against antinuclear organizations.¹¹⁸ The alliance's other co-founders were Walter Becher, a Sudeten German expellee official;¹¹⁹ August Freiherr von der Heydte, a CSU member, writer, and lawyer who was particularly influential within the Occidental movement, which comprised publications and organizations such as *Neues Abendland*, *Abendländische Aktion*, and the *Abendländische Akademie*;¹²⁰ the long-standing CSU Bundestag member Richard Jaeger; and Winfried Martini, a correspondent for *Christ und Welt*, *Rheinischer Merkur*, and *Die Welt*, who was seen by his contemporaries as a particularly ardent “Cold Warrior.” One year later the short-lived *Komitee zum Schutz der Bürger gegen Diffamierung durch die Linkspresse* (Committee for the Protection of Citizens from Defamation by the Left-Wing Press) was established by Ziesel together with Becher, Emil Franzel, a Sudeten German journalist and erstwhile editor-in-chief of *Neues Abendland*, and Hans Kapfinger, publisher of the *Passauer Neue Presse* and a close political ally of Franz Josef Strauß.¹²¹ This committee was established as a reaction to the *Club Republikanischer Publizisten*, a left-wing liberal association that had been in existence since 1956. While the *Club Republikanischer Publizisten* monitored right-wing activities, Ziesel's committee aimed to keep an eye on left-wing publications, with many of its attacks targeting the SZ.¹²² In 1960 Ziesel became one of the co-founders of the *Gesellschaft für freie Publizistik* (Society for Free Journalism), which brought together an array of former Nazi media officials, including Helmut Sündermann, the director of the far-right publishing company Druffel-Verlag and a former deputy to the Nazi press chief.¹²³ One year later, Franz Josef Strauß recruited the enterprising Ziesel to the CSU campaign team for the 1961 Bundestag election. Together with Hans Kapfinger, Ziesel spearheaded the campaign's vicious attacks on the SPD's candidate for chancellor, Willy

Brandt, painting him as a returned emigrant, born to unmarried parents.¹²⁴ In the following years, Ziesel cemented his advantageous ties with Strauß and his associates. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 1960s Ziesel's circle of acquaintances remained limited to Sudeten German expellees and Occidental CSU-affiliated groups in and around Munich.¹²⁵ He appears to have had very few direct ties to other conservative groups in the FRG, and his strident personality meant that he did not have many other friends.

This did not prevent Ziesel from continuing to gain the attention he desired throughout the FRG of the early 1960s with works such as *Der rote Rufmord* ("Red Defamation"), a no-holds-barred polemic against critics of the Federal Minister for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Victims of War, Theodor Oberländer. Documents found in the GDR had given rise to accusations that Oberländer, an *alter Kämpfer* of the Nazi movement and a participant in the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, had been involved in war crimes during the Second World War.¹²⁶ More lawsuits followed the publication of *Der rote Rufmord*. The most prominent plaintiff was the founder of *Der Spiegel*, Rudolf Augstein, who obtained an injunction because of the book's defamatory claim that, as the ruling put it, Augstein disguised himself

as a poor persecuted Jew who uses his newspaper to avenge the crimes perpetrated against him by the Germans. To strengthen this impression, Augstein sometimes uses the pseudonym Jens Daniel or, for editorial work, the name Moritz Pfeil, which accords the newspaper the prestige of employing two Jews as its star journalists.¹²⁷

As a right-wing polemicist, Ziesel continued to enjoy national media coverage. Indeed, in 1963 the magazine *Stern*, whose editors-in-chief believed that Ziesel could boost publicity and therefore sales, held meetings with him to discuss the possibility of his taking over a regular column from the fanatical anticommunist William S. Schlamm.¹²⁸

It was against this background that the rancorous controversies surrounding Ziesel's *Das verlorene Gewissen* entered their final round. The legal disputes may have been fierce, but, with the exception of the points made by Walter Dirks, there had been little real substance to the criticism of Ziesel. The problematic Nazi pasts of many highly respected journalists in the FRG had barely been mentioned in responses to his revelations. The debate surrounding Ziesel's book did not go beyond satisfaction at seeing opportunists being unmasked, on the one hand, and helpless denials and attempts to discredit Ziesel, on the other. Neither those directly involved nor the broader West German public seemed willing to reflect on and openly discuss the Nazi links or postwar

reorientation of a large proportion of West German journalists and authors—figures who now numbered among the Federal Republic’s intellectual elite. It was for precisely this reason that the responses to Ziesel were so weak.

Hans Werner Richter failed to deliver the detailed response promised in his 1958 letter, and so, toward the end of 1960, there was a lively exchange of letters between Heinrich Böll and Hans Paeschke, editor of the magazine *Merkur*, who took Böll up on his offer to write an article about Ziesel: “Your Ziesel suggestion is very tempting. We have stayed silent throughout the Ziesel affair, our motto being, ‘Only frost can keep dung from spreading.’ From a certain distance, now that the madness has died down, one could use the Ziesel affair to say all manner of important things about a German symptomatology.”¹²⁹ After Böll sent in his essay, Paeschke responded that the ideas needed “cleaning up.”¹³⁰ It soon became apparent what Paeschke was intimating. Böll’s essay mentioned the Nazi careers of the author Ernst Jünger and Friedrich Sieburg, a literary critic whom the FAZ presented as the antipode of Karl Korn. Paeschke accepted that “Sieburg cannot be eliminated, as the key premises of the stance you take on that dirty scoundrel Ziesel are bound up with the example of Sieburg. However, my grueling negotiations with my publisher mean that, for the time being, it will simply be impossible to make this kind of reference to Sieburg in *Merkur*.”¹³¹

Böll’s article was published in 1962 in *Die Zeit*, with all references to Jünger and Sieburg expunged. Böll does not appear to have been interested in writing a punchy polemic that portrayed Ziesel as a manipulator or in uncovering the truth behind Ziesel’s distortions, and his curiously vague article does not mention Korn, Pechel, or the other figures whom Ziesel had attacked. On the one hand, Böll was critical of the “respectable” newspapers that had “coyly or for reasons of taste” ignored Ziesel’s book. On the other hand, though, he characterized Ziesel as untrustworthy, arguing that Ziesel had put a needle into “the wound that needs to be healed, but unfortunately, Ziesel and his needle are not as clean and pure as they purport to be.” Böll concluded that all Ziesel was really interested in was himself, and that he, Böll, would remain skeptical until Ziesel also targeted those who praised his literary work: “The bad thing is that there are particles of truth in Ziesel’s political arguments, but if one wants to find these particles, one also has to swallow a whole load of nonsense. His drastic simplifications have fascist tendencies [. . .]. Ziesel does not heal or resolve anything.”¹³²

Böll’s article did not mark the end of the debate, but there was limited interest in the contributions that followed in subsequent years. In 1963 Ziesel sent Marion Dönhoff a photograph of her attendance at a family celebration with

Count Helldorff, chief of the Berlin SA in 1933. In the accompanying letter, Ziesel accused Dönhoff of deeming it right at the time “to ally yourself with a militant Nazi formation.” In addition, Ziesel claimed, there was evidence that Dönhoff had invited the Gauleiter of East Prussia, Erich Koch—“one of the most evil Nazi bigwigs”—to a charity party. Ziesel intended to mention this in his new book, he wrote, and would like an explanation.¹³³

To Ziesel’s surprise, Dönhoff announced that she would have both his letter and her reply published in *Die Zeit*. In her biting response, she noted the “loutish tone” of Ziesel’s letter and claimed that his motivations had “nothing to do with discovering the truth, and everything to do with intimidation.” In any case, Dönhoff pointed out, it had been her National Socialist relatives, and not she, who had invited Koch—Ziesel’s employer at the time—to the party in the photograph. Dönhoff concluded her letter by advising anyone who received a letter from Ziesel to reply with the following “magic formula”: “We have no comment and will hold you liable for any harm caused by your publication.”¹³⁴

The penultimate act in the legal battle between Ziesel and *Die Zeit*, which he had accused of “systematically defaming” him, played out in 1964. Ziesel claimed that with its “lying coverage” the weekly was becoming a “stooge for radical left-wing smear campaigns.”¹³⁵ The dispute was eventually resolved with a “nonaggression pact”—in other words, a “pact to refrain from mentioning each other.”¹³⁶ But by that stage Ziesel’s revelations had lost their power to shock. In one letter Hans Werner Richter advised Fritz J. Raddatz not to worry about Ziesel: “I wouldn’t get too worked up about Ziesel. I think this particular Austrian variety of fascism has had its day.”¹³⁷ While influential left-wing intellectuals of the mid-1960s onward did occasionally address the Nazi pasts of prominent contemporaries, they soon became more interested in structures of power and control within the Third Reich than in specific figures.

Ziesel was at the zenith of his career when he was appointed secretary-general of the Deutschland-Stiftung, an association founded in 1967 which presented awards named after its honorary president, Konrad Adenauer.¹³⁸ But the Deutschland-Stiftung represented only a minority on the conservative spectrum, those situated on the CDU’s extreme right. The association’s main organ, *Deutschland-Magazin*, which Ziesel edited from 1969 on, occasionally reached a circulation of 100,000, but it too was just one of many voices in the conservative media landscape. Ziesel’s shrill attacks on the “terror” spread by the left-wing commentariat and the “pornographic literati” failed to produce the sensation created by his Nazi revelations in the late 1950s;¹³⁹ read only by his right-wing conservative followers, Ziesel’s writing no longer triggered wide public debates.¹⁴⁰ Ziesel unintentionally garnered a degree of media attention

one final time when he accompanied Helmut Kohl on a state visit to Israel in early 1984. The Israeli ambassador in Bonn objected to Ziesel, an “ex-Nazi,” entering Israel, claiming that Ziesel—who had been allowed to fly there in the chancellor’s plane—had inveigled his way into the visiting party by “circumventing and misleading” officials.¹⁴¹ However, this registered as just one of several unfortunate incidents during Kohl’s less than successful visit.

The methods Ziesel used to uncover the pasts of prominent writers have long outlived him, as attested by the numerous publications that have since appeared concerning the Nazi links, whether proven or merely alleged, of liberal and Social Democratic journalists and writers such as Werner Höfer, Fritz Sanger, Walter Jens, and Gunter Grass. Long after Ziesel’s death in 2001, sensationalist revelations about the biographies of writers and journalists who supported the Nazis in their younger years continued to attract considerable public attention, particularly in the cases of those figures who, without ever addressing their involvement with the Nazi regime, went on to join the Federal Republic’s opinion-forming elite. Ziesel’s approach has entered the arsenal of effective strategies for exposing such figures.

Notes

1. See Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried, *Deutsche Kulturgeschichte: Die Bundesrepublik von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Hanser, 2009), 208–10, which includes references to the research literature on this subject.

2. See Christina von Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise: Eine Geschichte der westdeutschen Medienoffentlichkeit 1945–1973* (Gottingen: Wallstein, 2006).

3. Armin Mohler, *Tendenzwende fur Fortgeschrittene* (Munich: Criticon-Verl., 1978), 155.

4. Quoted in Konrad Jarausch, “Der nationale Tabubruch: Wissenschaft, offentlichkeit und Politik in der Fischer-Kontroverse,” in Martin Sabrow, Ralph Jessen and Klaus Groe Kracht, eds., *Zeitgeschichte als Streitgeschichte: Groe Kontroversen seit 1945*, (Munich: Verlag C.H.Beck, 2003), 20–40, here 23. See also Christoph Cornelien, *Gerhard Ritter: Geschichtswissenschaft und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Dusseldorf: Droste, 2001), 597–99.

5. See Carl Schmitt, “Im Vorraum der Macht,” *Die Zeit*, July 29, 1954. The publication of this particular article caused turmoil among the newspaper’s editorial staff, however, and led to the temporary resignation of Marion Donhoff. See Axel Schildt, “Immer mit der Zeit: Der Weg der Wochenzeitung DIE ZEIT durch die Bonner Republik—eine Skizze,” in Christian Haase and Axel Schildt, eds., *DIE ZEIT und die Bonner Republik: Eine meinungsbildende Wochenzeitung zwischen Wiederbewaffnung und Wiedervereinigung* (Gottingen: Wallstein, 2008), 9–27, here 20–21. Other examples can be found in Kai Burkhardt, ed., *Carl Schmitt und die offentlichkeit: Briefwechsel mit Journalisten, Publizisten und Verlegern aus den Jahren 1923–1983* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2013); Reinhard Mehring, “Der esoterische Diskurspartisan: Carl Schmitt in der Bundesrepublik,” in Thomas Kroll and Tilman Reitz,

eds., *Intellektuelle in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Verschiebungen im politischen Feld der 1960er und 1970er Jahre* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 232–48.

6. See Lutz Hachmeister, *Heideggers Testament: Der Philosoph, der Spiegel und die SS* (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 2014).

7. See Kurt Ziesel, *Das verlorene Gewissen: Hinter den Kulissen der Presse, der Literatur und ihrer Machträger von heute* (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1957); all quotations are from the second printing of January 1958, which is identical to the original edition.

8. On Ziesel's biography, see Hans-Dieter Bamberg, *Die Deutschland-Stiftung e.V.: Studien über Kräfte der "demokratischen Mitte" und des Konservatismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1978), 353–55. Stefan Busch offers an insightful analysis of Ziesel's standing in German literary history: see his "Und gestern, da hörte uns Deutschland." *NS-Autoren in der Bundesrepublik: Kontinuität und Diskontinuität bei Friedrich Griese, Werner Beumelburg, Eberhard Wolfgang Möller und Kurt Ziesel* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1998), 209–11. In the following discussion, all quotes and details regarding Ziesel's career in the Third Reich are taken from these two works. See also Hans Sarkowicz and Alf Mentzner, *Schriftsteller im Nationalsozialismus: Ein Lexikon* (Berlin: Insel Verlag, 2011), 637–39.

9. Busch, *NS-Autoren in der Bundesrepublik*, 212.

10. *Ibid.*, 246.

11. Monacensia. Literaturarchiv und Bibliothek München (hereafter: Monacensia), Nachlass (personal papers, hereafter: NL) Max Steff, MSt B 105, Letter from Kurt Desch to Max Steff, November 9, 1951.

12. E. P. (Eric A. Peschler), "Die falschen Europäer," *Michael*, August 23, 1953.

13. See Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 134.

14. Monacensia, NL Max Steff, MSt B 225, Explanation from Max Steff, February 10, 1958.

15. Monacensia, NL Max Steff, MSt B 480, Letter from Hermann Kasack to Walburga Rucker, May 16, 1955. Walburga Rucker had first met Ziesel by chance on a trip. Ziesel himself wrote that Rucker had initially wanted to introduce him to Munich's literary circles, but she subsequently heard negative reports about him; see Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 54–56.

16. Monacensia, NL Max Steff, MSt B 480, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Max Steff, May 23, 1955. Ziesel enclosed a letter from Walter von Molo to Rucker warmly defending Ziesel, who had been a friend of von Molo's since 1933.

17. Monacensia, NL Max Steff, MSt B 480, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Max Steff, May 23, 1955.

18. Kurt Ziesel, *Die verratene Demokratie*, 2nd ed. (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1961).

25. On the interpretation of *Daniel in der Löwengrube*, see Busch, *NS-Autoren in der Bundesrepublik*, 269–71.

19. One of the few exceptions was a rave review by J. O. Zöllner, which indirectly confirms the novel's hidden antisemitism. According to Zöllner, *Daniel in der Löwengrube* was inspired by a passage in Ernst Jünger's memoir *Strahlungen* about the Jewish policemen, who ordered to arrest Jews in the ghettos, also imprisoned German and Polish gentiles. Zöllner wrote that Ziesel had created "an epic tale of the Jewish people and the German people,"

peoples who had suffered “under the same yoke.” See J. O. Zöllner, “Erkenntnis und Einkehr,” *Neues Abendland* 7, no. 11 (November 1952): 701–2.

20. See Kurt Ziesel, *Das Leben verläßt uns nicht* (Stuttgart: Verlag Deutsche Volksbücher, 1954), *Und was bleibt ist der Mensch* (Stuttgart: Verlag Deutsche Volksbücher, 1954), *Die goldenen Tage: Roman der Insel Rhodos* (Stuttgart: Verlag Deutsche Volksbücher, 1954), *Solange wir lieben: Roman* (Stuttgart: Stuttgarter Hausbücherei, 1957). See also Busch, *NS-Autoren in der Bundesrepublik*, 230–32, esp. 285.

21. Bamberg, *Deutschland-Stiftung*, 364.

22. Quoted in *ibid.* (*Salzburger Volksblatt*, March 6, 1959).

23. See the documentation of these quotations from the *Europäischer Kulturdienst*, the *Deutsche Zeitung* (Stuttgart), and the right-wing Catholic *Deutsche Tagespost* (Würzburg) in *ibid.*, 365, 368.

24. See Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich*, 4th ed. (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2011), 195.

25. See Ziesel, *Gewissen*. For further details on J. F. Lehmanns Verlag, which was tainted by its involvement with the Third Reich and published works by several former Nazi writers, see Sigrid Stöckel, ed., *Die “rechte” Nation und ihr Verleger: Politik und Popularisierung im J. F. Lehmanns Verlag 1890–1979* (Heidelberg: J. F. Lehmanns, 2002).

26. Kurt P. Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika: German Nationalism since 1945*, vol. 1 (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), 563.

27. Heidrun Ehrke-Rotermund and Erwin Rotermund, *Zwischenreiche und Gegenwelten: Texte und Vorstudien zur “verdeckten Schreibweise” im “Dritten Reich”* (Munich: Fink, 1999), 25–27, analyze Pechel’s *Deutsche Rundschau* texts as examples of the “covert writing style” of the time.

28. See Sven Hanuschek, *Geschichte des bundesdeutschen PEN-Zentrums von 1951 bis 1990* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004), 45.

29. See Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive: Der Kongreß für kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1998), 308–10.

30. See the revealing selection of texts in Rudolf Pechel, *Deutsche Gegenwart: Aufsätze und Vorträge 1945–1952* (Darmstadt: Stichnote, 1953), and the older study by Rosemarie Schäfer, *Rudolf Pechel und die “Deutsche Rundschau” 1946–1961: Zeitgeschehen und Zeitgeschichte im Spiegel einer konservativen politischen Zeitschrift. Eine Studie zur konservativen Publizistik in Deutschland nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (PhD diss., University of Göttingen, 1975). On the construction of a “resistance” based on an orientation toward the West that lasted well into the postwar era, see Alexander Gallus, “Von der ‘Konservativen Revolution’ zur westdeutschen Demokratie: Rudolf Pechels *Deutsche Rundschau* und die Wandlungen des Konservatismus (1919–1961),” in Tilman Mayer, ed., *Medienmacht und Öffentlichkeit in der Ära Adenauer* (Bonn: Bouvier, 2009), 62–84; Claudia Kemper, “Rudolf Pechels intellektuelle Grundposition als Widerstand ‘mit dem Rücken zur Wand,’” in Alexander Gallus and Axel Schildt, eds., *Rückblickend in die Zukunft: Politische Öffentlichkeit und intellektuelle Positionen in Deutschland um 1950 und um 1930* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011), 164–80.

31. See Schäfer, *Rudolf Pechel*, 209–11.

32. Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 17.
33. This text is not included in Rudolf Pechel's essay collection, *Zwischen den Zeilen: Der Kampf einer Zeitschrift für Freiheit und Recht 1932–1942* (Wiesenheim: Droemersch Verlaganstalt, 1948). Pechel's "cultural" antisemitism, which was also evident in some of his other texts, went hand in hand with his support of the Young Conservative coalition members of the Hitler cabinet. Led by Franz von Papen and Edgar Julius Jung, these Young Conservatives were "neutralized" in 1934. See Volker Mauersberger, *Rudolf Pechel und die "Deutsche Rundschau": Eine Studie zur konservativ-revolutionären Publizistik in der Weimarer Republik (1918–1933)* (Bremen: Schünemann Universitätsverlag, 1971).
34. Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 127.
35. *Ibid.*, 102.
36. *Ibid.*
37. See Ernst Loewy, *Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz: Das Dritte Reich und seine Dichtung: Eine Dokumentation* (Frankfurt a. M.: Europäische Verlaganstalt, 1990), 161–63; Uwe-K. Ketelsen, *Literatur und Drittes Reich* (Scherfeld: SH-Verlag, 1992), 172–74; Eva Horn, "Literatur und Krieg," in Wilhelm Haefs, ed., *Nationalsozialismus und Exil 1933–1945 (Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur, vol. 9)* (Munich: Hanser, 2009), 287–309; and Sarkowicz and Mentzner, *Schriftsteller im Nationalsozialismus*.
38. Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 17.
39. See Hans Friedrich Blunck, "Blunck stellt klar," *Die Zeit*, May 15, 1957, and Blunck's memoirs: *Unwegsamen Zeiten* (Mannheim: Kessler, 1952).
40. Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 27.
41. *Ibid.*, 29.
42. See *ibid.*, 31.
43. The Grünwalder Kreis was founded in 1956 by Hans Werner Richter, who envisaged that this new organization would concentrate on political activism while *Gruppe 47* devoted itself to literary criticism. The most important activities of the Grünwalder Kreis were performed by the *Club Republikanischer Publizisten*, which explicitly focused on the dangers posed by the right. The "club," which had its own news service, existed until the early 1960s. See Dominik Geppert, "Alternativen zum Adenauerstaat: Der Grünwalder Kreis und der Gründungskonsens der Bundesrepublik," in Michael Hochgeschwender, ed., *Epoche im Widerspruch: Ideelle und kulturelle Umbrüche der Adenauerzeit* (Bonn: Bouvier, 2011), 141–52.
44. Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 34.
45. *Ibid.*, 111.
46. *Ibid.*, 112.
47. Cited in *ibid.*, 113; not italicized in the original. The antisemitism running through Abendroth's texts has been a topic of much discussion in recent years.
48. *Ibid.*, 115.
49. Ziesel's invectives against Kasack and Edschmid, both of whom had fallen out of favor in 1933, were grossly exaggerated. Under the Nazis, Edschmid's books had been burned, while Kasack had lost his job in radio (and therefore his main source of income). See Sarkowicz and Mentzner, *Schriftsteller im Nationalsozialismus*, 218–20, 373–75. Ziesel's

attack on the Darmstadt-based academy also indirectly implicated Pechel, who had been its president in the early 1950s.

50. See Kurt Ziesel, *Die Geister scheiden sich: Dokumente zum Echo auf das Buch "Das verlorene Gewissen." Eine Auswahl aus über 3 000 in- und ausländischen Pressestimmen und aus Tausenden von Briefen an den Verfasser. Die Reaktion der Betroffenen* (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1959).

51. The table of contents describes this part of the book as "a selection of excerpts from thousands of letters to the author and the publisher."

52. Ziesel, *Geister*, 21 (Letters from Franz Josef Strauß to Kurt Ziesel, February 18, May 9, and May 30, 1958).

53. *Ibid.*, 30.

54. *Ibid.*, 30–31, here 31.

55. *Ibid.*, 31–32, here 31.

56. *Ibid.*, 34 (letter dated February 24, 1958).

57. See Kai-Uwe Scholz, "Hiller und Ziesel, oder 'Zu allererst antikonservativ'?", in Rüdiger Schütt and Wolfgang Beutin, eds., *Zu allererst antikonservativ: Kurt Hiller (1885–1972)* (Hamburg: Edition Flihkraft, 1998), 132–53. On Hiller's biography, see Daniel Münzner, *Kurt Hiller: Der Intellektuelle als Außenseiter* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015).

58. Ziesel, *Geister*, 25 (undated letter).

59. *Ibid.*, 200 (letter dated March 3, 1958).

60. Kurt Hiller Gesellschaft, Neuss (hereafter: KHG), Süddeutsche Zeitung folder, Letter from Kurt Hiller to Werner Friedmann, April 1, 1958.

61. KHG, Süddeutsche Zeitung folder, Letter from Werner Friedmann to Kurt Hiller, July 22, 1958.

62. KHG, Süddeutsche Zeitung folder, Letter from Kurt Hiller to Werner Friedmann, July 23, 1958.

63. KHG, Kurt Ziesel folder, Letter from Kurt Hiller to Kurt Ziesel, February 15, 1958.

64. KHG, Kurt Ziesel folder, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Kurt Hiller, May 7, 1958; see also Kurt Hiller, *Rote Ritter: Erlebnisse mit deutschen Kommunisten* (Gelsenkirchen: Ruhr Verlag, 1951; new ed., West Berlin, 1980). An interesting aspect of this publication's tortuous history is the fact that Pechel recommended Hiller to the publisher Ruhr Verlag in Gelsenkirchen, only for the latter to subsequently become embroiled in permanent disputes with Hiller.

65. KHG, Kurt Ziesel folder, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Kurt Hiller, November 13, 1958.

66. KHG, Kurt Ziesel folder, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Kurt Hiller, March 14, 1961.

67. See Alexander Gallus, "Zeitschriftenporträt: 'konkret,'" *Jahrbuch Extremismus & Demokratie* 13 (2001): 227–49; Frederik Obermaier, *Sex, Kommerz und Revolution: Vom Aufstieg und Untergang der Zeitschrift "konkret" (1957–1973)* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2011).

68. Kurt Ziesel, "Den Schmutz beim Namen nennen," *konkret*, nos. 3 and 5 (1958); this quote appears at the start of the article.

69. Review of Ziesel's *Das verlorene Gewissen* in *konkret*, no. 5 (1958); in no. 7 (1958), Ziesel's *Krieg und Dichtung* (1940) is described as "agitational Nazi literature."

70. See Ziesel, *Geister*, 76.
71. See *ibid.*, 78–80 (letter dated February 22, 1958).
72. *Ibid.*, 142.
73. See *ibid.*, 170 (letter dated October 19, 1958).
74. *Ibid.*, 176–1979, here 176 (letter dated February 14, 1958), 166 (letter dated December 12, 1957).
75. *Ibid.*, 179–82, here 181 (letter dated June 11, 1958 and June 18, 1958).
76. *Kultur*, which served for a while as a mouthpiece for *Gruppe 47*, was published monthly in newspaper format between 1952 and 1962, with each issue featuring a different subtitle. Its final publisher was the Munich-based Kurt Desch.
77. Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin (hereafter: AdK), Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3665, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Hans Werner Richter, February 11, 1958.
78. AdK, Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3665, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to Hans Werner Richter, February 26, 1958.
79. AdK, Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3670, Letter from Hans Werner Richter to Kurt Ziesel, March 4, 1958. See also Busch, *NS-Autoren*, 222–23.
80. Richter is referring here to the *Club Republikanischer Publizisten*; see also footnote 43.
81. AdK, Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3442–43, Letter from Hans Werner Richter to Jürgen Eggebrecht, March 2, 1958.
82. AdK, Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3666–67, Letter from Hans Werner Richter to Erich Kuby, March 4, 1958.
83. AdK, Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3669, Letter from Hans Werner Richter to Rudolf Pechel, March 4, 1958.
84. AdK, Hans Werner Richter Archiv, 3669, Letter from Hans Werner Richter to Rudolf Pechel, March 10, 1958.
85. Monacensia, NL Max Steff, MSt B 225, Letters from Max Steff to Kurt Ziesel, February 29, 1960, and April 9, 1960.
86. Quoted in Ziesel, *Geister*, 184.
87. Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter: BArchK), NL Rudolf Pechel, II/7, Letter from Rudolf Pechel to Wolfdietrich Schnurre, April 10, 1960.
88. BArchK, NL Rudolf Pechel, I/73, Letter from Rudolf Pechel to Theodor Heuss, May 25, 1959.
89. BArchK, NL Rudolf Pechel, II/78, Letter from RA Werner Hennemann to Rudolf Pechel, November 25, 1960. This file contains other documents on the legal dispute with Ziesel.
90. See Ziesel, *Gewissen*, 41, 114–15, 165–66.
91. See Karl Korn's own account in *Lange Lehrzeit: Ein deutsches Leben* (Munich: Societäts-Verlag, 1979), 260–62.
92. See Heike Görtemaker, *Ein deutsches Leben: Die Geschichte der Margret Boveri, 1900–1975* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2005), 286–88. Boveri became involved in the Ziesel affair after making a sworn statement in support of Korn. This prompted her to conduct her own research into Berlin's journalistic landscape during the Third Reich, a landscape that had

been portrayed so critically. See Peter de Mendelssohn, *Zeitungsstadt Berlin: Menschen und Mächte in der Geschichte der deutschen Presse* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1959), and Margret Boveri, *Wir lügen alle: Eine Hauptstadtzeitung unter Hitler* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter-Verlag, 1965).

93. Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach (hereafter: DLA), A: Karl Korn, Letter from Margret Boveri to Karl Korn, November 15, 1958.

94. The quote from the letter from Korn to Heuss, August 1, 1959 (no. 216, 581–82, here 581), and Heuss's reply, August 5, 1959 (no. 217, 582–83), are published in Theodor Heuss, *Der Bundespräsident: Briefe 1954–1959*, Ernst Wolfgang Becker, Martin Vogt, and Wolfram Werner, eds. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013). On Heuss's contributions to *Das Reich*, see Reiner Burger, *Theodor Heuss als Journalist: Beobachter und Interpret von vier Epochen deutscher Geschichte* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1999), 329–31. Goebbels's antisemitic editorials were always published on the first page of *Das Reich* from December 1940 onward, while Heuss's final article for the newspaper appeared on February 2, 1941.

95. "Die Legende vom Reich," *Europäischer Kulturdienst* 8, no. 8 (1959); see also letter dated August 1, 1959, no. 216, in Heuss, *Bundespräsident*, 581. In another article for *Europäischer Kulturdienst*, Ziesel tackled Heuss's work for *Das Reich*. This article was then discussed in two issues of *Reichsruf*, the central organ of the Deutsche Reichspartei, a forerunner of today's far-right National Democratic Party (NDPD, *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*); see Kurt Ziesel, "Heuss: 'Unbewältigte Vergangenheit,'" *Reichsruf*, January 30, 1960, and February 6, 1960. Heuss sent a long response to the editor-in-chief of *Reichsruf*, Adolf von Thadden, which was subsequently published in *Reichsruf*, February 20, 1960. See letter from Heuss to von Thadden, February 8, 1960, no. 31, in Theodor Heuss, *Privatier und Elder Statesman: Briefe 1959–1963*, ed. Frieder Günther (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 161–68.

96. DLA, A: Kasimir Edschmid, Letter from Kasimir Edschmid to Karl Korn, October 27, 1959. Two years later Edschmid, who was a target of Ziesel's allegations himself, received a letter of support from Rudolf Krämer-Badoni containing arguments almost identical to those Edschmid had put forward to Korn: DLA, A: Kasimir Edschmid, Letter from Rudolf Krämer-Badoni to Kasimir Edschmid, December 7, 1961.

97. BArchK, NL Ernst Niekisch, 22 c, Letter from Ernst Niekisch to Karl Korn, November 25, 1959.

98. BArchK, NL Ernst Niekisch, 22 c, Letter from Karl Korn to Ernst Niekisch, November 25, 1959.

99. On the subsequent development of the lawsuits against Ziesel, see Marcus M. Payk, *Der Geist der Demokratie: Intellektuelle Orientierungsversuche im Feuilleton der frühen Bundesrepublik. Karl Korn und Peter de Mendelssohn* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2008), 319–21.

100. See "Der Streit Karl Korn–Kurt Ziesel," *Die Welt*, October 13, 1959.

101. Karl Korn, "Der Hofjude: Veit Harlans Film 'Jud Süß' im Ufa-Palast am Zoo," *Das Reich*, September 29, 1940.

102. Letter from Heuss to Korn, October 28, 1959, no. 9, in Heuss, *Privatier und Elder Statesman*, 114–15.

103. Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn-Bad Godesberg (hereafter: AdsD), NL Walter Dirks, 120 A, Letter from Walter Dirks to Karl Korn, November 9, 1959.

104. BArchK, NL Ernst Niekisch, 22 c, J. F. Lehmanns Verlag press release of October 22, 1959, on the Munich Regional Court's ruling of October 12, 1959.

105. AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 120 A, Letter from Karl Korn to Walter Dirks, November 19, 1959.

106. Payk, *Geist*, 320. At the time the *Deutsche Zeitung und Wirtschaftszeitung*, a Stuttgart-based newspaper that was initially issued twice weekly but had become a daily by the late 1950s, was trying to make a name for itself as the legitimate successor to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. There was therefore "bitter rivalry" between it and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ). On the rivalry between the two newspapers, see "Deutsche Zeitung: Schillernde Feder," *Der Spiegel*, January 20, 1960.

107. See Karl Korn, "Die Untat in Köln," FAZ, December 28, 1959; "Moralische Urheber," *Deutsche Zeitung*, December 30, 1959; and "Karl Korn's verdeckter Widerstand" (letters to the editor), *Deutsche Zeitung*, January 8, 1960. On January 8, 1960, Korn thanked Dirks for his letter: AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 123 A.

108. Letter from Erich Welter to Karl Korn, January 9, 1960, quoted in Payk, *Geist*, 321.

109. Walter Dirks, "Wie wir unsere Vergangenheit bewältigen: Bericht in fremder, eigener und allgemeiner Sache," *Frankfurter Hefte* 15, no. 2 (February 1960): 81–84. Dirks made a similar point in a letter to the editor of the *Deutsche Zeitung* dated April 25, 1960: "I simply cannot support the intransigent manner in which you tie Mr. Korn to a sin he committed almost twenty years ago. However, I agree with you on the principle that nothing can be hidden if we are to achieve the clarification we need." AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 122 A.

110. AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 123 A, Letter from Karl Korn to Walter Dirks, January 21, 1960.

111. AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 123 A, Letter from Karl Korn to Walter Dirks, February 12, 1960.

112. AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 122, Letter from Theodor W. Adorno to Walter Dirks, February 15, 1960, and Walter Dirks to Theodor W. Adorno, February 23, 1960.

113. AdK, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Letter from Theodor W. Adorno to Karl Korn, February 15, 1960.

114. AdK, Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Letter from Karl Korn to Theodor W. Adorno, February 22, 1960.

115. DLA, A: Dolf Sternberger, Letter from Dolf Sternberger to Benno Reifenberg, February 21, 1960.

116. AdsD, NL Walter Dirks, 123 A, Letter from Karl Korn to Walter Dirks, March 28, 1960. Enclosed with the letter is a detailed report, written by Korn and addressed to the Hessian minister of education and cultural affairs, Ernst Schütte, on the outcome of the lawsuit. During this court case Ziesel had again received the support of Kurt Hiller, who characterized Korn's article as a "completely obvious piece of Jew-baiting, pure Hitlerism, though admittedly not in the pornographic-thuggish style of Streicher, but rather pogromism with a coat of varnish, cultivated Goebbels-German, poisonous pink": KHG, Kurt Ziesel folder, letter from Hiller to Ziesel, December 5, 1959; letters from Ziesel to Hiller, December 9, 1959, and March 30, 1960.

117. On the historical background to these types of informal organizations, which were common at the time, see Marcus M. Payk, "Antikommunistische Mobilisierung und konservative Revolte: William S. Schlamm, Winfried Martini und der 'Kalte Bürgerkrieg' in der westdeutschen Publizistik der späten 1950er Jahre," in Thomas Lindenberger, ed., *Massenmedien im Kalten Krieg: Akteure, Bilder, Resonanzen* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2006), 111–37.

118. See Kurt Hirsch, *Rechts von der Union: Personen, Organisationen, Parteien seit 1945. Ein Lexikon* (Munich: Knesbeck & Schuler, 1989), 60.

119. Walter Becher (1912–2005) was one of the most influential Sudeten German expellee officials. From 1956 to 1958 he was chairman of the far-right Witikobund, a "community of like-minded individuals" (*Gesinnungsgemeinschaft*), most of them former Nazi functionaries seeking to control the Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft (Sudeten German Homeland Association). In the late 1950s Becher promoted a conservative alliance known as the "National-Demokratische Union." In 1967 he joined the CSU, and in 1968 he became the spokesman of the Landsmannschaft. Research on the Nazi pasts of expellee officials began too late; for interim conclusions, see Michael Schwartz (in cooperation with Michael Buddrus, Martin Holler, and Alexander Post), *Funktionäre mit Vergangenheit: Das Gründungspräsidium des Bundes der Vertriebenen und das "Dritte Reich"* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2013).

120. On von der Heydte's biography, see Vanessa Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen: Ideen von Europa in Deutschland zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung (1920–1970)* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2005), 63–65. On the Occidental movement, see Axel Schildt, *Zwischen Abendland und Amerika: Studien zur westdeutschen Ideenlandschaft der 50er Jahre* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999), 21–23.

121. See "Wer war Dr. W.B.?!," *Der Spiegel*, June 3, 1959.

122. On the Grünwalder Kreis and the *Club Republikanischer Publizisten*, see footnote 43. It is unclear when Ziesel (code name Zöllner) began working as an informer for the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (Federal Intelligence Service). See Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, *Undercover: Der BND und die deutschen Journalisten* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1998), 245–46, and idem, *Geheimdienst, Politik und Medien: Meinungsmache Undercover* (Berlin: Homilius, 2004), 105, 266–67.

123. See Peter Dudek and Hans-Gerd Jaschke, *Entstehung und Entwicklung des Rechtsextremismus in der Bundesrepublik: Zur Tradition einer besonderen politischen Kultur*, vol. 1 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984), 47–49.

124. See Daniela Münkler, *Willy Brandt und die "Vierte Gewalt": Politik und Massenmedien in den 50er bis 70er Jahren* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2005), 126–28.

125. The Sudeten Germans officially received the patronage (*Schirmherrschaft*) of the Bavarian state in 1962. For the period around 1960 see K. Erik Franzen, *Der vierte Stamm Bayerns: Die Schirmherrschaft über die Sudetendeutschen 1954–1974* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), 280–82.

126. See Kurt Ziesel, *Der rote Rufmord: Eine Dokumentation zum Kalten Krieg* (Tübingen: Schlichtenmayer, 1961). Ziesel wrote this book in collaboration with Oberländer; on the latter's biography, see Philipp-Christian Wachs, *Der Fall Oberländer (1905–1998): Ein Lehrstück deutscher Geschichte* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2000).

127. Zeit-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucorius, NL Gerd Bucorius, 527 a, Landgericht Hamburg (Hamburg Regional Court), July 17, 1961 (file no. 15 Q 316/61). Bucorius obtained a similar ruling from the Hamburg Regional Court, July 26, 1961 (file no. 15 Q 302/61).

128. See Hermann Schreiber, *Henri Nannen: Drei Leben* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1999), 86. On the ideological and conceptual affinities between Schlamm and Ziesel, see Susanne Peters, *William S. Schlamm: Ideologischer Grenzgänger im 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: be.bra wissenschaft verlag, 2013), 474–75.

129. DLA, D: Merkur, Letter from Hans Paeschke to Heinrich Böll, November 10, 1960.

130. Paeschke had passed Böll's manuscript for review to Hans Egon Holthusen, who found it "not great, rather confused," and recommended that the "largely baseless invective against Jünger" be removed: DLA, D: Merkur, Letter from Hans Egon Holthusen to Hans Paeschke, July 16, 1961.

131. DLA, D: Merkur, Letter from Hans Paeschke to Heinrich Böll, July 2, 1961. Paeschke's decision was informed by tough negotiations on releasing *Merkur* from its contract with DVA, its publisher at the time. One year later the magazine was taken over by the Cologne-based publisher Kiepenheuer & Witsch, which continued to publish it until 1968.

132. Heinrich Böll, "Der Schriftsteller und Zeitkritiker Kurt Ziesel: Versuch eines Beitrages zur sogenannten Bewältigung der Vergangenheit," *Die Zeit*, March 16, 1962. On the row, see also Kurt Ziesel, *Die Meinungsmacher: Spiegel, Zeit, Stern & Co*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Universitas, 1988), 215–17.

133. See Kurt Ziesel, *Der deutsche Selbstmord: Diktatur der Meinungsmacher* (Recklinghausen: Kommunalverlag, 1965), 309; in this book, *Der Spiegel* is the main target of Ziesel's attacks, while the Nazi past no longer plays the central role.

134. Marion Dönhoff, "Antwort an Ziesel: Ein Briefwechsel, der für sich selber spricht," *Die Zeit*, August 9, 1963. Dönhoff's description of (Erich) Koch as Ziesel's employer refers to the latter's time in Königsberg, where he spent a short stint working as an editor for the *Preußische Zeitung*, which was answerable to the Gauleiter. On February 21, 1964, the far-right *Deutsche National- und Soldatenzeitung* deployed the same strategy of visual confrontation when it published photographs of the editor-in-chief of *Die Zeit*, Josef Müller-Marein, with the Luftwaffe heroes Mölders and Galland. Alongside the photos the newspaper published an antisemitic quote from Müller-Marein which, it was argued, made his current position untenable. The *Deutsche National- und Soldatenzeitung* was subsequently forced to print a correction stating that it was uncertain whether the person posing with the pilots was actually Müller-Marein: see *Deutsche National- und Soldatenzeitung*, April 24, 1964.

135. Marion Dönhoff Stiftung, NL Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, F 0537, Letter from Kurt Ziesel to the legal division of *Die Zeit*, August 14, 1964.

136. The internal legal deliberations are documented in *ibid.*; see also Karl-Heinz Janßen, *Die Zeit in der ZEIT: 50 Jahre einer Wochenzeitung* (Berlin: Siedler, 1995), 204–6.

137. Letter from Hans Werner Richter to Fritz J. Raddatz, January 17, 1964, in Hans Werner Richter, *Briefe*, ed. Sabine Cofalla (Munich: Hanser, 1997), 494.

138. The first award for journalism was presented to Armin Mohler in 1967, the year the foundation was established. On the Deutschland-Stiftung, see Bamberg's detailed examination in *Deutschland-Stiftung*.

139. In a highly criticized ruling of 1969, the Higher Regional Court of Munich granted Ziesel the right to describe Günter Grass as “the author of the nastiest pornographic filth and scurrilous attacks on the Catholic Church”: see the West German PEN Center’s statement of August 1, 1969, in AdK, Archiv PEN West, 92. J. F. Lehmanns Verlag “documented” this trial in a publication reviewed by Gert Heidenreich: see Heidenreich, “Parteipropaganda als Dokumentation: Wie ein Schriftsteller zum Ferkel erklärt wird,” *Die Zeit*, June 13, 1969. Ziesel subsequently threatened to sue *Die Zeit*, claiming that the publication of Heidenreich’s article had breached their “pact to refrain from mentioning each other”: documents in Zeit-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, NL Gerd Bucerius, 527 b.

140. For a selection of Ziesel’s texts from the 1970s and 1980s, see Ziesel, *Wider den Zeitgeist: Die Demokratie auf dem Prüfstand* (Herford: Busse Seewald, 1992).

141. See the article on this incident in the culture pages of the FAZ, February 10, 1984. Kohl congratulated Ziesel on his sixty-fifth birthday in 1976 and continued to send his best wishes on subsequent milestone birthdays. Kohl also sent birthday wishes to other prominent conservatives such as Franz Josef Strauß, Karl Carstens, and Axel Springer.

In Memoriam Axel Schildt, 1951–2019



Axel Schildt, one of the authors in this volume of the German Yearbook of Contemporary History, passed away on April 5, 2019 following a short and severe illness. Professor of Modern History at the University of Hamburg and head of the Research Centre for Contemporary History in Hamburg, Axel Schildt was a leading figure in German *Zeitgeschichte*. At the very heart of his work stood the question of how historians could narrate the history of the Federal Republic. In 1999, he published an essay (which was reprinted in and formed the thematic focus of the *Festschrift* honoring him on the occasion of his 65th birthday in 2016) in which he sketched out five possibilities, see p. 15–16. One of these—a historical narrative of the Federal Republic as *Belastungsgeschichte*, a history of the burdens of the past—reflects the theme of this volume. His article “In the Crosshairs: Kurt Ziesel’s Adenauer-Era Campaign to Expose the Nazi Pasts of West German Intellectuals” was part of a broader book project about public intellectuals in postwar Germany, providing an intriguing example of the many different ways in which the burdens of the past festered in West German society. Sadly, the English version of the article and Professor Schildt’s study of public intellectuals appear only posthumously. We have lost one of the doyens of German *Zeitgeschichte*.

Unmasking Former Nazis in Adenauer's Germany

Individual Careers and Historical Significance

MARY FULBROOK

This article sets the controversies around Kurt Ziesel's revelations about individuals in a wider perspective. Applause for a liberal public sphere which allowed such controversies to be aired should not obscure the deeper, continuing currents that prevented West Germany from living up to its image of 'overcoming the past'. The FRG gained a reputation for facing up to Nazi crimes, but at a deeper level the continuities in personnel and practice made for a very different story. The Ziesel case therefore also raises wider questions about the ways in which societies—and not only Germany after 1945—deal with the aftermath of political conflict and engage in structural as well as personal transformations.

Introduction

Axel Schildt evokes the ways in which a former Nazi enthusiast, Kurt Ziesel, challenged the reputations of key figures in the media and literary circles who were now upholding the virtues of liberal democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).¹ Schildt reveals the complexities of a twisted situation. In postwar West Germany, right-wing critiques of the now dominant liberalism could not be based explicitly on discredited Nazi values. Other tactics were needed. Ziesel spearheaded a new approach to reputational damage and character assassination. While representing his own Nazi past in terms of a supposedly understandable and forgivable youthful idealism led astray by his elders, and mitigated or tempered by repeated brushes with the regime, Ziesel sought to undermine the credibility of other former Nazis who were prominent in the liberal media.

One intellectual after another was subjected to merciless critique by exposure of a silenced Nazi past. Ziesel's 1957 book, *Das verlorene Gewissen* ("The Lost Conscience") provoked a storm of controversy; it was reprinted several times in rapid succession and issued in an updated edition in 1961.² Those at-

tacked faced an uncomfortable choice between irate responses drawing attention to their own former compromises, or attempts to starve Ziesel of the oxygen of publicity by refusing to engage in self-defensive debate. In exploring the Ziesel case, Schildt sheds new light on the difficulties encountered by so many during the extraordinary transformation from being upholders of the Nazi regime to supporters of a new form of society, casting a shaft of illumination into one of the murky depths of this early period.

Reactions were however not merely at an individual level, involving only those immediately affected by Ziesel's attacks. What is particularly interesting about the Ziesel episode is that this was effectively a critique from the right, rather than the expected critiques from the left. And interestingly, despite the Nazi pasts of those exposed by Ziesel, some of their principal defenders and supporters came from the liberal scene which they now also espoused, including prominent individuals with impeccable credentials such as Theodor W. Adorno and Hans Werner Richter. Not all were convinced by Ziesel, however; and many from the left-liberal scene, including notable writer Heinrich Böll, were downright scathing. Böll was of the view that the "real surprise" of Ziesel's book consisted only in learning about the supposedly "wild tumult of feelings of resistance" that had allegedly been "swirling around among the ranks of Nazi authors." Böll added somewhat bitterly: "If only something of this resistance had actually been evident at the time!" Overall, he suggested, "Ziesel's books do nothing to speed up the essential cleansing" of Nazis in postwar Germany; rather, "they only add yet one more category to the many categories of the 'damaged': that of those 'damaged by Ziesel.'" But, Böll went on, "we are all damaged by—and survivors of—the past. Nothing is either healed or cleansed by Ziesel."³

The initial storm of controversy aroused by Ziesel's interventions brought him some short-lived fame, but did little to restore him to what he felt should have been his rightful place in the postwar public arena. Within a few years, the arguments around his personal accusations died down. But Ziesel's approach had broader long-term reverberations. The exposure of a Nazi past became a widespread and frequently used strategy through the following decades, with unexpected revelations repeatedly occasioning major scandals, even if these were not always massively damaging to individual careers.

The Ziesel case highlights the fact that so many people managed to change from being Nazi supporters to liberal democrats, with a surrounding veil of implicit silence about their past, as it suited them under a new regime and when the recent past was so utterly discredited. But what difference did this make?

Responsibility without Guilt: Restoration and Rehabilitation in Adenauer's Germany

Konrad Adenauer set the tone for the FRG's response to the Nazi past in his well-known speech to the Bundestag on 27 September 1951. In this, he claimed that the "vast majority of the German people rejected the crimes that were committed against the Jews and did not participate in them." Nevertheless, "in the name of the German people unspeakable crimes were committed, which impose upon us the duty of moral and material compensation."⁴ Note the use of the passive voice throughout this speech: crimes *were* committed *against* people, but not actually *by* anyone. Germans have a moral responsibility, but no-one actually appears to have been guilty. Or at least, the "vast majority" of Germans were not guilty; by implication, the few who had supposedly been genuinely responsible were either dead or had already been convicted in the courts. Germans could get on with new lives, acknowledging moral responsibility but not guilt.

This was of course a gross misrepresentation of history. But it admirably served Adenauer's political purposes: rehabilitation of the FRG in the eyes of the western world, and rehabilitation of former Nazis within the state. Within a few years, the FRG had become a respected member of western military and economic alliances; and former Nazis had made their peace with democracy, rescuing their jobs, careers and pensions.

The fact that there were so many former Nazis in high places in Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's Germany was more than evident.⁵ It was also politically controversial, providing East German communists with ammunition for their claims about being the 'antifascist state' while all major Nazis had supposedly fled to the west. From the late 1950s, there were energetic campaigns emanating from the communist German Democratic Republic (GDR) both to highlight this fact and, in the cases of Adenauer's chief aide in the Chancellery, Hans Globke, and his Minister for Refugees and Expellees, Theodor Oberländer, even to institute trials *in absentio* for alleged war crimes; Oberländer was sentenced in a show trial in 1960, and Globke in 1963. The strategy of identification of key individuals, now triggered and powered by the communist left in eastern Europe, bears some similarities in principle to Ziesel's attacks on post-Nazi liberals from the right. Since Nazism was now officially discredited on both sides of the Iron Curtain, revelations about the Nazi past of individuals could provide a common political weapon in the arsenal of both left and right—more surprising, as Schildt points out, when coming from the latter camp, given its own ideological affinities and former affiliations.

The continuities also proved controversial among western scholars and citizens critical of the shortcomings of western democracy. In debates over “restoration,” the argument was repeatedly made that continuity of personnel was essential to avoid administrative and economic chaos and that it also served to stabilise the new democracy. The counter-argument could readily be mounted that such continuities in both structures and personnel, rather than taking the opportunity for a clean break, were deeply unjust, morally questionable, and even pragmatically unnecessary. Counterfactually, there may well have been enough qualified people who had been excluded after 1933 by virtue of their socialist sympathies or Jewish ancestry and who would now have been more than able to fill the positions that were instead held onto or rapidly refilled by former Nazi sympathisers and conformists. But, proponents of the first position suggested, the fact that former Nazis were retained or reinstated served to stabilise the new democracy in ways that had not happened after 1918, when elites continued to fight against and undermine the newly created Weimar Republic. And in any event, so it was often argued, most who had conformed under the Third Reich were not “really” Nazis; the Nazis were always the “others,” fanatics, activists, dead or convicted.

Whatever the balance of these debates, which no longer rage as fiercely as they did in West Germany prior to 1990, further questions arise. At the individual level: had people genuinely converted after 1945 and seen the error of their previous ways, or were they simply conformists who trimmed their sails to whichever regime they found themselves serving? Can one believe their later protestations that they had been “always against it” (*immer dagegen*) and that, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, they had never “really” been Nazis? How should one evaluate their utterances after 1945 when these seem to repress, or reinterpret, the evidence of behaviours prior to that date? And at the broader, structural level: what was the significance of staffing a wholly new regime—one that not only explicitly acknowledged responsibility for the Nazi past but also sought to bring the guilty to account—with people who had also served under Nazism? What were the implications of having prominent former Nazis in high places in West German politics, society and culture? Is a concentration on individual personalities and expressed views in the public sphere in fact simply missing the far greater significance of continuities in practical areas which made a real difference, with continuing reverberations of Nazism in postwar West Germany?

In short: did the apparent openness in public confrontations with the Nazi past, the apparent willingness to engage in controversy about individuals, that was made possible by the liberal public sphere of the FRG, in fact serve

to mask the continuing, pervasive significance of continuities in other ways—ways that mattered far more in practice?

Entanglement in Nazism: Conformity, Complicity, and Cover-Ups

Exposing the Nazi pasts of individuals could only be of limited significance when so very many had been implicated in the system and functioning of the Third Reich. In both East and West Germany there were efforts to distinguish between those who had supposedly been purely “nominal” Nazis, and those who had a more tainted past. But it was hard to know how even to begin to compute the numbers who were potentially contaminated by former involvement in Nazism. Nor has it been much easier for historians to disentangle and evaluate the evidence. Much depends on the criteria used for identification of a Nazi past.

Ordinary National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP, *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) membership is and was not a very useful starting point. With more than eight million members at its peak—roughly one in ten of the German population (and of course a far higher percentage of the adult population)—the NSDAP had been a mass party. So many former NSDAP members claimed after the war that they had joined only under pressure, whether in order to keep their jobs and protect their families, or to be able to work from the inside “to prevent something worse.” This was of course easier to claim with some plausibility if party membership was acquired relatively late, from 1937, or where there was significant evidence of other previous political commitments, such as membership of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD, *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) or the German Communist Party (KPD, *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*), which then required a degree of “over-compensation” to avoid penalties and show evidence of dramatic new commitment and transformation. For people who had joined the NSDAP earlier—whether in the “years of struggle” before 1933, or in the heady first few months after Hitler's accession to power—different apologetics could be brought to bear. Youthful idealism, a patriotic concern for Germany's place in the world, a socially admirable desire to find solutions to economic distress and political instability—all of these could be claimed in mitigation even under the different conditions of the postwar period. In Cold War West Germany, anti-communism could also be adduced as an acceptable excuse, while antisemitism could not. As far as the persecution and extermination of the Jews was concerned, either one had supposedly been ignorant, having “known nothing about it,” or one had been allegedly impotent, incapa-

ble of acting against it. The postwar myth of having been merely an innocent bystander began to take shape.

It was not necessarily much easier to distinguish on the basis of former behaviours. In denazification proceedings, personal testimonials—popularly dubbed “Persil certificates” to whitewash a character’s past—were often brought to bear as supposed proof of longstanding deep religious commitments or small acts of kindness towards an individual who had been persecuted, whatever the evidence of other behaviours. This was often twisting the evidence beyond credibility, but it widely served its purpose, officially producing a nation of *Mitläufer* (fellow travelers), albeit with significant variations in the proportions allotted to this category in the different zones of occupation.

Yet for all the scepticism which is warranted in the more extreme cases of self-defensive deception and rewriting of the past, there was also some truth underlying these self-representations. Widespread conformity could indeed be interpreted not as evidence of genuine enthusiasm but rather the outward manifestation of a social performance under duress, for fear of the potential adverse consequences of stepping out of line. It is difficult to determine in retrospect the shifting proportions of the population who, at any given moment, felt they were engaged in a form of coerced conformity and outward displays that did not accord with their inner doubts and disquiet.⁶

Yet, whatever their personal reservations, by participating in the wider structures and processes that ultimately made mass murder possible, millions had in effect been complicit in collective violence—some far more than others, depending on role, time and circumstances. For example, bureaucrats in parts of the civilian administration had, in one way or another, colluded in sustaining a system that dispensed inhumanity. Widespread complicity in the sense of being an accessory to a crime was evident where people benefited from new opportunities for career advancement or material gain, through the exclusion of Jews from professional positions or the forced “aryanization” of their businesses and properties. Even informal practices in everyday life could be interpreted as a form of complicity, as inter-personal behaviours served to sustain processes of discrimination and exclusion, with significant consequences for the progressive isolation and degradation of the victims of persecution. And at the other end of the spectrum of culpability: even active perpetration was not limited to a supposedly brutal and sadistic few. Violence and murder had been carried out on such a scale that hundreds of thousands had in one way or another been directly involved. There was a massive mismatch between the capacity and procedures of postwar systems of justice and the sheer scope of involvement in collective violence on the scale of Nazi crimes.

So was it really surprising to find that so many prominent individuals in the media and public life had, in one way or another, first made their peace with the Nazi regime and were later unwilling to acknowledge this? The more interesting questions here, perhaps, relate to how they subsequently dealt with their pasts, whether in terms of self-justifications, reformulations, or selective silencing; and what lessons they drew from past experiences for new approaches in the very different circumstances of postwar Germany.

Silencing the past was clearly easier than engaging in explicit apologetics and self-exculpations. The former *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (BDM, League of German Girls) youth leader and publicist Melita Maschmann was unusual in this respect. In 1963 she published her own attempt to reckon with her Nazi past, an account written in the form of unanswered letters to a former Jewish school friend, Marianne Schweitzer, with whom she had lost contact.⁷ Far from being typical of her gender and generation at the time (as she is often portrayed by historians), in the later 1930s and early 1940s Maschmann had been an activist on behalf of the youth movement in Nazi press and publicity work, and also played a practical role in the colonisation and Germanisation of the newly acquired territories in defeated Poland. She had also, on her own initiative, been not merely complicit but actively involved in perpetration by betraying to the Gestapo her school friend's elder sister, Gabriele ("Rele") Schweitzer, and Rele's then boyfriend and later husband, Hans Seidel, who were both members of a clandestine opposition youth group. As a consequence, both Rele and Hans were arrested and incarcerated, with long-term consequences (including, decades later, Hans's suicide).⁸ These acts of denunciation may appear relatively minor in comparison with the far greater crimes committed by those involved in direct physical violence, but they nevertheless had a significant effect on the victims. By the early 1960s Maschmann was however, unlike so many former Nazis, clearly troubled both by an uneasy conscience and a desire to re-awaken contact with her former friend, someone with whom she had formerly had a close emotional bond. Such fractured ties of friendship—both in their initial severance, and in the later difficulties in re-connecting—were typical among people who had lived through the immense divisions introduced by the Nazi regime. Arguably, Maschmann's explicit strategies of self-defence—her appeals to youthful idealism, having been misled by older leaders whom she admired, her determination to prioritise what she saw as the national interest, her supposed suppression of instinctive feelings of sympathy with victims and pity particularly for children suffering in the Kutno ghetto—were arguably also typical. If challenged, many Germans in the decades after the war would have sought to represent themselves as essentially "good people" who had been led

astray, or who had only acted out of the best of motives. But not many offered such a self-critique and attempt at self-justification so openly as Maschmann.

Those whom Ziesel exposed had, it would appear, attempted to cover up some of their more uncomfortable biographical moments and moral compromises. It was more the attempted cover-up and silencing of the past, than what they had actually done at the time, that seemed to be the problem—as indeed was the case when the prominent West German writer Günter Grass, who had long adopted the role of mouthpiece of the conscience of the nation, very belatedly confessed to his former SS membership as a young person at the very end of the war.⁹ But the individuals targeted by Ziesel were now seeking to re-orientate themselves in ways that Ziesel himself could not accept, smarting as he was from his own marginalisation in the liberal-dominated media of post-war West Germany. The personal controversies he provoked were ultimately largely fruitless in terms of his own ends. Arguably too they missed a wider and far more important point.

Structural Contamination and Wider Consequences

The scandal of a silenced Nazi past was not as significant at the individual level as at the level of a widespread silent continuity of mentalities and personnel in places that made a difference in practice. The failure in Adenauer's Germany to achieve a real turnover of staff in key areas, and indeed what has been called the “re-nazification” of certain professions with the reinstatement of the so-called 131ers (following legislation passed in May 1951 under Article 131 of the Basic Law) who had been initially disgraced in denazification proceedings, is where the persistence of Nazis in high places made a significant difference.

This was certainly the case with respect to the legal profession, where judges decided that they should themselves not have to account for the sentences they had passed during the Third Reich, since they were supposedly merely upholding the law of the land at the time—including handing down exceedingly harsh penalties for trivial infringements of the then law, including lengthy sentences or even the death penalty for minor political offences. Alongside their own effective self-exoneration, or exclusion from having to account for former compromises with the Nazi regime, went a tendency to excuse professionals in other areas, including high-level medical professionals involved in euthanasia killings, and civilian administrators in the annexed and occupied territories. While professional offices were filled by people who had served under Hitler, the application in West Germany of the ordinary criminal law definition of murder as an individual act resulting from “base motives” and carried out with

“excess brutality” increasingly meant that the notion of Nazi “perpetrator” was reduced to images of ill-educated, lower-class thugs who had exercised brute force in low-level capacities such as camp guard. And where, as in some trials, there was irrefutable evidence of murder even in this individualised sense, judges often seemed to show more sympathy with and understanding of those in the dock, and with defence witnesses on the perpetrator side, than with the victims whose testimony for the prosecution was often treated with a degree of scepticism bordering on derision. This was of course far from universally the case, but there were certainly sufficient instances for one to wonder whether the persistence of certain outlooks, mentalities and sympathies was in fact frequently detrimental to consistency in the pursuit of justice. Even in the trials for murders carried out as part of the T4 “euthanasia” programme, higher level professionals seemed to have had an easier job of ensuring they were acquitted than did the subordinates who gave practical assistance in the administration of killing. And it was not merely a question of the significance of the sympathies of specific individual judges in particular trials; key early decisions in principle by a Nazified legal profession were instrumental in setting the parameters of what could subsequently be done under the law, even by lawyers of a younger generation or of quite different political views.¹⁰ Hessian Attorney-General Fritz Bauer, who spear-headed the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, was repeatedly depressed by the significant obstacles that lay in the path of justice in the early FRG. And however much western democrats may criticise the East German dictatorship, which was very far from any kind of *Rechtsstaat* (state upholding the rule of law), and which refused to pay reparations to the state of Israel, it is an indisputable historical fact that former Nazis were six or seven times more likely to be convicted for crimes committed under Nazism in the East than in the West, and sentences were a great deal more severe.

The significance of persisting mentalities and continuities of personnel in West Germany was evident, too, for at least the first decade and a half after the war, in many other areas: bureaucrats dealing with claims for compensation on the part of Roma and Sinti (“gypsies”), who were still often viewed as basically criminal or “asocial” elements who had actually warranted detention and deportation under Nazism; homophobic officials who applied sharpened laws against homosexuality with even more vigour and more severe effects in the 1960s than had been the case in the 1920s; and industrialists who had made massive profits through exploitation of forced and slave labour, and refused to countenance any claims for compensation on the part of the few survivors who sought remedies for their suffering. Recent officially commissioned in-

dependent historical investigations of a range of FRG ministries and institutions have also revealed just how extensive and significant was the saturation of West German government and administration with former Nazis.¹¹ And all these persistent attitudes and prejudices had significant consequences in practice for those who had already suffered, irrespective of the newly dominant liberalism in the public sphere or the embarrassment occasioned by occasionally turning over one of the many stones under which a plethora of former Nazis could be revealed.

Conclusions

All this tends to set the controversies around Ziesel's revelations about individuals in a wider perspective. Arguably, the froth of (not always) righteous indignation around exposure of prior Nazi sympathies, and the applause for a liberal public sphere which now allowed these to be aired, should not be allowed to obscure the deeper, continuing currents that prevented West Germany from really living up to the image it sought to present of coming to terms with its Nazi past. Some of its dirty underwear may now have been hung up to dry in public, as it were; but there was an awful lot more that was still being worn under more democratic outer garb, and with consequences that were not only disagreeable but actually deleterious in practice.

There is therefore something of a paradox involved in West Germany's process of 'coming to terms with the Nazi past'. While the FRG increasingly gained a reputation for facing up to and taking responsibility for Nazi crimes, at a deeper level the continuities in personnel and practice made for a very different story. While large numbers of people were able to mouth the right utterances and conform to new norms across changing circumstances, with behaviour adapting to radically altered political environments, questions around the legacies of the past are about more than simply individual conversions and convenient cover stories. The Ziesel case, in itself intriguing, therefore also raises far wider questions about how we should address the ways in which societies—and not only Germany after 1945—deal with the aftermath of political conflict and engage in structural as well as personal transformations.

Notes

1. See Axel Schildt, "In the Crosshairs: Kurt Ziesel's Adenauer-Era Campaign to Expose the Nazi Pasts of West German Intellectuals," in this publication.

2. See Kurt Ziesel, *Das verlorene Gewissen: Hinter den Kulissen der Presse, der Literatur und ihrer Machträger von heute* (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1957; 7th ed. 1961).

3. Heinrich Böll, "Der Schriftsteller und Zeitkritiker Kurt Ziesel: Versuch eines Beitrages zur sogenannten Bewältigung der Vergangenheit," *Die Zeit*, March 16, 1962, <https://www.zeit.de/1962/11/der-schriftsteller-und-zeitkritiker-kurt-ziesel/komplettansicht>, accessed July 3, 2019.

4. "Aussöhnung mit dem Staate Israel und den Juden in aller Welt': Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Dr. Konrad Adenauer und Erklärungen der Fraktionen im Bundestag am 27. September 1951," in Dietrich Rollmann, ed., *50 Reden aus dem Deutschen Bundestag 1949–1983: Zum 35jährigen Bestehen des Deutschen Bundestages* (Stuttgart: Burg Verlag, 1983), 97–102, here 98.

5. See further, Norbert Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 1996); idem, *1945 und wir: Das Dritte Reich im Bewußtsein der Deutschen* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2005); Mary Fulbrook, *Reckonings: Legacies of Nazi Persecution and the Quest for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); and the journalistic treatment in Willi Winkler, *Das braune Netz: Wie die Bundesrepublik von früheren Nazis zum Erfolg geführt wurde* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2019).

6. This is a point I am exploring further in a book on bystanders, supported by an AHRC grant for a collaborative project on complicity and perpetration. See also Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, revised in two vols. 2017).

7. See Melita Maschmann, *Fazit: Kein Rechtfertigungsversuch* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1963); see also Helen Epstein, "I Was a Nazi, and Here's Why," *New Yorker*, May 29, 2013.

8. See further Fulbrook, *Reckonings*, 198–201.

9. See Günter Grass, *Beim Häuten der Zwiebel* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2006). It is possible that this was a form of pre-emptive confession, given his likely exposure following a publication a few months earlier which had provided some hints in this direction: Ute Scheub, *Das falsche Leben: Eine Vatersuche* (Munich: Piper, 2006), 7–62, describes not only her father's public suicide by drinking cyanide at an event where Grass had just spoken, her father's last words being a greeting from the microphone to his SS comrades, but also Grass's subsequent extended and somewhat surprising interest in her family.

10. For further details and references, see Fulbrook, *Reckonings*, 205–358.

11. See the first path-breaking work of a spate of independent historical commissions, Eckart Conze et al., *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (Munich: Blessing, 2010), which was followed by a series of others in similar vein. On justice, see Manfred Görtemaker and Christoph Safferling, *Die Akte Rosenberg: Das Bundesministerium der Justiz und die NS-Zeit* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2016). On the West German secret service (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*) and its predecessor, the *Organisation Gehlen*: Christoph Rass, *Das Sozialprofil des Bundesnachrichtendienstes: Von den Anfängen bis 1968* (Berlin: Chr. Links, 2016); Gerhard Sälter, *Phantome des Kalten Krieges: Die Organisation Gehlen und die Wiederbelebung des Gestapo-Feindbildes*

“Rote Kapelle” (Berlin: Chr. Links, 2016); Ronny Heidenreich, Daniela Münkler and Elke Stadelmann-Wenz, *Geheimdienstkrieg in Deutschland: Die Konfrontation von DDR-Staatssicherheit und Organisation Gehlen 1953* (Berlin: Chr. Links, 2016); Sabrina Nowack, *Sicherheitsrisiko NS-Belastung: Personalüberprüfungen im Bundesnachrichtendienst in den 1960er-Jahren* (Berlin: Chr. Links, 2016).

“I Got Through Those Times Well”

Otto Brunner and National Socialism

HANS-HENNING KORTÜM

TRANSLATION BY DONA GEYER

This contribution analyzes the structural and biographical conditions that made the career of the Austrian medievalist Otto Brunner (1898–1982) possible. Brunner proved to be a fervent adherent of the Nazi regime until the bitter end. His support for the regime manifested itself in several ways: his function as head of the *Völkische Forschungsvereinigungen* (Ethnic German Research Associations) between 1940 and 1944; his efforts to gain Nazi Party membership (ultimately successful in 1943); his close collaboration with Amt Rosenberg even as late as January 1945; his professional successes, including his reception of the prestigious Verdun Prize in 1943; and his publications, most importantly his manuscript “Der Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes” (“The German People’s Road to Destiny”) of 1944. Long considered lost, the manuscript did in fact survive, albeit only in the form of proofs. Brunner succeeded in jump-starting his professional career in the young Federal Republic in the 1950s through the help of long-standing personal networks. He continued his study, with only minor modifications, of the most important topics that had kept him busy during the Third Reich. Völkisch-nationalist ideas still pervaded his depiction of German history and medieval society. Structural peculiarities of the academic discipline of history, including a West German historical conservatism, led to a situation in which Brunner’s interpretation of the Middle Ages came to be challenged only in the 1980s.

Introduction

The death on June 12, 1982, of Otto Brunner, professor emeritus of medieval and early modern history at the University of Hamburg, marked the passing of a man who was undoubtedly one of the most influential German historians of the twentieth century.¹ However, this accolade at the end of his life might have seemed unlikely in May 1945, because the collapse of the Greater German Reich had a palpable impact on Brunner’s academic career. For the Austrian Brunner, who definitely felt himself to be German, the founding of the Second Austrian Republic was a twofold disaster. One reason was that the denazification process that began in 1945 at the University of Vienna, where he had

taught, ended in 1948 with his unequivocal forced retirement.² What possibly proved harder for him to face, however, was that he could no longer claim to “belong [. . .] to the German people,” as he wrote with some bitterness to Carl Schmitt, the former “crown jurist of the Third Reich,”³ who had also been forced into retirement and with whom Brunner had corresponded since the 1930s.⁴ However, unlike Schmitt, Brunner was able to gain a foothold professionally in the new Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), especially thanks to the active support of several colleagues who themselves had survived unscathed and had been able to continue their careers after, at most, a very brief interruption. One particularly energetic supporter of Brunner’s candidacy for the academic chair at the University of Hamburg was his predecessor, Hermann Aubin,⁵ with whom Brunner had worked closely since the 1930s within the framework of the so-called *Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften* (Ethnic German Research Associations).

The intense debate in Germany concerning the involvement of historians in National Socialism,⁶ which began, at the latest, in 1998 at the forty-second Biennial German Historians’ Convention in Frankfurt am Main, is the reason why we are now relatively well informed about the relevant networks and structures that were already in existence in the 1930s and continued to thrive during the postwar period. It is now widely accepted that the year 1945 represented anything but a new beginning with regard to the writing of academic scholarship.⁷ Two research approaches have become very clearly recognizable in this context. One is based on an analytical concept that focuses strongly on generational history⁸ and emphasizes, above all, the centrality of the First World War experience in explaining the corresponding mental dispositions and resulting behaviors among many of the men born around 1900.⁹ Brunner, who was born in 1898, joined the army as a one-year volunteer in 1916, and thus belonged to the “young front generation”¹⁰ of men who completed their university studies in the 1920s and then successfully advanced their careers in the 1930s.

The other approach prominent in contemporary historical research draws specifically on the heuristic value associated with the concept of *Denkstil* (style of thought) in the sociology of knowledge.¹¹ This may help explain why certain paradigms and research approaches are dominant during an era, marginalizing or even obliterating the importance of alternative interpretations. Such an approach is advisable in the case of Otto Brunner’s oeuvre, as he is among the historians who have given significant thought to their methodological procedure. Thus, Brunner repeatedly turned his attention to the history of historiographical terminology. In addition to his most influential work, *Land und*

Herrschaft (“Land and Lordship,” 1939), Brunner is remembered by historians particularly for his co-editorship of *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (“Fundamental Concepts in History”), a monumental work of conceptual history that was not completed until long after his death.¹²

More than two decades ago Gadi Algazi subjected Brunner’s figures of thought and central explanatory categories as they appear in *Land and Lordship* to a convincing analysis.¹³ However, his arguments made only a partial impression on the field of medieval studies. Apparently, leading names in medieval studies and in legal and constitutional history continue undeterred to adhere to Brunner’s main theories. This testifies to the long-lasting “continuity” of interpretive frameworks, as emphasized by Otto Gerhard Oexle.¹⁴ Only slightly modified following the Second World War, some of them still enjoy great popularity today. The reasons for this will be addressed more extensively below.

The many obituaries¹⁵ written about Brunner after his death at the age of eighty-four tellingly avoided all mention of his numerous writings on the “German East.” The reader of the obituary can come away unaware of the dramatic increase in the number of his writings on *Deutschtum im Südosten* (“Germandom in the Southeast”), beginning in the second half of the 1930s. The eulogies usually mentioned little or nothing about the conspicuous break in Brunner’s academic career, the removal from his academic chair in Vienna and the accompanying ouster as head of the Austrian Institute of Historical Research (ÖIG, *Österreichisches Institut für Geschichtsforschung*) in 1945, and the forced retirement that ensued three years later.¹⁶ Instead they highlighted the year 1954, when Brunner resumed his academic career in the FRG upon appointment to a position at the University of Hamburg, an event that is still described today in the annals of the Hanseatic city’s university as an “unusual stroke of luck.”¹⁷

The Early Years: Brunner’s Youth and Student Days, 1907 to 1923

Even as a young person, Brunner may well have been exposed, at least subconsciously, to the ethnic tensions in the multiethnic Habsburg nation-state. He spent the second half of his secondary education years in the Moravian city of Jihlava (German: Iglau) and then in the bigger city of Brno (German: Brünn). Both cities had a highly multiethnic profile. In addition to “German Austrians” (*Deutschösterreicher*) and Czechs, Jewish communities also existed in both of these cities.¹⁸ At the Erstes Deutsches Staatsgymnasium, where Brunner spent his last two years of secondary school (1914–16), classes were

taught in German. According to the statistics for the 1908/9 school year, not quite three percent of the 502 pupils attending the school were native speakers of Czech, while over 97 percent claimed German as their native tongue. The fact that a disproportionately high percentage of the pupils were “of the Mosaic faith” seems both noteworthy and typical of the time. While Jews accounted for less than ten percent of the total population, they made up 24 percent of this school’s student body. Another 71 percent belonged to the Catholic Church and five percent—including Brunner—were Protestants.¹⁹

In addition to his schooling, Brunner was also profoundly influenced by military life. His stepfather was a career officer in the army of the Habsburg Empire. In 1916 Brunner himself was drafted at the age of 18 to serve in a rifle regiment, Schützenregiment No. 21, in Sankt Pölten. His experiences in the final two battles of the Isonzo Front—in which he probably fought in August and October 1917—the disbandment of the Austro-Hungarian army, and the capture of “nearly all parts” of his regiment by the Italians on November 4, 1918,²⁰ did not cause Brunner to suffer from postwar trauma. Rather, his enthusiasm for all things military apparently continued undiminished even into his later years. For example, “from September 19 to 27, 1940” he took part “in a trip with scholars to the French battlefields.”²¹ He dated the preface of the second, expanded edition of *Land and Lordship* to his time “in military service, October 1942,”²² and on May 12, 1944, he wrote a letter from his duty station at the time, Luftkriegsschule 7 (a Luftwaffe officer training school) in the town of Tulln in Lower Austria, to the dean of the Philosophy Faculty at the University of Vienna, which he signed “Captain Brunner.”²³

When, at the age of 20, Brunner resumed his studies in history and geography in Vienna in the winter semester of 1918/19, he entered a university that was in an extremely dramatic situation, the mirror image of a difficult era in German-Austrian history. Even after the war, the university itself remained the highly conservative *Ordinarienuniversität*—a university controlled by its professorial chairholders—that it had been before 1914. The introduction of a republican constitution put the university faculty in a difficult position. As civil servants, the faculty members were legally bound to the new democracy, but in their hearts they rejected the newly formed Republic of Austria. Therefore, the university became a reactionary island in the midst of “Red Vienna.”²⁴

The end of the war in 1918 marked a dramatic turning point for the University of Vienna.²⁵ For one thing, the German-speaking Austrians who had previously studied at the universities of the lost crown lands now flocked primarily to Vienna to study. The faculty also grew in size because it was forced to absorb the German-Austrian professors who had previously taught at oth-

er universities of the now defunct Habsburg monarchy. The number of students rose by 50 percent, to approximately 15,000. There were two reasons for this: first, men like Brunner were returning home from the war to resume their studies, and second, the universities were opening their doors to women.²⁶ One very obvious development was the influx of refugees, particularly Jews from the former crown lands in the eastern part of the Habsburg Empire, namely Galicia.

Violent confrontations occurred at the university. The students, the overwhelming majority of whom held German nationalist views, vehemently demanded the repatriation of the “Eastern European Jews” (*Ostjuden*) and a *völkisch* admission restriction.²⁷ In late April 1920—in the middle of Brunner’s student years—antisemitic agitation came to a head for the first time when German nationalist students vandalized the Jewish dining hall and the anatomy lecture hall. By the end of 1923, when Brunner concluded his studies at the university and began his work at Austria’s national archives, the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, the situation had certainly not improved. Still inspired by the failed Beer Hall Putsch in Munich, “about 200 ‘*Hakenkreuzler*’ [members of groups using the swastika emblem] armed with clubs and brass knuckles [made] their way into various buildings and classes, where they demanded the exclusion of Jewish students. Nine people were seriously injured as a result.”²⁸

Brunner’s academic instructors had been appointed to their university chairs at the turn of the century, that is, long before the First World War.²⁹ To these professors, already elderly, Brunner owed the genuine expertise he gained in his field, knowledge that he was able to deepen as a member of the thirty-third class at the ÖIG between 1921 and 1923. However, the greatest influence on his philosophy of history and his political view of the world was Othmar Spann, a member of the Faculty of Law and Political Science. Brunner had taken classes not only in history and geography but also in other fields. He had a particular interest in the offerings of the Faculty of Law and Political Science.³⁰ Spann’s views on the “true state” must have resonated with the young student and reserve officer Brunner, who was very probably worried by the collapse of the old order. Spann borrowed heavily from nineteenth-century romantic Catholic social teachings to conceive his idea of a harmonious, integrated corporate state (*Ständestaat*) and at the same time to adamantly reject liberalism and socialism, positivism and empiricism. “Spann was a brilliant rhetorician and fascinated the youth by questioning and usually thoroughly repudiating social conventions and conventional academic teachings.”³¹

Early Academic Career and Involvement during the National Socialist Period, 1931 to 1939

Brunner's appointment in September 1931 as professor (albeit without chair, or *Lehrstuhl*) of medieval and Austrian history, and hence as a faculty member of the ÖIG, laid the foundation for his subsequent university career. The institute's graduates, who liked to call themselves "instituters," (*Institutler*)³² were united by a very specific esprit de corps linked with an elitist attitude. All three of the men who held professorships in history in 1930s Vienna were members of the twenty-third graduating class of the institute. Therefore, there was "homogeneity also in the ideological orientation of those teaching and their teachings."³³ Brunner's further academic advancement was facilitated considerably by this "network." One particularly helpful person for Brunner's career proved to be Hans Hirsch, who became a professor of history and the auxiliary sciences of history (*historische Hilfswissenschaften*) in 1926 and, as the successor to Brunner's doctoral advisor Oswald Redlich, the new chairperson of the ÖIG board in 1929.³⁴ Brunner especially had Hirsch to thank for his rapid rise to the status of one of the most influential historians of the Nazi period and for his general ideological worldview. For his dissertation, titled "Österreich und die Walachei während des Türkenkrieges von 1683 bis 1699" ("Austria and Wallachia during the Great Turkish War from 1683 to 1699"), Brunner had even picked one of Hirsch's central topics, namely the danger posed to Germany by the enemy from the East.³⁵

It is also striking that one of the titles Brunner submitted to the relevant committee as a possible topic for his habilitation lecture was "Das Problem der Gesamtstaatsidee in der österreichischen Geschichte" ("The Problem of the Idea of the Unified State in Austrian History").³⁶ The terms "state" and "Austria" and specifically "Austrian history" were leitmotifs that permeated Brunner's thinking, writing, and actions in the decades to come. The topic of the medieval feud was also evident in his writings by the end of the 1920s and would become the central focus of what remains his most famous work, "Land and Lordship. Structures of Governance in Medieval Austria" published originally in German in 1939 as *Land und Herrschaft. Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Südostdeutschlands im Mittelalter*.³⁷ Brunner's tribute to Hans Hirsch in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, published the year following Hirsch's death in 1940, reveals what made him exceedingly important to Brunner. In addition to the human and academic qualities of his deceased mentor, Brunner appreciated Hirsch's "vibrant awareness of history in the *Volkstumskampf*" (ethnic struggle): "In Vienna he expanded his horizon

to include the German ethnic groups in the Southeast. In many years of largely unnoticed organizational work, he was able to develop the requisite scholarly know-how for the *Volkstumskampf* in this region and to make personal connections that enabled lively interaction between academics inside and outside Germany.³⁸ With these words Brunner outlined Hirsch's involvement in the Southeast German Research Foundation (SODFG, *Südostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*), which he co-founded with the geographer Hugo Hassinger in 1931 and which was financed by the Reich.³⁹ Brunner's own involvement was evident in that, among other things, he was a regular participant in the study trips organized continually by the SODFG, starting in 1932, to the *außendeutsche* ethnic regions, meaning regions where German ethnic culture existed outside Germany's borders.⁴⁰ With considerable regularity he presented relevant historical lectures.⁴¹

Most importantly, Brunner now began to publish *völkisch*-oriented contributions on a regular basis. By 1932, in an essay on the Burgenland published by *Volk und Reich*, he was already addressing a topic key to his historical thinking: the danger that Hungary posed to the "German border regions." He justified his position with geographic, cultural, and historical arguments. He considered Hungary to be a "piece of the south Russian steppe pushed into Central Europe." In his eyes the "Hungarians" themselves were a "nomadic people" characterized by a "peculiar tenacity." He was convinced that a danger emanated from the state established by the "ruling classes" of this people, namely the danger of an ongoing and unrelenting Magyarization of the "*deutschen Volkskörper*" (the body of the German people).⁴² The demonization of Hungary and the Hungarians, a portrayal he justified on geopolitical and *völkisch* grounds, would remain a regular feature of his historical discourse to the end of the Third Reich. Even in the context of his later work as head of the SODFG, starting in 1939, Hungary was often the focus of his *Volkstumskampf*.⁴³

Another component of Brunner's narrative was the close association he made between the ideas of "borderland," "border area," and "march" (or "mark," meaning "frontier or border area") and what he viewed as an inevitable concomitant "*völkisch* threat" to the "German people" settled in these regions. The danger, by its very nature, arose primarily and almost exclusively "in the East." In his essay "The Historical Significance of the Waldviertel," he wrote that "what we are interested in, however, is the border to the East."⁴⁴ This statement can be viewed as paradigmatic of practically all his work on *Volkstum* between 1930 and 1945.

It probably was not wholly coincidental that Brunner's pertinent work proliferated in 1938, the year of the Anschluss, Austria's annexation by the Third

Reich. In an essay inspired by the immediate impact of Austria's *Heimkehr* (homecoming) to the Reich, Brunner pontificated about Austria as "Europe's *Ostmark*", referring to "the struggle against the incursions into Europe by foreign steppe peoples from the southeast." In medieval German history, he said, rulers "from the Carolingian dynasty, then again from the Saxon and the Salic dynasties," had found themselves "battling against an equestrian people alien to Europe, the Magyars." Later it had been "the dukes of Austria" who had taken on the task "of being Europe's *Ostmark*," to be followed even later by the "German-Austrian countries" with "help from the Reich." Now that Austria's *Heimkehr* had restored the order disrupted "by the calamitous political fragmentation of the German people," the opportunity presented itself once again "to fulfill the task of being Europe's *Ostmark*."⁴⁵

Brunner wrote this essay as a contribution to the exhibition *Europas Schicksalskampf im Osten* ("Europe's Battle for Destiny in the East"), which the *Amt Schrifttumspflege* (Office for the Cultivation of Literature)—an entity subordinate to the so-called Plenipotentiary of the Führer for the Supervision of the Entire Intellectual and Ideological Training and Schooling of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP, *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*)—put on in the Nuremberg Norishalle in 1938 as part of the preparations for the annual Nuremberg rally. One might therefore interpret Brunner's words as opportunistic statements by a career-minded historian who either had to or wanted to adopt National Socialist jargon, as he would then do in his praise of the "creator of Greater Germany [. . .], Adolf Hitler," who "[is] an Austrian." In this context Brunner noted that, "despite all blunders and errors, which were unavoidable, [. . .] something great and unique happened here: the decisive shaping of ethnic German thinking."⁴⁶ However, even his purportedly strictly academic article on *Das österreichische Institut für Geschichtsforschung und seine Stellung in der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft* ("The Austrian Institute for Historical Research and its Place in German Historical Scholarship"), upon closer inspection, has an unmistakable *völkisch* veneer toward the end of the work. For example, Brunner evaluated Austrian *Historie* (the discipline of history) as having been "more fortunate" than the "theoretical sciences of government, economics, and society," because "it never lost the pan-German context. It is no accident that the turn toward pan-German and thus simultaneously ethnic German thinking took place on Austrian soil."⁴⁷ Here Brunner was obviously referring not only to his mentor, Hans Hirsch, but also to himself.

Earlier research in contemporary history, particularly in Austria, occasionally tried to relativize *völkisch* thinking in comparison to National Socialist

ideas. It was argued that what was important to Otto Brunner's way of thinking was the "soil" (*Boden*), not the "blood" (*Blut*).⁴⁸ This was most likely true for the period up to 1939, but after that what mattered first and foremost to Brunner was, no doubt, the "blood."

In his article for the magazine *Die deutsche Schule* (The German School) in 1942, for example, Brunner descended into the depths of the racist National Socialist "blood and soil" ideology by examining "Southeast German Achievements and Destinies" since AD 1000. In particular, notes Michael Wildt, Brunner's emphatic praise for SS *Obergruppenführer* Werner Lorenz demonstrates his familiarity with the "comprehensive, *völkisch*-racial concept of a new order in which settlement areas were to be created for 'Aryan' Germans by way of expulsion, deportation, and genocide."⁴⁹ From October 1939, Lorenz headed the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (Ethnic German Liaison Office) and was, as such, a subordinate of Heinrich Himmler, Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of Germandom. Lorenz was assigned the task of "creating new German settlement areas through resettlement." In Brunner's words, it was "the Faustian will and the vigor of the Germanic blood" that had made it possible to transform a "natural landscape" into a "German cultural landscape." He added that, by the end of the eighteenth century, the "biological strength" of "Southeast German ethnic groups, by then long established," was making it difficult to procure sufficient "space, specifically soil, and thus food," whereas the "Hungarian state, one utterly weakened in a biological sense, tries to strengthen its constitutive Magyar people by assimilating the ethnic Germans." He went on to argue:

The year 1938 finally brings about [. . .] also the turning point [. . .] for the ethnic groups. [. . .] First, ethnic Germans in the borderlands [*Grenzdeutschtum*] were reintegrated into the Reich, thereby rectifying a blatant injustice. [. . .] Second, ethnic Germans beyond the Carpathians were uprooted and resettled in the Reich. The "Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of Germandom," *Reichsführer* SS, and Chief of the German Police Heinrich Himmler and the Ethnic German Liaison Office under SS *Obergruppenführer* Lorenz solved this difficult problem in the interest of strengthening the German East. [. . .] Only Yugoslavia refused to make concessions. Nothing, not even the smallest step, could be achieved in either foreign or domestic policy because the ruling class of South Slavia [Yugoslavia] listened too much, and then succumbed, to West European insinuations. So, after many attempts to preserve peace

in the Balkans, the Führer finally struck and wiped the unnatural state off the map after barely fourteen days of fighting.

Therefore, the “ethnic groups” were, in Brunner’s mind, “no longer a regrettable appendage of the German people but contributors to the pan-German mission, which is determined solely by the Führer. Is this not more than every German on either side of the border ever dared to dream of?”⁵⁰

The Years of the Second World War

In the years just before the onset of the Second World War, Brunner was enjoying a first high point in his prestige, among fellow historians and influential NSDAP officials alike. He was convinced very early on that the future was his. This is evident in the triumphal tone of his lecture at the 1937 German Historians’ Convention in Erfurt, in which he leveled what was, especially for a professor who did not hold a chair, harsh criticism at established older medievalists—and he did so the year before the Anschluss and as the only Austrian representative of historical scholarship in attendance, besides Heinrich von Srbik.⁵¹ Furthermore, Brunner proved to be right: in recognition of his accomplishments, he received the *Erinnerungszeichen zur Wiedervereinigung Österreichs mit dem Reich* in 1939, a medal in commemoration of Austria’s reunification with the Reich, for having “closely cooperated with the authorities in the German Reich and endangered [his] life and position in order to support scholarly work on ethnic Germans in the Alpine region and the Danube region along pan-German lines.”⁵²

Naturally Brunner also attended the traditional “breakfast”⁵³ for the heads of the *Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften* at the Hotel Adlon in Berlin on March 28, 1938,⁵⁴ even though he would not be appointed by the Reich Ministry of the Interior to be Hirsch’s successor until the following year, on April 14, 1939.⁵⁵ That high expectations were being placed on the young Brunner is also suggested by the fact that he was selected to give the opening address at the Research Associations’ conference on April 17, 1939, instead of one of the long-serving institutional directors such as Albert Brackmann from Berlin or Hermann Aubin from Breslau. Brunner spoke on “the altered political situation and its effects on *volksdeutsch* research” (German ethnicity research). He defined the new tasks of “*volksdeutsch* scholarship” to be “well-planned active cooperation in securing the entire German *Lebensraum*, that is, in the great and crucial mission assigned to us by the Führer.” He applauded

the integration of Austria and the “former Sudeten lands,” viewing it as proof that German ethnic groups in what had been isolated and border regions outside Germany (*Grenz- und Inseldeutschtum*) had now been “intimately” joined to *Deutschtum* within Germany. “Borders where open conflict raged or underground subversion festered have now become Reich borders.” However, he stressed the necessity of being on guard, because a new danger was emerging “through the creation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia”: “The Czechs have centuries of experience in ethnic struggle and possess mindsets that will meet the challenge superbly, particularly in the situation where they are no longer the constitutive people.” This led him, he said, to an inevitable conclusion: “The issue of the Germanic heritage in these lands, of the share of German blood and the German contribution to the political and cultural achievements of the Czechs, is to be pursued on the broadest front possible in order to clarify the prerequisites for the existence and function of Czech culture in the German *Lebensraum*.”

In other words, Brunner believed that the new Greater German Reich offered the Research Associations the opportunity to abandon the defensive position previously needed “to fend off the offensive conducted at the time by the Eastern peoples and their scholarship.” Instead, now was the moment to take the offensive themselves. “I believe that ethnic German research should spring from the idea of *German Lebensraum*, proclaimed as the guiding theme of the latest major decisions. Domestic Germandom and ethnic groups along with their constituent peoples are part of the *Lebensraum*. Ethnic German research should not shy away from reaching beyond the borders of the Reich.” However, the “new situation” also brought about “difficulties.” “No longer are tasks set for us by the need of the day, as they once were; instead, new tasks are to emerge from a long-term political focus. Therefore, the new situation requires even closer contact with the key offices in the Reich [...].”⁵⁶

Brunner’s formulations, nebulous rather than clear, would fall again on fertile soil as the war progressed. His remarks at the meeting in Vienna on March 17–18, 1941, to mark the tenth anniversary of the SODFG provide further proof of his “undoubtedly racist, pseudohistorical, and geopolitical arguments,” according to Michael Fahlbusch.⁵⁷ In any case, they perfectly fit the specific pattern of thought so characteristic of Brunner when he talked about the “percentage of Germanic blood in the population” and the “immunization of German ethnic groups against the intellectual influence of foreign ideas of governance,” and then underpinned this also with geopolitical theories.⁵⁸ In this respect the doubts expressed from time to time about the authenticity of

these quotes—based primarily on the fact that their source is a file memorandum summarizing the proceedings at the meeting—have gained no ground.⁵⁹

The fact that Brunner was a pivotal figure in the historical profession since the start of the Second World War is proven also by his assistance with the well-attended Munich exhibition *Deutsche Größe* (German Greatness), which was opened on November 8, 1940, at the Deutsches Museum by its sponsor, Deputy of the Führer Rudolf Heß, and distinguished by a speech given by *Reichsleiter* Alfred Rosenberg and broadcast by the Großdeutscher Rundfunk. The exhibition was basically the brainchild of the Munich historian Karl Alexander von Müller. This “most influential historian in the Nazi state” was invited by the Rosenberg Office (Amt Rosenberg) to contribute to the project in a leadership role.⁶⁰ Whether Brunner was contacted directly by the Amt Rosenberg, with which he maintained close relations until the bitter end of the Third Reich,⁶¹ or whether the initiative originated with Karl Alexander von Müller, the working relationship between the two historians proved fruitful. In fact, when Müller was the only scholar who was asked by the Reich Ministry of Science, Schooling, and National Education to recommend people for the 1940 Verdun Prize, he placed the name of his Viennese colleague on his recommended list of candidates, albeit only in second place.⁶²

This prestigious and—with 3,000 Reichsmarks—valuable prize for historians had been awarded to Müller in 1935.⁶³ Originally the prize had been created in 1844 by the Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm IV and had been last awarded in 1913. However, it was revived during the Nazi period.⁶⁴ Minister of Science, Schooling, and National Education Bernhard Rust decided in favor of Otto Brunner, despite votes to the contrary by the experts in his own ministry. On August 13, 1941, Brunner wrote to thank the minister for the 1940 Verdun Prize: “Allow me to express my sincerest gratitude for this very honorable distinction. This mark of recognition will be an incentive for me to continue dedicating all my talents to the service of German historiography.”⁶⁵

In 1942 Brunner took part in a *Historiker-Lager der Reichsdozentenführung* (a historians’ retreat sponsored by the Reich Leadership of the University Teachers’ League) in Augsburg, led by Professor Dr. Harold Steinacker, the rector of the “German Alpine University of Innsbruck.”⁶⁶ In Rosenberg’s optimistic opinion, his Main Office of Science had “succeeded in bringing together at the university-teacher retreats the ideologically significant people in the *Dozentenbund* [German University Teachers’ League]. There, ideological problems were wrestled with in presentations and discussions, and the mutually beneficial relationship between science and the NSDAP was promoted in an indirect way, through the scientific discussions.”⁶⁷

Thus it is not surprising that Steinacker—one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Hitler among German historians⁶⁸—entrusted the job of giving the opening lecture to his Viennese colleague. It was to be presented on April 9, 1942, and titled “Deutschland.”⁶⁹ Each speaker was to contrast the “Germans’ becoming a people” with a depiction of “becoming a people” for the English, French, Italians, and Russians. In the case of Germany, Steinacker believed that “a new idea of a people” was at work: “It involves the aspect of race and demands a new *Volksordnung* [national ethnic order], merging nationalism and socialism. It restructures the relations between the people and the state and bases the organization of both on the Führer principle.”⁷⁰ As Brunner was conscripted into military service on April 18, 1942, he could no longer be a speaker at the retreat, which had been postponed to October. Steinacker himself gave the opening lecture instead of Brunner, who was at least able to contribute to the discussion as one of the thirty-six participants.⁷¹

As part of his military responsibilities, Brunner served as a “teacher of history and national politics” at Luftkriegsschule 7 in Tulln/Langenlebarn, where he was stationed from April 1942.⁷² Apparently he fulfilled perfectly what was expected of him. Within just six months, he advanced from being a lieutenant in the reserves to the rank of *Oberleutnant* and was then promoted to *Hauptmann* (captain). In the recommendation for promotion to *Oberleutnant*, dated September 23, 1942, Brunner was evaluated as follows: “He knows how to deal with difficulties. His bearing both on and off duty is adroit and confident. He is firmly grounded in National Socialism and uses this knowledge also in his lectures.”⁷³ The same tenor is also found in the *Beurteilungsnotiz* (evaluation memo) dated April 13, 1943, in connection with his promotion to captain: “He is resourceful and effective in every situation. There can be no doubt about his National Socialist convictions.”⁷⁴

Brunner’s efforts in 1943 to be finally admitted as a member of the NSDAP are also to be seen in this context. According to him, his application of July 1, 1938,⁷⁵ was deferred by the Vienna Gau on May 6, 1940, on grounds of age, until the ban on new party membership admissions was lifted. The Gau made reference to Brunner’s application for admission, which it noted as having been submitted on June 1, 1938. The *Reichsleitung* approved the deferment on July 31, 1940. Three years later, on April 4, 1943, Brunner once again submitted an application, which once again was turned down by the *Reichsleitung* of the NSDAP, on July 16, 1943. However, by this point Brunner could rely on his influential network to further his cause. Evidently his application had been rejected strictly on the grounds of legal technicalities, as is apparent from the “appeal” made by Kurt Knoll, the Vienna Gau head of the University Teach-

ers' League and rector of the Hochschule für Welthandel (University of World Trade), to the "*Kreisleiter* [district leader] of Kreis VI of the NSDAP." He intervened on Brunner's behalf on December 10, 1943.⁷⁶

On December 19, Brunner also received the explicit support of the *Reichsdozentenführer* and the head of the Gaustabsamt of the Vienna Gauleitung, who testified to Brunner's "consistently impeccable National Socialist attitude." It was said that Brunner had "championed National Socialist ideas [...] at a time [...] when a university professor ran a certain risk in doing so." These efforts finally culminated in his acceptance into the party on February 18, 1944, "effective as of January 1, 1941, under the membership number 9 140 316."⁷⁷ Curiously, this occurred at a time when many hitherto enthusiastic supporters in Austria were distancing themselves from National Socialist Germany in light of the increasingly bleak military situation.⁷⁸ These circumstances may have helped secure Brunner the status of indispensability (known as *UK* status) that followed in June 1944. At any rate, Brunner informed the dean of the Philosophy Faculty in a letter dated May 12, 1944, that he had received "several days ago a letter from the *Reichsforschungsrat*" (Reich Research Council) in which he was informed "that [his] 'retrieval from the *Wehrmacht*' was forthcoming."⁷⁹ Previously, on June 22, 1943, and then again on August 30, 1943, "recommendations from the Main Office of Science" of the Amt Rosenberg had reached the Party Chancellery in which the *UK* status was requested for eight history professors, including "Professor Dr. Brunner, Vienna."⁸⁰ These recommendations apparently did not have any immediate consequences, which was not surprising, considering the traditionally tense relationship between Rosenberg and Martin Bormann. The fact that Brunner was finally granted *UK* status in June 1944 was linked to the increasing efforts, evident since December 1943, of the Reich Research Council to have scholars of value to the war effort, including scholars in the humanities, declared "indispensable." The retrieval initiative went by the codename *Sonderelbe Wissenschaft*,⁸¹ and the prerequisite for being included in the program was willingness "to serve in German military research."⁸²

Number five of the thirty-eight names on a list dated March 13, 1944—with the subject "re: *UK* Status of Humanities Scholars, file: Oral agreement with SS *Obersturmbannführer* Dr. Rößner"—was that of "Brunner, Otto, Prof., born April 21, 1898, modern history, Vienna, captain, Thul [*sic*]—Langenlebern near Vienna, Luftkriegsschule."⁸³ Thus, Brunner was one of the remaining thirty-eight persons of the originally planned "contingent of one hundred humanities scholars [selected] for retrieval."⁸⁴ In this way Brunner had not been snatched from "German military research,"⁸⁵ and thus was "se-

cured for the German people” and saved, “unlike many a humanities scholar, from being killed in action.”⁸⁶

Based on present knowledge, the question of Brunner’s specific role in “German military research” cannot be resolved, yet there can be no doubt that such a role actually existed. On October 2, 1944, Brunner’s close associate at the SODFG Dr. Wilfried Krallert wrote the following in a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in his capacity as “executive director of the Southeast German Research Foundation”:

For many months, the current chairman of the Southeast German Research Foundation, Univ. Prof. Dr. Otto Brunner, has been unable to attend actively to his duties at the SODFG because he was in military service. Some time ago he left military service but has been assigned a special task that again prevents him from carrying out his responsibilities for the SODFG. Therefore, he has decided to resign from his position at the SODFG and has instructed me to inform you of this decision and to request, on his behalf, your approval of his resignation from the chairmanship.⁸⁷

A Lost Book: “Der Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes”

The “special task” still left Brunner with enough time to attend to the proofs of his book “Der Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes” (“The German People’s Road to Destiny”),⁸⁸ which was never published because of the war. “This small book,” the author informed his potential readers in a preface dated “Vienna, October 1944,”⁸⁹ “grew out of the classes I taught for a long period at a Luftkriegsschule. It has no other purpose than to be useful to all those who seek clarity concerning the historical foundations of our struggle for existence.” As he noted, Brunner had wanted “to have the book finished by the end of 1943.”⁹⁰

This work, until recently thought to be lost,⁹¹ gives us deep insight into Brunner’s philosophy of history, a philosophy shaped by *völkisch* and racist thought, precisely because he intended it for a wider audience. A “German ethnic consciousness,” allegedly developed during the time of “the ‘German Movement,’ the name we use to summarize the creative forces of the years 1770–1830” (112–13), was linked by Brunner to the “recognition of the individual as a whole, of all his emotional and intellectual powers, of the ‘Gemüt’ [soul] as the ‘sense of Natural Totality’ (Hegel).” “Closely related to this is the present understanding of the concept of the organic as a distinct level of existence. This is the soil in which modern thought on heredity and race

is ultimately rooted, even if it was not yet understood at the time in its full consequentiality" (114). "In the years of collapse after Jena and the German uprising," continued Brunner, it had at least become possible to "understand and clarify" the "concept of the *Volk* as a political entity": "the *Volk* as a community of blood and common descent, characterized by its language, by its intellectual heritage, and by shared political experience" (147). In order to "discover and understand German *Volkheit* [peoplehood] in history, language, and myth, in fable, legend, and poetry, in law and customs," people had looked to "the Germanic north in search of origins, to find the original Germanic essence among the brothers of one's own ancestors" (116). However, ever since the times of Johann Joachim Winkelmann, "the great era of true Hellenism, from Homer to Plato" had also been vitally important to the "German spirit," because it had gained "direct access to a world in which it recognized the existence of a deeply related power derived from an earlier commonality of blood. In Hellenism, we saw the image of a high and noble humanity, one in which we recognized ourselves" (116–17). "It has been left to our era," Brunner maintained, "to recognize once again the connection between Reich, *Volksordnung*, and ideology" (154). Despite the optimism expressed in the philosophy of history presented here, the book also reveals that its author was gripped by a certain degree of pessimism in light of the reversal in the military fortunes of the Greater German Reich on all fronts. Still, he refused to be discouraged, as his words in the book's introduction made evident: "A closer examination reveals the insight that the power to rise up has grown out of the great catastrophes in our history, that in centuries of outward standstill, *Volk*-like forces have survived that were destroyed elsewhere. Thus the years of hardship and misfortune strengthen our belief in the future of our people no less than do the glory days of German history" (11).

Brunner wanted to squelch any doubt about the central importance of all things *völkisch* to German history. The very first sentence of the introduction emphasizes this: "The subject of a German history in the full and true sense is the entire German people and its Reich," as well as the corresponding *Lebensraum* and the "entire German *Volksboden*" (areas inhabited by German-speaking people) (9). The "inevitable" and "necessary" "struggle" associated with that notion also belongs in this context: "Part of the essence of the Germanic mindset is a unique concept of destiny. The Teuton does not fatalistically endure the immutable as the Oriental does; rather, he is willing to undergo the inevitable struggle, with faith in its intrinsic necessity" (14–15). In using such a crude interpretation of destiny, laden with *völkisch* and racist overtones, Brunner was obviously under the influence of a philosophy of

history that Alfred Rosenberg had conveyed in his book *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* (“The Myth of the Twentieth Century”). In the context of his statements about the “Germanic concept of destiny,” Hitler’s chief ideologue contrasted “Semitic fatalism” with the Germanic cast of mind: “The struggling Germanic peoples wittingly accept this destiny in the service of those internal values which they so willingly honor, and they pursue this destiny, without complaint, as free men. [. . .] They know that they also face death, but they consciously and freely accept their duties in the service of tribal honor and fight until their last drop of blood is spent [. . .].”⁹²

Brunner’s supposedly historical finding of what he called an “earlier community of blood” between “Teutons” and “Greeks” also reiterates one of Nazism’s favorite ideas—one that was vehemently championed by Rosenberg and others—in which “the dream of Nordic humanity in Hellas was the most beautiful of all.” “Wave after wave came out of the Danube valley” in order, “as rough masters and warriors,” to supplant “the declining civilization of pre-Asiatic traders,” in the process of which “Nordic strength, diminished by continual struggle, was continuously revived through sea migrations.”⁹³

Brunner’s evaluation of the German colonization of the East is hardly surprising: “When the German farmer moved eastward and cultivated the woodlands and swamps, he was searching there for new *Lebensraum* for himself and his children, but in doing so he expanded the overall German *Volksboden*.” Naturally, in his depiction Brunner paid tribute—as he had always done—to the achievements of the people of the “Southeast German lands,” who had known how to effectively fend off the dangers charging in from the East (9).

A statement at the end of Brunner’s introduction warrants the greatest interest. Here we find the core of his self-image as a historian. Apparently, he deeply disdained independent, critical historical scholarship: “Whoever thinks he can be above it all lapses into a neutrality that is often erroneously termed objective. Whoever places himself outside the current of history is unable to feel its driving force.” For this reason, Brunner argues that history can “be written only from one’s own committed political standpoint.” And once again, the soldierly side of “Captain Brunner” comes to the fore: “The soldier knows his enemy; he is determined to fight until the enemy is destroyed. But nothing is further from his mind than to demean and belittle the enemy. He gives him the respect due to him. This soldierly attitude also applies to the past; it is most closely related to the attitude of the historian” (11).

Brunner later wrote a defense of his unpublished book. This document, which has been preserved in his personnel file, was quite obviously used in connection with his denazification trial, which started in May 1945. In it, he

attempted to depict himself merely as a follower of National Socialism. He had, he believed, “maintained scientific objectivity,” and “on those few final pages about National Socialism and the events leading to the war” he had “expressed [himself] as cautiously as was possible at the time.”⁹⁴ It is not clear which aspect of such a self-evaluation is more amazing: his 180-degree turn in favor of scientific objectivity or his considerable degree of chutzpah in assuming that no one would notice the book’s last chapter, *Vom ersten zum zweiten Weltkrieg* (“From the First to the Second World War,” 267). Here the reader can find no trace of any reticence on Brunner’s part. Certainly he will be shown some leniency for having extolled, in a manner specific to the times, the First World War’s “front generation,” to which he belonged: “But what shines steadily throughout these four years is the heroism of the German soldier, in whom the frontline experience had deeply embedded itself. This was the source from which the National Socialist movement later drew the strength for its resurgence” (276). His harsh reckoning with the Weimar Republic also fits neatly into the standard conservative and antisemitic framework of the time (277–78):

The majority parties, Democrats, Center Party, and Marxists, were in charge here and gave Germany in 1919 in Weimar a liberal-democratic constitution based on the Western model. From those groups, no real resistance could be expected. Economic breakdown and intellectual decline progressed uncontrollably, most strongly influenced by the Jews, whose importance was ever increasing. Communism continued to spread. [. . .] The most terrible warning was the shocking drop in the number of births, which brought the extinction of the German people into the realm of possibility.

However, when Brunner eventually mentioned the era that dawned in 1933 with the emergence of the “new Germany,” he abandoned all subtlety and revealed his complete and utter acceptance of National Socialism, including its darkest aspects (284–85):

In the days of collapse, in Germany’s greatest need, Adolf Hitler decided to start a movement to liberate the German people. After fourteen years of the toughest struggle and despite all setbacks, he led the NSDAP to victory. On the day of the seizure of power, January 30, 1933, the Führer set about laying the foundation needed to achieve his aims. The purpose was not to reestablish the German Reich of 1914, but to incorporate all cohesive German settlements into a Greater German Reich and to se-

cure its *Lebensraum*. Therefore, the National Socialist movement placed at the heart of its political thought the idea of the people as an entity bonded by blood. [. . .] The NSDAP initiated a new political direction for the entire German people; it neutralized internal enemies, the parties, and Jewry. Fundamental laws started the biological revitalization of the German people.

In Brunner's eyes the "annexation of the *Ostmark*" brought about by the Führer meant the "shift of political influence in the southeastern region"; the Munich Agreement had made the "profoundly" longed-for "homecoming" possible for the "3.5 million Sudeten Germans separated from their *Volksgenossen* [racial comrades] in the Reich only by a national border." He argued that "what then remained was a rump Czecho-Slovakia, which soon proved unable to survive on its own. So in March 1939 the Führer created the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, while in the east Slovakia became independent and came under the protection of the Reich" (287). The outbreak of the Second World War—in which "Japan, [. . .] like Germany and Italy, fights to secure *Lebensraum* for its population of millions, crowded together in the tiniest of spaces"—was solely the fault of Great Britain and France, because neither London nor Paris had wanted to allow Germany a "free hand to settle, here [in the East], the vital matters threatening its existence" (288–89). Inevitably, the consequence was a "gigantic crisis," in which a struggle was being fought "for the self-assertion of the German people and a fundamentally new concept of order in the world." This crisis, he went on to claim, "is no accident and is not the result of human weaknesses and errors but of portentous necessity" (289–90). Brunner concluded his work with a dramatic appeal: "When the German people began to lift itself out of the catastrophe of its earlier history, it found that its place was occupied. In repeated efforts and setbacks it has risen up to face the final decisive hour. Now it must put itself to the test" (290). By calling for Germany to "put itself to the test," Brunner was propagating a stance that was urged on the German population repeatedly toward the end of the war in key speeches, newspaper articles, and books. In any case, the idea of a "test" confronting the German people became one of the prominent rhetorical phrases used in the final phase of the Third Reich.⁹⁵

As far as Brunner's own stance was concerned, it can be established that he "stood up to the test" by serving the Nazi regime almost to the end. In Berlin on January 21, 1945, a Sunday, Otto Brunner gave a lecture on Otto the Great, although by then the capital city of the Reich lay largely in ruins. This lecture would not be published in his lifetime, even though he had kept the

manuscript carefully stored away among his personal papers until his death. Yet its topic was a befitting one. In the Battle of Lechfeld in 955, King Otto the Great succeeded in defending “the southeast once again” with the help of a “military levy of all German tribes.” In 1945 as well, the unification of all Germans and their resolve and perseverance were the prerequisites for what Brunner thought could still be a possible victory over the enemy, an enemy that once again came from the East, just as the Hungarians had invaded in the time of Otto the Great.⁹⁶ His lecture was part of a series, which was given the characteristic title *Weltgeschichtliche Bewährungsstunden* (“World-Historical Moments of Truth”) and was organized “in cooperation with the *Deutsches Auslandswissenschaftliches Institut*” (German Institute of Foreign Studies) and “styled after [Johann Gottlieb] Fichte’s *Addresses to the German Nation*.” The idea for the series came from Brunner’s old acquaintance *Reichsleiter* Alfred Rosenberg,⁹⁷ with whom he had been in contact at least since 1938. When Brunner started to give his lecture in the Schinkelsaal at the *Deutsches Auslandswissenschaftliches Institut* at eleven thirty on a beautifully sunny winter morning, he was probably delivering the last in a series of lectures by historians who were both prominent and steeped in National Socialism, such as Helmut Berve from Munich and his colleague Wilhelm Weber from Berlin.⁹⁸

Otto Brunner after the Second World War

Although Brunner faced an uncertain future after the Second World War, he eventually had a breakthrough in the years following 1954. In Hamburg he not only successfully revived his university career, which had been interrupted for nine years by his forced retirement, but also single-mindedly continued his *cursus honorum*. In 1958 he became the dean of the Faculty of Humanities and in 1959/60 he was elected to serve as president of the entire University of Hamburg.⁹⁹ The universities of Heidelberg and Münster each awarded him an honorary doctoral degree. Brunner was a member of the academies of sciences in Vienna, Mainz, and Bavaria. However, the intensive effort he made to gain German citizenship for himself and his family immediately after taking what was his third official oath—in this case to uphold a liberal-democratic constitution the likes of which he had so reviled earlier—shows that his thinking was still highly influenced by *völkisch* ideas and that he continued at the same time to keep an eye on other career possibilities. As Brunner wrote in September 1950 to Carl Schmitt, who had also been forced into retirement, he would have had a hard time imagining “how I could have taught university lecture courses

in recent years. With all due respect for an independent Austria, I still cannot cease to see myself as belonging to the German people, and that is not officially allowed here.”¹⁰⁰ However, backed by the university, the efforts Brunner made were eventually rewarded, and he was granted German citizenship on May 3, 1956, while being allowed to keep his Austrian citizenship.¹⁰¹

By the second half of the 1950s, Brunner was once again one of the leading historians in his discipline. Together with Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck, he edited the eight-volume encyclopedic work *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*,¹⁰² and in 1956 a collection of his lectures and essays on social and constitutional history was published for the first time, under the title *Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte*. In a revised and expanded edition published in 1968,¹⁰³ the terms *Abendland* (Occident) and *Alteuropa* (Old Europe) became the central focus of his historical observations.

This overall concept of an era¹⁰⁴ can in turn be considered as proof that, as Oexle has argued, continuity exists among interpretive models. There is obviously a close conceptual proximity between the evocation of *Alteuropa*, which began in West Germany after the Second World War, and the “Europa-Rausch”¹⁰⁵ (Europe frenzy) that erupted in Nazi Germany after the victory over France in 1940, intensified after the invasion of the Soviet Union,¹⁰⁶ and became the object of Brunner’s homage in his “Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes”:

It was clear from the start that, for the German people, this was a matter of to be or not to be. In the old Europe, worn down by the antagonisms of the world powers, there was no place for the Greater German Reich. This could exist only with the successful creation of a “New Europe” under its leadership, a Europe that was in a position to hold its own as a *Großraum* [greater space] among the other *Großräume* on earth. (288)

Basically, the foreign policy situation during the Cold War era was essentially unchanged. The enemy still sat in the “East,” threatening the *Abendland*, the Western world. The only difference now was that the enemy had reached the Elbe River and thus stood in the middle of Europe, in the middle of Germany.¹⁰⁷ Brunner had reflected on Otto the Great’s victory at Lechfeld, near Augsburg, in his lecture in Berlin on January 21, 1945, at which point Soviet armies had already reached the Oder River and thus were not far from the Reich capital. But only ten years later, in July 1955, sixty thousand people gathered in Augsburg’s Rosenau Stadium to celebrate once again the preservation of the Occident a thousand years before. This took place in the awareness that “now,

[. . .] again, the masses of the East [stand] not much farther from this city [than a thousand years ago].”¹⁰⁸

Brunner’s concept of the *Abendland* differed somewhat from other concepts that were current after 1945, with their particular emphasis on the “Christian” and “ancient Roman” aspects of the Western world. The reason why these aspects did not play such a prominent role in the way Brunner conceived the Western world after 1945 has to do with his specific understanding of antiquity, as presented earlier in “Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes” (116–17). What interested Brunner about the ancient world both then and in the postwar period was particularly the very manly and preferably noble Greek hero, who was just as much the master “of his inner life” as he was “of house and polis” thanks to his commitment to virtue (*Arete*).¹⁰⁹ Brunner’s greatly simplified image of Greek heroism may have been the result of his study of Rosenberg’s *Mythus*, in which Hitler’s chief ideologist had similarly exalted the type of the Greek hero. Both men were convinced that the golden age of such heroes was the period between Homer and Plato.¹¹⁰

Above all else, Brunner’s post-1945 emphasis on the European-Occidental world demonstrates his intellectual suppleness, which enabled him to adapt to the prevailing zeitgeist. A good example of this is his 1954 Hamburg University Lecture on *Abendländisches Geschichtsdenken* (Western historical thought), which the freshly appointed full professor gave in one of the larger academic auditoriums of the Hanseatic city.¹¹¹ Brunner traced the life and work of Karl Löwith, a historian of philosophy who had been driven out of Germany in 1936, had eventually immigrated to the United States, and had been appointed to a position at Heidelberg University in 1952. With the help of numerous boldly interspersed Latin quotes from Christian authorities, as well as those of late antiquity and medieval times, Brunner demonstrated to his audience the full scope of his knowledge of the treasures of Western culture. He ended his lecture with the following conclusion: “Historical thought is European in its origins, a Western achievement.”¹¹²

In somewhat coded terms Brunner also indicated to his audience at the end of his lecture the way he wished his own “historical thought” during the Nazi era to be evaluated. He did this by citing, in addition to Löwith, the educator Theodor Litt, another person of great moral stature and a man no less prominent in the early years of the FRG as an opponent of the Third Reich.¹¹³ “We are confronted with the ‘leading and misleading paths of historical thought,’” said Brunner, quoting Litt, “but sometimes we must travel to the end of an erroneous path in order to recognize it as such, before we find the

right one. What this requires is a scholarly mindset that is conscious of its own limitations.”¹¹⁴ Yet we may justifiably doubt whether, nine years after the war had ended, Brunner was truly conscious of the erroneous path that he himself had traveled, in full confidence of its validity, between 1933 and 1945. He does not appear to have succeeded, not even within the framework of a single academic speech, to free himself from those earlier spirits to which he had clung for so long: “There does indeed exist that ‘spirit’ of the world, of humanity, of time, of the peoples, and their ‘bodies’ also exist: society, classes, races, the peoples’ bodies. However, what has become highly controversial is their relationship to one another.”¹¹⁵ Litt had placed great emphasis on the general “idea of a person’s responsibility toward history and life, particularly in terms of revising the German conception of history.”¹¹⁶ Whereas Brunner quoted Litt repeatedly, he himself had quite obviously evaded this responsibility. Brunner was far from being conscious of his own guilt and the guilt of the German people, something that quite obviously tormented Litt. Brunner’s unflinching adherence to ideas already developed under National Socialism is also manifested in his concept of the *Ganzes Haus* (whole household), headed ideally by a “noble lord of the household.”¹¹⁷ Brunner emphasized what in his view was the markedly anti-economic orientation and binding character of his *Ganzes Haus* model, which he took for granted for an *Alteuropa* stretching from Greek antiquity to the Enlightenment. Nowadays historians regard this model, in particular, as an unrealistic and romanticized social utopia with a decidedly male perspective.¹¹⁸ The same must be said for his much-lauded but little-read work *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist* (“Noble Rural Life and the European Spirit”),¹¹⁹ written during his forced retirement after the war and published in 1949. The truly notable aspect of Brunner’s depiction is that in 1949, four years after the end of the war, he believed himself to be mired in what he called the “present-day intellectual crisis,”¹²⁰ which he linked not to the collapse of the Third Reich but rather to the continuing failure to overcome the collapse of *Alteuropa*: “This new world has not yet managed to create enduring forms of human coexistence and an intellectual life befitting such a world.”¹²¹ Reading between the lines, we repeatedly find evidence of Brunner’s regret that National Socialism failed in its attempt, which he had so emphatically supported, to revive *alteuropäisch* “forms of human coexistence” and “an intellectual life befitting such a world” in a modified form. For Brunner, the *alteuropäisch* society culminated in the emergence of “masterful men, breeders of large livestock who, in the process of successfully taming and thus subjugating large, superior animals, developed a lordly attitude and a stronger rationality” that enabled them “to impose” their lordship over

“primitive, land-cultivating (hoe-farming) peoples with a matriarchal social structure and a magical-animistic mentality.” The characteristically *völkisch* agrarian romanticism¹²² he expressed here is based on ideas that originated in the nineteenth century and were adopted, developed further, and misused by National Socialism in propaganda and legislation.¹²³

The popularity of *Land and Lordship* in particular, Brunner’s most important work, continued after 1945. The first German edition had appeared in 1939, followed soon afterward by two further editions in 1942 and 1943. After the war, the book was published in a fourth and a fifth edition in 1959 and 1963, respectively. The latest reprint appeared in 1990, and the book is still lauded as a standard work of historiography.¹²⁴ This assessment again supports the hypothesis of the continuity of interpretive models and key ideas beyond 1945.¹²⁵ Like his academic ally Werner Conze,¹²⁶ Brunner merely “adapted [his] thought style.”¹²⁷ First, the subtitle of his book underwent a metamorphosis. The politically laden term “Southeast Germany,” which was automatically understood during the Nazi era as meaning the *Ostmark* as well as *Baiern* (Bavaria), mutated into “Austria.”¹²⁸ In several other instances Brunner replaced terms that had become problematic with unsuspecting-sounding ones: instead of *Völksgeschichte* (People’s History), Brunner now spoke of “structural history.”¹²⁹ Also to be seen in this context is his abandonment of what he subtly termed “outdated” literature, albeit without explaining to the reader why this literature was outdated. There was no fundamental change in the ideological substance of his remarks in *Land and Lordship* in the first postwar edition, in 1959. Therefore, one reviewer was disappointed, wishing that Brunner “had not aligned himself so unilaterally with the dangerously suspect Carl Schmitt.”¹³⁰ The outline and organization of the book remained the same, except for a “more expansive conclusion” and the inclusion of more recent literature. This led the same reviewer to note, “It may be a moot question whether the friends and users of this almost ‘classic’ book are truly well served; I personally would have preferred the unrevised republication, perhaps augmented by supplements that were identified as such.”¹³¹

The fact that Brunner’s views were basically unchanged is manifest especially in his interpretation of medieval violence in the form of war and feud, to which he held steadfast even after the war. Characteristically, Brunner explained such violence as a socially recognized legal remedy. Such a view was a deliberate challenge to the traditional constitutional and legal historiography of liberal historians and legal scholars that dominated the field until the 1930s. The overwhelming majority of these scholars had stigmatized the feud as the rule of brute force.¹³² But Brunner’s attempt to rehabilitate autonomous

force in *Land and Lordship* was in keeping with a *Denkstil* that had been cultivated since the mid-1920s by right-wing conservative intellectuals strongly influenced by Nazism, among them the majority of German constitutional scholars.¹³³ Well suited to this way of thinking was Brunner's view that, in the Middle Ages, it was accepted practice to literally engage in violence in pursuit of one's rights.¹³⁴ Therefore, at the end of his famous chapter on the feud, Brunner adopted an ironic tone to distance himself from conventional liberal concepts of law and, citing Heinrich von Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas*, he interpreted the use of the "law of the fist" as "one of the strongest moral impulses of all social life, the individual's sense of right."¹³⁵ This line of argument should also be seen in the context of a surge in Kleist's popularity in the German-speaking world as of 1933, with Michael Kohlhaas depicted as a symbol of the well-behaved German and the entire German people as Michael Kohlhaas.¹³⁶

Such a denigration of the liberal constitutional state and its legal procedures continued to be attractive, at least to some degree, among non-lawyers even after the end of the Second World War. In the eyes of people without legal training, a barely comprehensible, out of touch, and increasingly complicated legal system still appeared to be in the hands of legal experts who supported the system, meaning the liberal constitutional state. Yet this system was traditionally and fundamentally distrusted on both the right and the left. To this perception, Brunner and others counterposed an idealized medieval model emphasizing simple and clear—because seemingly "orderly"¹³⁷—binary structures, such as "the ruler and the ruled" (*Herrscher und Beherrschte*), "obedience and loyalty" (*Gehorsam und Treue*), "protection and safeguard" (*Schutz und Schirm*), "the seigneur and the vassal" (*Grundherr und Grundholde*), "household and kin group" (*Haus und Sippe*), and "friend and foe" (*Freund und Feind*). Brunner's rehabilitation of medieval violence in particular was repeatedly embraced by parts of a younger generation of medieval historians, starting at the end of the 1980s.¹³⁸ By its very nature, the historical context in which *Land and Lordship* was written interested this generation only marginally or not at all. These young historians did not seek to "excoriate their academic mentors."¹³⁹ All the more eagerly, however, they seized upon Brunner's concept of the feud. His interpretation legitimized the use of force because, according to him, it was subject to strict rules and thus remained fundamentally contained and limited. Medieval violence did not seem to have exhibited the disconcerting aspects that characterized modern violence, particularly in the age of extremes. These aspects included excessiveness and totality. Thus, Brunner and his followers presented a fundamentally "different" Middle Ages, in sharp contrast to a present-day world that many viewed critically.¹⁴⁰ From this perspective, the medieval world

emerged as a positive foil, seemingly not afflicted by precisely those defects for which modernity was and still is held responsible.

His idea of a fundamental dissimilarity between the Middle Ages and the modern era put Brunner in perfect agreement with a contemporary *Denkstil*, one that was adopted by many experts, not only in the field of medieval history but also in other disciplines of medieval studies. For example, Hans Robert Jauß, a leading scholar of medieval French literature and perhaps the best-known representative of the Poetics and Hermeneutics research group in Constance, coined the catchphrase about the “alterity” of the Middle Ages, a term still in frequent use today.¹⁴¹

Also associated with *Land and Lordship* is the firm rejection of a concept of “the state” with respect to the medieval period.¹⁴² Brunner considered this absence a key indicator of the period’s otherness. Specifically, his argument that the feud was accepted by society made it nearly imperative to emphasize an absence of any medieval statehood. The contention that a person was allowed to take the law into his own hands in pursuit of his rights implies the non-existence of a state or state-like structures. Every state, even a very rudimentarily developed medieval one, would find itself fundamentally undermined or at least challenged by the autonomous use of force. The fact that more or less successful attempts to delegitimize the feud were initiated very early in the Middle Ages raises serious doubts about the acceptance of the feud within society,¹⁴³ a theory made popular by Brunner, and might indicate that medieval statehood was at least gradually developing. His adamant denial of any form of statehood might again be due to his overall *Denkstil*, which was characteristic of a specific point in history, as *völkisch* thought never tired of asserting the primacy of the *Volk* and all things *völkisch* over the state and all that pertained to it. Harold Steinacker, Brunner’s like-minded colleague from Innsbruck, put it this way: “History is not about states, it is about peoples. ‘In a word, *Volk* is above *Staat*. That is our basic law.” As Renate Spreitzer explains, “Steinacker in general held the opinion that ‘*Volk* is everything, the individual is nothing; the tribes and estates and classes, the religious denominations, political parties, dynasties, states are nothing next to the *Volk*; the *Volk* is the end and the beginning of everything.’”¹⁴⁴

In the meantime, more than 30 years since Brunner’s death, a new generation of historians has emerged who critically question the seemingly irrefutable truths and insights linked to his name. The popularity of the term “feud” has declined noticeably in the academic disciplines, perhaps also because Brunner’s ties to a specific time have become problematic for many. It has been replaced by the distinctly broader, more neutral-sounding “conflict,” a term

that is almost ubiquitous in research, and a category under which considerably more can be subsumed than under “feud.” Furthermore, the author of a recently published study, Florian Dirks, stated somberly “that at present, there is little consensus in research about what is understood by the term ‘feud.’ While this may appear confusing and complex, on the one hand, it is due, on the other hand, to terminology found in the sources that is itself not exactly clear.”¹⁴⁵

However, the alternative interpretation put forth by Gadi Algazi was by no means received wholeheartedly. Distancing himself firmly from Brunner, Algazi interpreted the feud as an instrument used by the nobility to enforce social discipline and thereby to assert its absolute claim to lordship over the peasant classes.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, a middle course was suggested, with feuds to be understood first and foremost as “social practices” that took place in the “public sphere of politics” and did indeed leave actors with some options, as indicated especially by the quite divergent courses of various conflicts. In this interpretation, which of the options the actors eventually chose—be it exclusively the use of force or reliance on the mediating services of a third party—was dependent on “the perceptual horizon of the public-social space.” And, one should add, it might have also depended on how well a potential feuding party was equipped to use force. Hence this approach, whereby we “understand the feud first as a singular conflict with its own intrinsic logic,” offers us an opportunity to “check” the “leveling effect of macro-historical explanatory approaches.”¹⁴⁷

As part of the revision of Brunner’s feud concept in recent scholarship, it is not surprising that even the question of the medieval state, an issue previously considered anachronistic, can now be posed again.¹⁴⁸ A more careful view has also been adopted with regard to the differentiation between public and private, a distinction expressly labeled anachronistic by Brunner but now deemed acceptable,¹⁴⁹ if only in the form of a “controlled anachronism.”¹⁵⁰ Recently, Jörg Feuchter severely criticized Brunner, calling his argument a typical “apodictic assessment” by the “master medievalist,” for which Brunner had not provided sufficient proof and which has led to a veritable “thought barrier” due to its acceptance and explicit confirmation by the “master philosopher” Jürgen Habermas. Both of these men shared a view of the Middle Ages steeped in alterity, albeit in opposite ways.¹⁵¹

Objections have also been raised to an overly harmonizing interpretation of the warlike violence of the medieval period, which Brunner had significantly facilitated by equating war with the feud. A closer look, however, reveals this understanding as a special path taken by German medievalists. Committed to a relativistic constructivism, they clearly underestimate the reality and the extent

of violence in belligerent conflicts, the majority of which were conducted in anything but a chivalrous manner.¹⁵² As early as 1987, at a conference in Trent, Italy, considerable doubts were expressed about the soundness of Brunner's depiction of the Middle Ages and the early modern period,¹⁵³ and doubts as to the validity of his interpretations have continued to increase to this day. The harshest criticism leveled against Brunner recently has come from Peter Moraw, one of the most prominent German medieval historians:

From today's perspective, one can rightly call the selection of his sources manipulated and one-sided—especially when compared with the wide-ranging claim to validity of the assertions. One can also speak of the subjugation of the diversity of the realities, of time and space, to pre-conceived time-bound opinions that more likely can lay claim only to selective validity. [. . .] Generalizing, one can describe the access to the medieval past in those days, characterized by a preselection and conceptual pre-sorting of the material that is hardly conceivable today, as being enormously specific to its time, harmonizing, and conforming. [. . .] This applied especially to Brunner's concentration on the feud as a central, "regulative" concept of the Middle Ages rather than as means that can be understood in various ways as working to the advantage of the strongest, be they one or many.¹⁵⁴

The very harsh accusations that Brunner leveled against the "liberalistic" legal and constitutional historians whom he so thoroughly despised—namely, that they were obviously linked to specific times and values, specifically to the culture of the middle classes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—were also applicable to him, probably to an even greater degree. He was conspicuously tied to particular times and values, in his case to *völkisch*-national categories. He remained fully committed to these not only as a young or relatively young man and scholar in the 1930s and 1940s but throughout his entire life. If the notion that Germany experienced a "zero hour" when the Third Reich collapsed has now become definitively obsolete, this notion concerns also some parts of German historiography after 1945, particularly the writings of Otto Brunner.

Notes

1. This contribution is a considerably shortened version of my original publication "Gut durch die Zeiten gekommen: Otto Brunner und der Nationalsozialismus" in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 66, no. 1 (January 2018): 117–60.

2. Brunner could “not return to the University of Vienna [. . .] despite the relatively favorable judgment handed down by the special commissions.” On Brunner’s denazification procedure, see Roman Pfefferle and Hans Pfefferle, *Glimpflich entnazifiziert: Die Professorenschaft der Universität Wien von 1944 in den Nachkriegsjahren* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2014), 150–52, here 151.

3. Alfons Söllner, *Deutsche Politikwissenschaftler in der Emigration: Studien zu ihrer Akkulturation und Wirkungsgeschichte* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996), 98: “Carl Schmitt is the ‘crown jurist of the Third Reich’—this equation by his earlier friend Waldemar Gurian in 1934 provides the definitive cue. And it would remain the main leitmotiv of emigrant literature into the 1940s.”

4. In a letter to Carl Schmitt dated September 2, 1950, Brunner wrote, “With family, apartment, and books, I got through those times well; however, I have been forced to retire and now have to figure out how I can get by modestly.” Rheinisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf (hereafter: HStA Düsseldorf), Nachlass (personal papers) Carl Schmitt, RW 265–2112.

5. See Eduard Mühle, *Für Volk und deutschen Osten: Der Historiker Hermann Aubin und die deutsche Ostforschung* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2005).

6. The relevant presentations at the German Historians’ Convention and other papers dealing with this topic are collected in a volume by Winfried Schulze and Otto Gerhard Oexle, eds., *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1999). See also Ingo Haar, *Historiker im Nationalsozialismus: Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft und der “Volkstumskampf” im Osten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); Anne Christine Nagel, *Im Schatten des Dritten Reichs: Mittelalterforschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945–1970* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).

7. On the historical profession, see Frank-Rutger Hausmann, “*Deutsche Geisteswissenschaft*” im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Die “Aktion Ritterbusch” (1940–1945), 3rd. ed. (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2007), 177–203. See also Hartmut Lehmann and Otto Gerhard Oexle, eds., *Nationalsozialismus in den Kulturwissenschaften*, vol. 1: *Fächer, Milieus, Karrieren*; vol. 2: *Leitbegriffe, Deutungsmuster, Paradigmenkämpfe: Erfahrungen und Transformationen im Exil* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

8. For a more detailed account, see Jens Thiel, “Nutzen und Grenzen des Generationenbegriffs für die Wissenschaftsgeschichte: Das Beispiel der ‘unabkömmlichen’ Geisteswissenschaftler am Ende des Dritten Reiches,” in Matthias Middell, Ulrike Thoms and Frank Uekötter, eds., *Verräumlichung, Vergleich, Generationalität: Dimensionen der Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Leipzig: Akademische Verlagsanstalt, 2004), 111–32, here 111–18; Nagel, *Schatten*, 13–16.

9. In this context it has been referred to, among other things, as “a widespread cult of masculinity, toughness, uncompromisingness and objectivity”: Patrick Krassnitzer, “Existieren generationelle Stile in den Bevölkerungswissenschaften? Ein Werkstattbericht,” in Middell, Thoms and Uekötter, eds., *Verräumlichung*, 95–110, here 105–6.

10. Ulrich Herbert, *Best: Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft, 1903–1989* (Bonn: Dietz, 1996), 43.

11. For this analytical concept, associated with the name Ludwik Fleck, see Thomas Etzemüller, “Kontinuität und Adaption eines Denkstils: Werner Conzes intellektueller

Übertritt in die Nachkriegszeit,” in Bernd Weisbrod, ed., *Akademische Vergangenheitspolitik: Beiträge zur Wissenschaftskultur der Nachkriegszeit* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002), 123–46, here 125–26. Lutz Raphael also refers to “Ludwik Fleck’s concept of *Denkstil* in the sociology of knowledge” in his contribution “‘Ordnung’ zwischen Geist und Rasse: Kulturwissenschaftliche Ordnungssemantik im Nationalsozialismus,” in Lehmann and Oexle, eds., *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 2, 115–37, here 118.

12. See Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, 8 vols. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972–97).

13. See Gadi Algazi, *Herrengewalt und Gewalt der Herren im späten Mittelalter: Herrschaft, Gegenseitigkeit und Sprachgebrauch* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 1996); idem, “Otto Brunner: ‘Konkrete Ordnung’ und Sprache der Zeit,” in Peter Schöttler, ed., *Geschichtsschreibung als Legitimationswissenschaft 1918–1945* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1997), 166–203.

14. Otto Gerhard Oexle, “Leitbegriffe—Deutungsmuster—Paradigmenkämpfe: Über Vorstellungen vom ‘Neuen Europa’ in Deutschland 1944,” in Lehmann and Oexle, *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 2, 13–40, here 40; Nagel, *Schatten*, 19.

15. The following are some, but far from all, of the obituaries written on the occasion of Brunner’s death: Erwin Auer, “Univ.-Professor Otto Brunner,” *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* 37, no. 1 (1982): 178–79; Peter Blickle, “Otto Brunner (1898–1982),” *Historische Zeitschrift* 236, no. 1 (December 1983): 779–81; Ludwig Buisson, “Das wissenschaftliche Werk,” in *Zum Gedenken an Otto Brunner 1898–1982: Ansprachen auf der Akademischen Gedenkfeier am 1. Dezember 1982* (Hamburg: Pressestelle der Universität, 1983), 13–32; Werner Conze, “Nachruf Otto Brunner (1898–1982),” *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 69, no. 3 (July 1982): 452–53; Adam Wandruszka, “Otto Brunner,” *Almanach der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften für das Jahr 1982* 132 (1983): 387–97; Otto Friedrich Winter, “Nachruf: In Memoriam Otto Brunner,” *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 36 (1983): 557–63; Harald Zimmermann, “Nachrufe Otto Brunner,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 39 (1983): 352–53; Erich Zöllner, “Nachruf Otto Brunner,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 90, no. 3–4 (December 1982): 519–22.

16. This is certainly not surprising in the case of Werner Conze, one of Brunner’s closest ideological allies after the Second World War. Conze himself was also involved in *Völkstumsarbeit*; see Conze, “Nachruf.”

17. This is the wording used by Prof. Dr. Jürgen Deininger, speaking on behalf of the History Faculty at the University of Hamburg, in his opening remarks as published in *Zum Gedenken an Otto Brunner*, 9–11, here 9. Just as euphoric in his assessment was Hans-Werner Goetz, “Geschichtswissenschaft in Hamburg im ‘Dritten Reich,’” in Rainer Nicolaysen and Axel Schildt, eds., *100 Jahre Geschichtswissenschaft in Hamburg* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2011), 103–60, here 155–57.

18. See Thomas Krzenek, “Brünn/Brno,” in *Online-Lexikon zur Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa*, 2013, accessed November 12, 2019, ome-lexikon.uni-oldenburg.de/54186.html.

19. See *Jahresbericht des Ersten Deutschen Staatsgymnasiums in Brünn für das Schul-*

jahr 1908/09 (Brno 1909), 58–59, accessed November 12, 2019, digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/ulbdsp/periodical/titleinfo/3785086.

20. On “the bitter end” of the war, see Anton Sichelstiel, *Das k.k. Schützenregiment St. Pölten Nr. 21: Seine Friedens- und Kriegsgeschichte* (Vienna: Einundzwanziger-Schützen- und Landsturmbund, 1930), here 245–47. In this context the author’s remarks (243) on the ethnic composition of the regiment in the summer of 1918 are notable: “It is also interesting that at the time the regiment consisted of the following nationalities: German-Austrians 64 percent, Czechs 6 percent, Poles 13 percent, Slovenes 8 percent, Ruthenians 9 percent. It must be said that all fought bravely.”

21. Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Archiv der Republik, UWFuK, BMU, PA, Sign. 10 Brunner, Otto (Personalakte), “Schreiben Kurator der wiss. Hochschulen in Wien an den Rektor der Universität Wien, 30.9.1940.”

22. See Otto Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft: Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Südostdeutschlands im Mittelalter*, 2nd expanded ed. (Brünn, Munich, and Vienna: Rohrer, 1942), xxiv.

23. Archiv der Universität Wien (hereafter: UAW), Dekanat der Philosophischen Fakultät, D.-Zl. 136.

24. Mitchell G. Ash, “Die Universität Wien in den politischen Umbrüchen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts,” in idem and Josef Ehmer, eds., *Universität, Politik, Gesellschaft* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2015), 29–172, here 60–89, quote on 89.

25. See Stefan Lenk, “Chancen sozialer Mobilität an der Universität Wien im 20. Jahrhundert: Brüche und Kontinuitäten bei der sozialen Herkunft der Studierenden,” in *ibid.*, 565–618, here 573–76.

26. Dr. Stephanie Brunner, born Staudinger, Brunner’s wife since February 24, 1927, had also studied history and geography and, like her husband, came from a university-educated civil service milieu. Her father, Dr. Friedrich F. A. Staudinger (died 1905), had been a *Staatsanwalt Substitut* (deputy state prosecutor): UAW, Philosophische Fakultät, Oesterr. Institut für Geschichtsforschung, Personalblatt, “Anzeige über Verheiratung, 30.8.1938.” She thus fit the sociographic profile of the first generations of women students at the University of Vienna. See Waltraud Heindl, “Bildung und Emanzipation: Studentinnen an der Universität Wien,” in Ash and Ehmer, eds., *Universität*, 529–63.

27. See Klaus Taschwer, “Nachrichten von der antisemitischen Kampfzone: Die Universität Wien im Spiegel und unter dem Einfluss der Tageszeitungen, 1920–1933,” in Margarete Grandner and Thomas König, eds., *Reichweiten und Außensichten: Die Universität Wien als Schnittstelle wissenschaftlicher Entwicklungen und gesellschaftlicher Umbrüche* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2015), 99–126, here 108. On antisemitism in academic circles, see the summary by Klaus Taschwer, *Hochburg des Antisemitismus: Der Niedergang der Universität Wien im 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Czernin Verlag, 2015).

28. Idem, “Nachrichten,” in Grandner and König, eds., *Reichweiten*, 110.

29. This was true for Brunner’s doctoral advisor, Oswald Redlich (1858–1944), who held the medieval history chair from 1897 to 1934, had been rector of the University of Vienna in 1911/12, and served as president of the Austrian Academy of Sciences from 1918 to 1938. Another of Brunner’s teachers was Alfons Dopsch (1868–1953), professor of economic and

cultural history. He had been appointed to a full professorship in 1900 and was forced into retirement in 1936.

30. See Wandruszka, "Otto Brunner," 388; Zöllner, "Nachruf Otto Brunner," 519.

31. Tamara Ehs, "Gesellschaftswissenschaft. 2. Othmar Spann," in Thomas Olechowski, Tamara Ehs and Kamila Staudigl-Ciechowicz, *Die Wiener Rechts- und Staatswissenschaftliche Fakultät 1918–1938* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2014), 581–90, here 585. The first to draw attention to the influence that Othmar Spann had on Brunner was Robert Jütte, "Zwischen Ständestaat und Austrofaschismus: Der Beitrag Otto Brunners zur Geschichtsschreibung," *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte* 13 (1984): 237–62, here 244–55, 261–62.

32. The self-designation as "instituters" is found, for example, in Theodor Mayer, "Probleme der österreichischen Geschichtswissenschaft," in *Alteuropa und die moderne Gesellschaft: Festschrift für Otto Brunner*, ed. by Historisches Seminar der Universität Hamburg (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 346–63, here 363.

33. Gernot Heiss, "Die 'Wiener Schule der Geschichtswissenschaft' im Nationalsozialismus: 'Harmonie kämpfender und Rankescher erkennender Wissenschaft'?", in Mitchell G. Ash, Wolfram Nieß, and Ramon Pils, eds., *Geisteswissenschaften im Nationalsozialismus: Das Beispiel der Universität Wien* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2010), 397–426, here 401. This is about the so-called "Trifolium," consisting of Hans Hirsch, Heinrich von Srbik, and Wilhelm Bauer.

34. See Manfred Stoy, *Das Österreichische Institut für Geschichtsforschung 1929–1945* (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 28–30.

35. See *ibid.*, 46, footnote 11.

36. See *ibid.*

37. See Otto Brunner, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Fehdewesens im spätmittelalterlichen Österreich," *Jahrbuch für Landeskunde von Niederösterreich* 22, no. 4 (1929): 431–507. On this, see Hans-Henning Kortüm, "Mittelalterliche Verfassungsgeschichte im Bann der Rechtsgeschichte zwischen den Kriegen: Heinrich Mitteis und Otto Brunner," in Jürgen Dendorfer and Roman Deutinger, eds., *Das Lehnswesen im Hochmittelalter: Forschungskonstrukte, Quellenbefunde, Deutungsrelevanz* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2010), 57–77; Hans-Henning Kortüm, "'Wissenschaft im Doppelpaß'? Carl Schmitt, Otto Brunner und die Konstruktion der Fehde," *Historische Zeitschrift* 282, no. 1 (December 2006): 585–617.

38. Otto Brunner, "Nachruf Hans Hirsch," *Historische Zeitschrift* 163, no. 1 (December 1941): 447–49, here 448–49.

39. See the summary, with citations to the older literature, in Petra Svatek, "'Wien als Tor nach dem Südosten': Der Beitrag Wiener Geisteswissenschaftler zur Erforschung Südosteuropas während des Nationalsozialismus," in Ash, Nieß and Pils, eds., *Geisteswissenschaften*, 111–39. On Hirsch's involvement in particular, see also Heiss, "Wiener Schule," in *ibid.*, 412–14.

40. On this, see the table in Michael Fahlbusch, *Wissenschaft im Dienst der nationalsozialistischen Politik? Die "Volksdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaften" von 1931–1945* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 1999), 278.

41. Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter: BArch), R 153/1533, fols. 3–5; R 153/1487, fols. 5–9; R 153/1488, fols. 46–48, fols. 71–72.
42. All quotes are found in Otto Brunner, “Das Burgenland,” in Friedrich Heiss and Arnold Hillen Ziegfeld, eds., *Bekennnis zu Österreich* (Berlin: Volk und Reich Verlag, 1932), 40–46.
43. BArch, R 73/1944.
44. Otto Brunner, “Die geschichtliche Stellung des Waldviertels,” in Eduard Stepan, ed., *Das Waldviertel*, vol. 7: *Geschichte* (Vienna: Verlag Dr. Eduard Stepan, 1937), 368–431, here 378.
45. Otto Brunner, “Die Ostmark Europas,” *Bücherkunde* 5, no. 9 (September 1938): 466–68. This journal was the organ of the Office for the Cultivation of Literature at the Plenipotentiary of the Führer for the entire intellectual and ideological training of the Nazi Party and the Reich Office for Promotion of German Literature.
46. Otto Brunner, “Österreichs Weg zum Großdeutschen Reich,” *Deutsches Archiv für Landes- und Volksforschung* 2, no. 2 (May 1938): 519–28, quotations on 519 and 526.
47. Otto Brunner, “Das österreichische Institut für Geschichtsforschung und seine Stellung in der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft,” *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Instituts für Geschichtsforschung* 52, no. 2/3 (March 1938): 385–416, here 415–16.
48. Gernot Heiss, “Von Österreichs deutscher Vergangenheit und Aufgabe: Die Wiener Schule der Geschichtswissenschaft und der Nationalsozialismus,” in Gernot Heiss et al., eds., *Willfähige Wissenschaft: Die Universität Wien 1938–1945* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1989), 39–76, here 49. However, influenced by more recent research, Heiss later leveled a far more critical assessment of Brunner; see idem, “Wiener Schule.” in Ash, Nieß and Pils, eds., *Geisteswissenschaften*.
49. Cited in Michael Wildt, “Eine neue Ordnung der ethnographischen Verhältnisse’: Hitlers Reichstagsrede vom 6. Oktober 1939,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 3, no. 1 (2006): 129–37, here 133.
50. Otto Brunner, “Südostdeutsche Leistungen und Schicksale,” *Die deutsche Schule* 46, no. 1 (January 1942): 74–79, here 77–79. For the historical background of the period, see Wildt, “Ordnung.”
51. See Ulrich Crämer, “Der 19. Deutsche Historikertag in Erfurt vom 5.–7. Juli 1937,” *Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* 27, no. 7/8 (July 1937): 345–69, here 357; Otto Brunner, “Politik und Wirtschaft in den deutschen Territorien des Mittelalters,” *Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* 27, no. 7/8 (July 1937): 404–22: “We are experiencing a scientific process in which the fundamental concepts of political science are being subjected to a far-reaching transformation in the broadest sense. In the face of a new reality, the concepts of a time which claimed that its fundamental categories could measure every historical reality are dissipating before our eyes” (421), and “What is occurring today is a revision of the fundamental concepts. It is an unacceptable state of affairs when concepts originating from a dead reality still determine the essential standards and questions for a time whose internal structure is thoroughly different. The demand cannot be worded too radically. [...] Nothing is more dangerous than the delusion that one can adopt the entire inherited store of knowledge and concepts essentially unchanged” (422). See further Kortüm, “Wissenschaft im Doppelpaß,” 593, footnote 35.

52. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (hereafter: PA/AA), R 60280, Abt. Kult. A 5428/38, Berlin, July 21, 1938.

53. This was actually a four-course, early afternoon meal, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: PA/AA, R 60280.

54. Ibid.

55. PA/AA, R 60283, Abt. Kult. A 1466, and Abt. Kult. A 1589, "Schreiben Brunners an die 'Kulturpolitische Abteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes z.Hd. v. Herrn Ministerialdirektor Dr. Stieve,' 25.4.1939."

56. PA/AA, R 60295, "Volksdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften Tätigkeitsberichte 1938/39. Einleitungsreferat von Professor Dr. O. Brunner—Wien: Die veränderte politische Lage und ihre Auswirkungen auf die volksdeutsche Forschungsarbeit."

57. Michael Fahlbusch, "Südostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft," in Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch, eds., *Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften: Personen, Institutionen, Forschungsprogramme, Stiftungen* (Munich: Saur, 2008), 688–97, here 695.

58. Quoted from *ibid.*, 694–95.

59. See Hans Böhm, "Magie eines Konstruktes: Anmerkungen zu M. Fahlbusch 'Wissenschaft im Dienst der nationalsozialistischen Politik?'" *Geographische Zeitschrift* 88, no. 3/4 (2000): 177–96.

60. This is the assessment of Matthias Berg, *Karl Alexander von Müller: Historiker für den Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 453–62, here 459; on the exhibition, see 316–18.

61. BArchB, NS 15/72, "Hausrundschreiben Nr. 93/44 des Abschnittsleiters Zöllfel 'An alle Politischen Leiter,' 21.11.1944."

62. BArchB, R 4901, fol. 205, "Schreiben des Präsidenten der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften an den Herrn Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, Berlin, 11.12.1940." Additional suggestions were presented by the president of the *Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands*, Walter Frank; the president of the *Reichsinstitut für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*), Edmund Stengel; the president of the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Heinrich Ritter von Srbik; the rector of the University of Marburg, Theodor Mayer; Professor Erich Botzenhart, who was a professor from 1939 to 1945 at the University of Göttingen and became the successor of the ousted Walter Frank in 1943; and Prof. Wilhelm Schüssler from the Historisches Seminar of Berlin's Friedrich Wilhelm University: BArchB, R 4901, fols. 206–14.

63. BArchB, R 4901, fols. 215–16, here fol. 215, "Referentenentwurf, 15.1.1941." On the largely unresearched history of awarding the Verdun Prize, see Katharina Weigand, "Geschichtsschreibung zwischen Wissenschaft und nationaler Vereinnahmung: Der Verdun-Preis," in Katharina Weigand, Jörg Zedler and Florian Schuller, eds., *Die Prinzregentzeit: Abenddämmerung der bayerischen Monarchie?* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2013), 105–27.

64. See *ibid.*, 118, 127, footnote 109.

65. BArchB, R 4901, fol. 225.

66. BArchB, NS 15/326.

67. BArchB, NS 15/20, fols. 1–19, “Schreiben des Zentralamts des Amts Rosenberg an den Leiter der Partei-Kanzlei Martin Bormann, 15. 8. 1944”; quotation on fol. 12.

68. For more detail on this, see Renate Spreitzer, “Harold Steinacker (1875–1965): Ein Leben für ‘Volk und Geschichte,’” in Karel Hruza, ed., *Österreichische Historiker 1900–1945: Lebensläufe und Karrieren in Österreich, Deutschland und der Tschechoslowakei in wissenschaftsgeschichtlichen Porträts*, vol. 1 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2008), 191–223, here 203–4, 218–20.

69. BArchB, NS 15/326, fol. 95682.

70. BArchB, NS 15/326, fol. 95675, “Undatierter Entwurf Steinackers ‘Zum Thema des Lagers.’”

71. BArchB, NS 15/326, fols. 6, 13, “Bericht über das Historiker-Lager der Reichsdozentenführung (7.–10.10.42 in Augsburg) von Dr. Wolfgang Erxleben, Hauptamt Wissenschaft. Amt für Wissenschaftsbeobachtung,’ 15.10.1942.”

72. BArchB, Pers 6/189048.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. UAW, Philosophische Fakultät, Oesterr. Institut für Geschichtsforschung. The personnel sheet (*Personalblatt*) filled out by Brunner on May 19, 1945, gives the date as July 1, 1938. The dates of May 1 and June 1, 1938, also appear in the letter from the party office as being the dates of Brunner’s applications for party membership: BArchB, Berlin Document Center, PK 10100244488.

76. BArchB, Berlin Document Center, PK 10100244488, “Kurt Knoll an den ‘Kreisleiter des Kreises VI der NSDAP,’ 10.12.1943.”

77. This becomes clear from the documents in the BArchB, Berlin Document Center, PK 10100244488.

78. On such trends toward disengaging and withdrawing from the party, see Hermann Hagspiel, *Die Ostmark: Österreich im Großdeutschen Reich 1938 bis 1945* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1995), 331–34.

79. Brunner’s letter had arrived at the dean’s office on May 19, 1944: UAW, Dekanat der Philosophischen Fakultät, D.-Zl.: 136.

80. BArchB, NS 8/241, fol. 116.

81. For details about these retrievals—particularly concerning the letter written by the head of the planning office at the *Reichsforschungsrat* to the Party Chancellery “with attached lists of the humanities scholars designated for retrieval,” dated May 30, 1944, that is, immediately before the renewal of Brunner’s UK status in June 1944—see Sören Flachowsky, *Von der Notgemeinschaft zum Reichsforschungsrat: Wissenschaftspolitik im Kontext von Autarkie, Aufrüstung und Krieg* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008), 444, footnote 684; Jens Thiel, “Akademische ‘Zinnsoldaten’? Karrieren deutscher Geisteswissenschaftler zwischen ‘Beruf’ und ‘Berufung’ (1933/1945),” in Rüdiger vom Bruch, Uta Gerhardt and Aleksandra Pawliczek, eds., *Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 167–94, here 191.

82. As stated by the head of the planning office at the Reich Research Council, Werner Osenberg, in a letter to the Party Chancellery, May 30, 1944: BArchB, R 26 III, no. 43, fol. 19.

83. BArchB, R 26 III, no. 43, fol. 20.

84. BArchB, R 26 III, no. 43, fol. 19.

85. Ibid.

86. In the words of SS *Standartenführer* Dr. Wilhelm Spengler on behalf of the Security Police and the Security Service (SD, *Sicherheitsdienst*) to Osenberg, August. 8, 1944: BArchB, R 26 III, no. 112, fol. 125.

87. PA/AA, R 100462/000074, "Schreiben des Geschäftsführers der Südostdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft, Dr. W. Krallert, an das Auswärtige Amt, 2.10.1944."

88. I am indebted to the courtesy and generosity of my Japanese colleague Prof. Dr. Akihiro Misagawa, Department of History, Occidental History Course, Tokai University (Tokyo), for a PDF document that contains the already page-numbered proofs, which Brunner called the *Probobogen*. According to Brunner, these were in his possession "in the fall" of 1944: UAW, Dekanat der Philosophischen Fakultät, Studienjahr 1945/46, Verwaltungsstelle für wissenschaftliche Hochschulen in Wien 4581/Z: "Undatierte Stellungnahme Brunners 'Zu dem Buch 'Der Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes' im Zusammenhang seines 1945 eingeleiteten Entnazifizierungsverfahrens."

89. Brunner, "Schicksalsweg," 5; in the following, the "Schicksalsweg" page reference is given in parentheses directly after each quote.

90. Ibid. (*Vorwort* – preface).

91. In 1986 the library of the University of Chuo acquired Brunner's private library and thereby also his personal papers, including his *Probobogen* (global.chuo-u.ac.jp/english/general/libraries/libraries03/, accessed November 13, 2019). "Schicksalsweg des deutschen Volkes" has been in Japan since then and was considered lost until now; see, e.g., Heiss, "Wiener Schule," in Ash, Nieß and Pils, eds., *Geisteswissenschaften*, 61; Stoy, *Österreichisches Institut*, 313: "However, a verification is not possible because there is no trace of any of these *Probobögen*."

92. Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit*, 34th ed. (Munich: Hoheneichen-Verlag, 1934), 399.

93. Cited by *Race and Race History: And Other Essays by Alfred Rosenberg*, ed. and introduced by Robert Pois, New York 1970, 47. On the historical background of the National Socialist teachings about an allegedly racial identity linking the Germanic world and Hellenism, which dates back to Adolf Hitler's argument from the early 1920s that all high cultures share Aryan origins, and on the history of the "scientific" elaboration of these teachings during the Nazi period, see Johann Chapoutot, *Der Nationalsozialismus und die Antike* (Darmstadt: Philipp von Zabern Verlag, 2014), here 46–49, 75–78 (on Rosenberg's influence in shaping the Nazi image of Greece).

94. UAW, Dekanat der Philosophischen Fakultät, Studienjahr 1945/46, Verwaltungsstelle für wissenschaftliche Hochschulen in Wien 4581/Z.

95. See Hans-Henning Kortüm, "Otto Brunner über Otto den Großen: Aus den letzten Tagen der reichsdeutschen Mediävistik," *Historische Zeitschrift* 299, no. 2 (October 2014): 297–333, here 315–17.

96. Ibid.

97. BArchB, NS 15/72, "Hausrundschreiben Nr. 93/44 des Abschnittsleiters Zölffel, 'An alle Politischen Leiter,' 21.11.1944."

98. On the historians giving lectures, see Kortüm, “Otto Brunner über Otto den Großen,” 319–24.

99. On the circumstances leading to Brunner’s Hamburg appointment, which had been preceded by a failed application in Cologne, see Thomas Etzemüller, *Sozialgeschichte als politische Geschichte: Werner Conze und die Neuorientierung der westdeutschen Geschichtswissenschaft nach 1945* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001), 243–44.

100. HStA, Nachlass (personal papers) Carl Schmitt, RW 265–2112, Letter, Brunner to Carl Schmitt, September 1, 1950. For more background on this, see Kortüm, “Wissenschaft im Doppelpaß,” 604, footnote 76.

101. Hamburgisches Staatsarchiv, Rektorakten, vol. VII 364–5 I, “Einbürgerungsurkunde, 3.5.1956.”

102. See Brunner, Conze and Koselleck, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*. Christof Dipper, “Die ‘Geschichtlichen Grundbegriffe’: Von der Begriffsgeschichte zur Theorie der historischen Zeiten,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 270, no. 1 (December 2000): 281–308, has suggested that Brunner wrote only a single lemma. But Reinhard Blänkner warns that there is a “questionable flipside to the current Koselleck-hype,” which results in “losing sight of Brunner’s contribution to ‘Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe.’” Blänkner appears convinced that “neither the ‘saddle period’ nor the encyclopedia ‘Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe’ is conceivable without Brunner’s *Alteuropa*”: idem, “Begriffsgeschichte in der Geschichtswissenschaft: Otto Brunner und die ‘Geschichtlichen Grundbegriffe,’” *Forum Interdisziplinäre Begriffsgeschichte* 1, no. 2 (E-Journal 2012): 102–8, here 106–7, accessed April 29, 2020, www.zfl-berlin.org/publication/forum-interdisziplinäre-begriffsgeschichte.238.html.

103. See Otto Brunner, *Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956); idem, *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte*, 2nd expanded ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968).

104. On Brunner’s important contribution to the coining of the term *Alteuropa*, see Christian Jaser, Ute Lotz-Heumann, and Matthias Pohlig, “Alteuropa, Vormoderne, Neue Zeit: Leistungen und Grenzen alternativer Periodisierungskonzepte für die europäische Geschichte,” in Christian Jaser, Ute Lotz-Heumann and Matthias Pohlig, eds., *Alteuropa, Vormoderne, Neue Zeit: Epochen und Dynamiken der europäischen Geschichte (1200–1800)* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2012), 9–24, here 12–14.

105. The quote was taken from an as yet unpublished lecture by Ulrich Herbert on the subject “Zum Wandel des ‘Europa’-Konzepts während des Nationalsozialismus,” given on March 14, 2001, at the Max Planck Institute for History in Göttingen. See also Oexle, “Leitbegriffe,” in Lehmann and Oexle, eds., *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 2, 17.

106. See *ibid.*

107. On the relevant concepts of Europe, see Vanessa Conze, *Das Europa der Deutschen: Ideen von Europa in Deutschland zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung (1920–1970)* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2005).

108. The quotation is from the speech of the foreign minister at the time, Heinrich von Brentano, who spoke in Augsburg’s Rosenau Stadium to “sixty thousand devout Catholic and Protestant Christians.” See the evidence provided by Axel Schildt, “Zur Hochkonjunk-

tur des 'christlichen Abendlandes' in der westdeutschen Geschichtsschreibung," in Ulrich Pfeil, ed., *Die Rückkehr der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft in die "Ökumene der Historiker": Ein wissenschaftsgeschichtlicher Ansatz* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2008), 49–70, here 52–53.

109. Otto Brunner, "Die alteuropäische 'Ökonomik,'" *Zeitschrift für Nationalökonomie* 13, no. 1 (August 1950): 114–39, here 122–23.

110. Rosenberg, *Mythus*, sections 51 ("Griechische' Demokratie") and 52 ("Griechenlands Untergang"), according to which the "psychic-racial decline of the Homeric Greeks" begins with the emergence of democracy, which is interpreted as "the domination of the Near East over the Greek tribes, [. . .] whose manpower and strengths were being rapidly dissipated." Plato serves as the witness of an alleged "longing for the heroic race's heroic men." Cited by *Race and Race History*, 52–53. For Brunner, "Schicksalsweg," 116–17, the heroic era also ends with "Plato immediately."

111. See Otto Brunner, "Abendländisches Geschichtsdenken (Hamburg 1954)," in idem, *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte*, 26–44.

112. *Ibid.*, 43.

113. See Schildt, "Hochkonjunktur," in Pfeil, ed., *Rückkehr*, 57–58.

114. Brunner, "Abendländisches Geschichtsdenken," in idem, *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte*, 43–44.

115. *Ibid.*, 39.

116. Walther Hofer, "Wege und Irrwege geschichtlichen Denkens," in *Schweizer Monatshefte* 30 (April 1950–March 1951): 238–45, here 240.

117. Brunner, "Alteuropäische 'Ökonomik,'" 122–23.

118. On the debate, see Valentin Groebner, "Außer Haus: Otto Brunner und die 'alteuropäische Ökonomik,'" *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 46, no. 1 (January 1995): 69–80; Claudia Opitz, "Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte? Ein kritischer Blick auf Otto Brunners Konzept des 'ganzen Hauses,'" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 20 (1994): 88–98.

119. See Otto Brunner, *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist: Leben und Werk Wolf Helmhards von Hobbeg 1612–1688* (Salzburg: Müller, 1949).

120. *Ibid.*, 339.

121. *Ibid.*

122. See Brunner's reflections on the *Reiter* (horseman) and *Ritter* (knight) as "the prototype of the noble man" (247).

123. See Andreas Dornheim, *Rasse, Raum und Autarkie: Sachverständigen Gutachten zur Rolle des Reichsministeriums für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft in der NS-Zeit* (Bamberg: 2011), 51–55, accessed November 3, 2020, https://www.bmel.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/_Ministerium/Geschichte/sachverstaendigenrat-zur-rolle-ns-zeit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3.

124. Karl Brunner has recommended it as a "work on constitutional history" that sets "standards" and has become a "classic": idem, *Kleine Kulturgeschichte des Mittelalters* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2012), 248. Christine Reinle has also expressed her unreservedly positive assessment of Brunner's concept of the feud in her article "Fehde" in Albrecht Cordes et al., eds., *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, vol. 1, 2nd fully revised

and expanded ed. (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2008), 1515–25. The great attention paid to *Land and Lordship* is also explained by the fact that the original German book was translated not only into English but also into Italian.

125. See Oexle, “Leitbegriffe,” in Lehmann and Oexle, eds., *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 2, 40.

126. See Jan Eike Dunkhase, *Werner Conze: Ein deutscher Historiker im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).

127. See Etzemüller, “Kontinuität.” in Weisbrod, ed., *Akademische Vergangenheitspolitik*.

128. In the first three editions (1939, 1942, 1943), the subtitle was *Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Südostdeutschlands im Mittelalter*, which was changed after the Second World War to *Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Österreichs im Mittelalter*. For more detail, particularly concerning the spelling of *Baiern* in the original German book *Land und Herrschaft*, see Kortüm, “Otto Brunner über Otto den Großen,” 311, footnote 70.

129. Klaus Schreiner, “Führertum, Rasse, Reich: Wissenschaft von der Geschichte nach der nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung,” in Peter Lundgreen, ed., *Wissenschaft im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1985), 163–252, here 208–11; Etzemüller, *Sozialgeschichte*, 85.

130. Karl S. Bader, “Rezension zu Otto Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft: Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Österreichs im Mittelalter*,” *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 77 (1960): 378–80, here 379.

131. *Ibid.*

132. See Dominik Reither, *Rechtsgeschichte und Rechtsgeschichten: Die Forschung über Fehde, autonome Gewalt und Krieg in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2009).

133. This becomes evident, to use the words of Horst Dreier, through a threefold “negative consensus”: their “anti-liberalism,” their “anti-parliamentarism and anti-federalism,” and their “antisemitism”: idem, “Die deutsche Staatsrechtslehre in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus. 1. Bericht von Prof. Dr. Horst Dreier, Würzburg,” in *Berichte und Diskussionen auf der Tagung der Vereinigung der deutschen Staatsrechtslehrer in Leipzig vom 4. bis 6. Oktober 2000* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 10–72, here 24–31.

134. On Brunner’s interpretation of war and feud, see Hans-Henning Kortüm, *Kriege und Krieger 500–1500* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010), 70–74.

135. Otto Brunner, *Land and Lordship: Structures of Governance in Medieval Austria*, trans. and introduction by Howard Kaminsky and James van Horn Melton (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 92.

136. See Kortüm, “Mittelalterliche Verfassungsgeschichte,” in Dendorfer and Deutinger, eds., *Lehnswesen*, 68–69, footnote 51.

137. On the concept of order as conceived by Carl Schmitt and advocated by Brunner, see Raphael, “Ordnung,” in Lehmann and Oexle, eds., *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 2, 134; Algazi, “Otto Brunner.” in Schöttler, ed., *Geschichtsschreibung*.

138. A typical example is Gerd Althoff, “Schranken der Gewalt: Wie gewalttätig war das ‘finstere Mittelalter’?,” in Horst Brunner, ed., *Der Krieg im Mittelalter und in der Frühen*

Neuzeit: Gründe, Begründungen, Bilder, Bräuche, Recht (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1999), 1–23, with several explicit references to Otto Brunner's *Land and Lordship*.

139. Christof Dipper, "Keine Neigung, die 'Väter in die Pfanne zu hauen': Der Jahrgang 1943 im Feld der deutschen Historiker," in Christoph Cornelißen, ed., *Geschichtswissenschaft im Geist der Demokratie: Wolfgang J. Mommsen und seine Generation* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2010), 277–92, here 277.

140. This had already been noted by Gerhard Dilcher in the concluding discussion of the first section of the Otto Brunner Conference in Trent in 1987: *Annali dell'Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico in Trento* 13 (1987), 181–84, here 183.

141. On the concept of alterity and its origins, linked with a call to abandon it due to its *Unterkomplexität*—its underdeveloped degree of complexity—see Manuel Braun, "Alterität als germanistisch-mediävistische Kategorie: Kritik und Korrektiv," in idem, ed., *Wie anders war das Mittelalter? Fragen an das Konzept der Alterität* (Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2013), 7–38.

142. See Kortüm, "Mittelalterliche Verfassungsgeschichte," in Dendorfer and Deutinger, eds., *Lehnswesen*, 73–76.

143. See Elmar Wadle, "Zur Delegitimierung der Fehde durch die mittelalterliche Friedensbewegung," in Brunner, *Krieg im Mittelalter*, 73–91, here 78–91, on attempts to contain the feud by way of the *Friedenstexte* (peace documents) of the Peace of God movement and through the *Landfrieden* laws, particularly of Staufian rulers.

144. Cited in Spreitzer, "Harold Steinacker," in Hruza, ed., *Österreichische Historiker*, vol. 1, 217.

145. An overview of German research on feuds, the acceptance of or distancing from Brunner's interpretation of the feud, and the emergence of the new concept of "conflict" in recent German research is provided by Florian Dirks, *Konfliktaustragung im norddeutschen Raum des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts: Untersuchungen zu Fehdewesen und Tagfahrt* (Göttingen: V & R unipress GmbH, 2015), 21–67, quotation on 66.

146. On this, see Algazi, *Herrengewalt*; idem, "Otto Brunner" in Schöttler, ed., *Geschichtsschreibung*; On the criticism of Algazi, see Alexander Jendorff and Steffen Krieb, "Adel im Konflikt: Beobachtungen zu den Austragungsformen der Fehde im Spätmittelalter," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 30, no. 2 (2003): 179–206, here 180–81.

147. *Ibid.*, 202–5.

148. See Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, eds., *Staat im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006); Walter Pohl and Veronika Wieser, eds., *Der frühmittelalterliche Staat: Europäische Perspektiven* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009).

149. Wadle speaks of the "agents of public power, the traditional rulers": idem, "Delegitimierung der Fehde," in Brunner, ed., *Krieg im Mittelalter*, 89. On the concept of the public sphere and its role in current medieval research, see Jörg Feuchter, "Oratorik und Öffentlichkeit spätmittelalterlicher Repräsentativversammlungen," in Martin Kintzinger, ed., *Politische Öffentlichkeit im Spätmittelalter* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2011), 183–202, here 188, footnote 22.

150. Quotation taken from Peter von Moos, "Das Öffentliche und das Private im

Mittelalter: Für einen kontrollierten Anachronismus,” in Gert Melville and Peter von Moos, eds., *Das Öffentliche und Private in der Vormoderne* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998), 3–83, here 14.

151. Feuchter, “Oratorik,” in Kintzinger, ed., *Politische Öffentlichkeit*, 196.

152. On this, see the numerous examples found in Kortüm, *Kriege und Krieger*, 219–64; idem, “Krieg im Mittelalter: Der Blick auf die Kinder,” in Alexander Denzler, Stefan Grüner and Markus Raasch, eds., *Kinder und Krieg: Von der Antike bis in die Gegenwart* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 201–18, here 211–12.

153. Hans Boldt pointed out Brunner’s “deficient perspective for historical development”: “Brunner combined this with an odd and problematic reinterpretation of the subject of constitutional history, the constitution.” And further: “The methodological approach to historiography that Brunner offered in various versions remains unclear and unsatisfactory.” Christof Dipper argued in a somewhat similar way: “The long and short of it is that Brunner’s concept, summed up by the catchword *Alteuropa*, does not satisfy the needs. The elimination of the state and the society, along with their conflicts—all of which were important features precisely of that era—leads to reductions and errors that distort the entire picture.” The essays by Hans Boldt, “Otto Brunner: Zur Theorie der Verfassungsgeschichte,” and Christof Dipper, “Otto Brunner aus der Sicht der frühneuzeitlichen Historiographie,” are found in *Annali dell’Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico in Trento* 13 (1987): 39–66, 73–96; the quotations are on 43, 53, 92.

154. Peter Moraw, “Kontinuität und später Wandel: Bemerkungen zur deutschen und deutschsprachigen Mediävistik 1945–1970/75,” in Peter Moraw and Rudolf Schieffer, *Die deutschsprachige Mediävistik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2005), 103–38, here 127–28.

National Socialism in Austria before and after 1945

Nazi Minister Anton Reinthaller and the
Origins of the Austrian Freedom Party

MARGIT REITER

TRANSLATION BY SINÉAD CROWE

After 1949, many former Austrian National Socialists reorganized in the Federation of Independents (VdU, *Verband der Unabhängigen*) and its successor party, the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ, *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*). As the first party leader of the FPÖ beginning in 1955/56, Anton Reinthaller (1895–1958) played a central role in the postwar political mobilization of former National Socialists, known in Austria as the *Ehemaligen* (formers). On the basis of the hitherto unused personal papers of Anton Reinthaller, Margit Reiter's contribution sketches the political career of the founder of the FPÖ from his time as a member of the illegal National Socialist Party during the era of Austrofascism, through his appointment as a Nazi minister in 1938 and to various other positions during the Nazi period, to his postwar denazification and reentry into politics. The correspondence, personal notes, and court documents contained in his papers not only provide a good overview of the networks and the discourse among former Nazis after 1945, but also allow for an investigation into Reinthaller's attitude towards National Socialism and his retrospective self-presentation in front of the denazification court. The early history of the FPÖ is analyzed by interweaving party history with a biographical approach. In its tension between biographical and ideological continuities, on the one hand, and a willingness and ability to adapt to changed political circumstances, on the other, the example of Anton Reinthaller reveals a typical "Austrian" perpetrator biography of a sort that has been neglected in historical research.

Introduction

The Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ, *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*) was officially established on April 7, 1956, by Anton Reinthaller, a former high-ranking Nazi.¹ At the time Reinthaller, who also became the party's first chairman, was a national rallying figure for Austria's former Nazis. The FPÖ emerged from and supplanted the Federation of Independents (VdU, *Verband der Unabhängigen*), a party that had held seats in parliament since 1949 and had widely been regarded as a hotbed of former Nazis. Indeed, as I will demonstrate, contemporary observers believed that the new party, often

referred to as “Reinthaller’s Nazi party,” was run by “a small coterie of right-wing extremists and Nazi leaders” who had seized power from the VdU leadership.² These criticisms were leveled not at some small postwar right-wing faction, but at one of the main parties in the Austrian Parliament of the Second Republic, a party that continues to play a defining role in Austrian domestic politics today.

The FPÖ’s ties to National Socialism came under increased scrutiny after it became the governing party in late 2017. In early 2018 it emerged that leading FPÖ figures were members of German nationalist *Burschenschaften* (fraternities) that used songbooks with antisemitic content. In the wake of the scandal, one of the FPÖ’s top election candidates was forced to step down (albeit temporarily), and the party’s chairman, Heinz-Christian Strache, announced that an internal commission would be established to investigate the FPÖ’s past. However, this “historical commission” was criticized by historians for its lack of transparency and highly selective research questions.³ The final report of the commission was presented to the public at the end of 2019 after several delays, but it contained no new factual information.⁴

It is common knowledge in Austria that numerous former Nazis were politically active in both the FPÖ and its predecessor party, the VdU. This makes it all the more surprising that so little is known by historians, and therefore by the general public, about the specific circumstances under which the *Ehemaligen* (formers, i.e. former National Socialists, somewhat of a misnomer given that these individuals were still fervently committed to Nazism) found a political home within the Freedom Party. Most publications about the early history of the VdU and the FPÖ offer sympathetic, exculpatory accounts—hardly surprising, given that their authors are affiliated with the latter party.⁵ These works are to be approached with skepticism, as are the memoirs written by figures who were involved in the parties in their early days.⁶ In such publications, the continuities with Nazism are either ignored or greatly played down.⁷ While a large number of critical studies have been published on the later FPÖ from its time under the leadership of Jörg Haider and afterwards, no source-based research has been conducted into Nazi continuities—in terms of both membership and ideology—in the early FPÖ. Furthermore, no detailed biography of Reinthaller, the party’s first chairman, has yet been published; at present, all that exist are some short profiles of the politician written from the FPÖ’s perspective⁸ and brief accounts of certain phases of his career.⁹ As a result, in both academic and public discourse the Nazi “multifunctionary” and founder of one of the Second Republic’s main parties remains a largely unknown quantity.

My book, *Die Ehemaligen. Der Nationalsozialismus und die Anfänge der*

FPÖ (“The Formers: National Socialism and the Beginnings of the *FPÖ*”), published in 2019, has filled this gap. Drawing on my book and some of my other previous studies,¹⁰ I will examine the prehistory and beginnings of the *FPÖ*, focusing on Anton Reinthaller and his role in organizing the *Ehemaligen* into a political force. I will begin by outlining the political framework and limitations imposed on Nazis who were subject to denazification in post-war Austria. I will follow this with a quick overview of the emergence of the *VdU* (which can also be read as a prehistory of the *FPÖ*) before focusing on the political career of Reinthaller, who was active in three successive political systems. Who was Anton Reinthaller, and how did his career as a Nazi develop prior to and after 1938? What form did his political life take after 1945, and what was his status within the *Ehemaligen* milieu? Although it was impossible to access some historical sources,¹¹ Reinthaller’s papers, which have not yet been catalogued, have allowed me to trace the *FPÖ* founder’s political career from his time as an illegal Nazi during the Austrofascist regime through his appointment as a Nazi minister in 1938 to his activities after 1945. In addition to providing valuable insight into the discourse that dominated the *Ehemaligen* milieu and Reinthaller’s networks after 1945, Reinthaller’s letters and personal notes reveal a great deal about his attitude toward National Socialism and the image he sought to convey of himself in the postwar era.¹² In the final section of this article, I will examine Reinthaller’s central role in unifying the nationalist camp and establishing the *FPÖ* in 1955/56. I will combine the organizational history of the *FPÖ* with a biographical approach. My aims are to illuminate the key features of the party when it first emerged and to examine Reinthaller as a political actor, showing how he exemplified the “specifically Austrian” type of perpetrator that has largely been neglected by historians.

The Political Reorganization of the *Ehemaligen* after 1945

The year 1945 represented a new democratic dawn in Austria. The fundamental principles of the Second Republic included distancing itself from National Socialism, committing to an independent Austria, and establishing a democratic political order. The Social Democrats and Christian Socialists, who had been bitter opponents during the Austrofascist era, resolved to put aside their political differences in order to tackle Austria’s democratic reconstruction. Members of the former Christian Social Party (*Christlichsoziale Partei Österreichs*) founded the Austrian People’s Party (*ÖVP, Österreichische Volkspartei*); many in the *ÖVP* leadership had been *Christlichsoziale* before 1938. After the first free elections in November 1945, the two main parties—the conservative *ÖVP*

and the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ, *Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs*)—formed a coalition that would have a defining influence on Austrian politics in the years that followed.

The legal framework for denazification was established soon after the war ended. Firstly, the *Verbotsgesetz* (Prohibition Act) ordered the immediate dissolution of the Nazi Party, the repeal of all Nazi laws, the prohibition of Nazi activities, and the removal of the Nazi political elite from key governmental and industrial positions.¹³ Secondly, the *Kriegsverbrechergesetz* (KVG, War Criminals Act) provided a basis for the prosecution of Nazi crimes.¹⁴ The *Verbotsgesetz* required that all former Nazi Party members be registered, and it mandated a graduated series of punitive measures and sanctions to be handed down by special courts known as *Völksgesichte* (people's courts). Unlike in Germany, the government in Austria was responsible for denazification procedures from a very early stage. The main criterion for selecting individuals for denazification was the date on which they had joined the Nazi Party.¹⁵ “Illegals”—that is, the approximately 100,000 Austrian Nazis who had joined the party before 1938 and had continued to be politically active after its prohibition in 1933—received particularly severe punishment. The *Entnazifizierungsgesetz* (Denazification Act) of 1947 replaced this “joining date” criterion with the categories *belastet* (offender) and *minderbelastet* (lesser offender), but a series of amnesties from 1948 onward led to a drastic decline in the number of “offenders.” The sentences of most of these individuals expired in the early 1950s, or else they were granted pardons. Denazification ended in Austria in 1957.

Staunch Nazis reacted in different ways to the end of the war in 1945, which they viewed as catastrophic. High-ranking Nazi functionaries and members of the SS, SA, and Gestapo, in particular, had to assume that they were on Allied wanted lists and that they would not go unpunished. Numerous Nazi criminals, including Adolf Eichmann, Franz Stangl, and Alois Brunner, escaped prosecution by fleeing the country or changing their identities.¹⁶ As the war was ending, many Nazi functionaries in eastern Austria, fearing the Soviet army, decamped to the American Zone of Occupation in western Austria, where the *Ehemaligen* would politically regroup in a few years' time. The Allies, invoking the policy of “automatic arrest,” interned some former Nazi functionaries in two large camps: Camp Marcus W. Orr in Salzburg (also known as Camp Glasenbach), which was run by American occupation forces, and a British camp in Wolfsberg, Carinthia.¹⁷

These specific postwar experiences fostered a powerful sense of identity among former Nazis, who after 1945 formed an unwavering community

based on shared memory and political outlook.¹⁸ These *Ehemaligen* had espoused Nazi ideology and actively supported the Nazi system. Most importantly, they largely remained true to their convictions even after 1945.¹⁹ The *Ehemaligen* often moved in a male-dominated social and political milieu where they developed a counter-narrative to the official historical narrative.²⁰ They vehemently rejected the *Opferthese* (victim theory), according to which Austria was “Hitler’s first victim,” and the externalization of Nazism. For the *Ehemaligen*, these narratives, which would dominate Austrian discussions of the past for decades, did not reflect their own experiences and beliefs before and after the Anschluss of 1938. They did not see themselves as “victims” of Nazism at all; any sense of victimhood they felt was related to the time after the “collapse”. They lamented their loss of powerful positions and social prestige, viewing themselves as “victims” of denazification. Ultimately, such laments blended in with a widespread sense of “collective victimhood” in Austria at the time. The *Ehemaligen* milieu formed the basis, in terms of both membership and ideology, for the later FPÖ, which would serve as the political representative of this nationalist core clientele.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, however, political reorganization was out of the question. While some once-staunch Nazis withdrew in disappointment into political abstention (for the moment), others adapted relatively quickly to the new reality, finding a new political home in one of the two main parties, the ÖVP and the SPÖ.²¹ But many of the *Ehemaligen* scorned such pliant “opportunists” and sought to create their own political formations. Initial attempts to reorganize themselves into small right-wing parties such as the *Verfassungstreue Vereinigung* (Association Loyal to the Constitution), which was founded in 1947, were unsuccessful.²² In the late 1940s, new plans were made for a national “fourth party.” This new party saw itself as an alternative to the two dominant parties, the ÖVP and the SPÖ, and as a right-wing counterweight to the anti-fascist, politically insignificant Communist Party of Austria (KPÖ, *Kommunistische Partei Österreichs*), which held seats in the Austrian parliament until 1959. Influential business and media figures in Salzburg supported the creation of a new party, most notably the journalist Herbert Kraus, who had already explored the potential of a “fourth party” in his journal, *Berichte und Informationen*.²³ In the spring of 1949, half a year before the general elections, Kraus and his political ally Viktor Reimann founded the Electoral League of Independents (WdU, *Wahlverband der Unabhängigen*; also known as the VdU).²⁴ The new party saw itself firstly as a counterbalance to the ÖVP–SPÖ grand coalition and secondly as a strong advocate for former Nazis who had been subject to denazification.²⁵ The

VdU wanted to “put the past firmly in the past” and integrate Nazis, whom it presented as victimized and “disenfranchised,” into the democratic process.²⁶ The general elections of October 1949 revealed that the VdU’s promises appealed to this group. Though Nazis were vigorously courted by all the parties in the lead-up to this election, the first in which Nazis were allowed to vote again, the VdU received 11.7 percent of the vote, gaining sixteen seats in the Austrian parliament.²⁷

The new party was heterogeneous with regard to membership and ideology. In addition to its founders, Kraus and Reimann, who were regarded as “liberals” and opponents of Nazism,²⁸ and a few economic liberals and conservative monarchists, the VdU included several “nationalists” in various forms and from various backgrounds: German nationalist politicians from the old *Landbund* (Rural Federation) and the *Großdeutsche Volkspartei* (Greater German People’s Party), several former Nazi functionaries who had been classified as “lesser offenders,” and *Heimkehrer* (repatriated prisoners of war and internees) and *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans), who now lacked a political home. The party’s rhetorical attempts to distance itself from National Socialism could not disguise the fact that the VdU—and later the FPÖ—harbored numerous “incriminated” Nazis.²⁹

The inherent conflicts within the VdU erupted soon after it entered parliament and eroded the party’s already very fragile internal power structure. The VdU was almost banned after a series of scandals centering on individual functionaries’ “neo-Nazi activities.”³⁰ When the party suffered painful losses in the 1953 election, nationalist factions became more critical of the leadership, which they viewed as too conformist.³¹ Disgruntled and increasingly self-confident “nationalists” within and beyond the VdU began to congregate around the former Nazi minister Anton Reinthaller, who was rapidly becoming a national rallying figure for the *Ehemaligen* since receiving his pardon in 1953.

Anton Reinthaller’s Nazi Career before and after the Anschluss of 1938

Anton Reinthaller was born on April 14, 1895, in Mettmach, Upper Austria. The son of a farmer and small brewery owner, he served as a soldier in the First World War until he was captured by the Russian army in 1916. He was interned as a prisoner of war until 1918. After the war, Reinthaller studied forestry at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna, earning a degree in forest engineering in 1922.³² During this time, he was a member

of a *Burschenschaft* called Akademische Landsmannschaft der Salzburger (Salzburgers' Academic Association). Reinthaller subsequently became a contract civil servant in the Upper Austrian regional government, in the Department of Torrent and Avalanche Control. In addition, he owned two farms in Upper Austria.

Reinthaller soon found a political place for himself in the interwar German nationalist/National Socialist milieu. When he joined the Nazi Party on April 23, 1928, he was given the low membership number 83,421, indicating that he was one of the earliest members of the party in Austria.³³ In 1924 he married Therese Ritzberger-Oehn, the daughter of a Greater German (i.e. supporting the integration of Austria into a "Greater Germany") politician and large farmer near Attersee. She had also joined the Nazi Party at an early point, receiving the membership number 86,299. In addition to leading the Attersee chapter of the Nazi Party, which he himself had founded, Reinthaller became Gauleiter of Upper Austria, joined the party's Austrian leadership, and served as a *Kreisleiter* (district leader) for propaganda, *Gauredner* (Gau speaker), and leader of the country's illegal Nazi farmers' organization, the *NS-Bauernschaft*.³⁴ The fact that Reinthaller now tends to be categorized as a "moderate" Nazi is largely due to his position in the years prior to 1938, when he belonged to a wing of the illegal Nazi Party that advocated an "evolutionary" approach. This approach rejected the use of violence to topple the Dollfuß/Schuschnigg regime; instead, it was argued that "staunch nationalists" should infiltrate the state apparatus and undermine the regime from the inside. Reinthaller therefore clashed with the far more radical Nazi leader Theo Habicht, who called for a violent seizure of power in Austria.³⁵ But although these two wings pursued different strategies, their ultimate objective was the same: to assume power and clear the way for the German annexation of Austria.

The Austrofascist government's ambivalent strategy for dealing with the Nazis wavered between "appeasement and confrontation."³⁶ On the one hand, it responded to increasing radicalization and Nazi terrorism with repressive measures, such as restricting freedom of movement and association, arresting and deporting prominent Nazis (including Habicht, who was deported to Bavaria), and banning the Nazi Party on June 19, 1933.³⁷ On the other hand, however, the government sought dialogue with "moderate" Nazis with the aim of quelling Nazi violence and quashing the illegal Nazi Party by means of the divide-and-conquer strategy.

After the Nazi Party was outlawed, Reinthaller—one of the few Party leaders who had not fled to Germany—emerged as an ideal mediator. He belonged

to a circle of notable German nationalists who were prepared to come to an arrangement with the Austrofascist regime, partly because they shared some ideological positions and partly because of their plot to infiltrate the regime. They hoped to thereby strengthen their position within the German nationalist camp and ultimately assume leadership of the Austrian Nazi Party.³⁸ As an agricultural functionary, Reinthaller had developed good contacts in the Christian Social Party and played a key role in several so-called initiatives to make peace between the Austrian Nazis and the Austrofascist regime.³⁹ He was first in contact with the then minister of education, Kurt Schuschnigg, in November 1933, but this attempt at rapprochement failed after the government made a series of arrests intended to serve as a deterrent.⁴⁰ Many illegal Nazis were interned in detention camps, including Reinthaller himself, who was held in a camp in Kaisersteinbruch from January 17 until April 21, 1934. Reinthaller's activities caused some contention within the party and led to his expulsion by his rival, Habicht, who was by now controlling the party from Munich. The grounds for Reinthaller's expulsion were that he had negotiated with the Dollfuß government "behind the back of the *Landesleitung* and in open repudiation of its policies" and that he had organized a "separatist movement" within the Austrian Nazi Party.⁴¹

Undeterred, Reinthaller resumed his negotiations with the government after his release, launching his eponymous Aktion Reinthaller (Reinthaller Initiative) in the summer of 1934. Joining Reinthaller in the talks were the former Greater German politicians Franz Langoth and Hermann Foppa, as well as Hermann Göring's brother-in-law, Franz Hueber, who would later serve as minister of justice in Arthur Seyß-Inquart's cabinet. Ernst Kaltenbrunner, whom Reinthaller had first met in the detention camp in Kaisersteinbruch and appointed as his "secretary" in 1934, was also involved in the negotiations.⁴² Representing the government in the talks were the chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuß, Schuschnigg, and the minister of trade, Friedrich Stockinger. The governor of Upper Austria, Heinrich Gleißner, and the Upper Austrian director of security and leader of the Upper Austrian home guard, Peter Revertera, both of whom Reinthaller knew personally, served as chief mediators.

Reinthaller was not involved in the July Putsch, the Nazi coup d'état attempt of July 25, 1934.⁴³ In fact, by Reinthaller's own account, he was caught completely by surprise, learning of the attempted putsch and the murder of Dollfuß while he was on a train to Germany for negotiations.⁴⁴ In the wake of the failed putsch, Hitler's Austrian policy shifted decisively toward an

evolutionary approach, which was supported by the newly appointed German ambassador to Austria, Franz von Papen.⁴⁵ With German support secured, Reinthaller's talks with Dollfuß's successor, Schuschnigg, resumed in the first half of August 1934. The Aktion Reinthaller proposed that the entire nationalist camp be subsumed within the Fatherland Front (VF, *Vaterländische Front*), which aimed to supersede all other parties in Austria. In addition, Reinthaller's plan called for an end to the persecution of Nazis and the immediate release of all imprisoned Nazis. "Nationalists" were to be integrated on all levels, admitted en bloc into the VF, and permitted to create their own paramilitary unit.⁴⁶ In return, it was promised that Nazi terror would end and that Germany would lift the Thousand Mark Fee (*Tausend-Mark-Sperre*).⁴⁷ Before being admitted into the VF, Nazis would have to pledge their loyalty to the state of Austria. Though Reinthaller and his allies were prepared to do this,⁴⁸ Chancellor Schuschnigg was not prepared to accept the Nazis' excessive demands. For him, this would have been tantamount to capitulation, and so he broke off the negotiations.⁴⁹

The Aktion Reinthaller had failed, but its creator soon launched other initiatives, this time concentrating on negotiations at the level of the federal states.⁵⁰ An initial willingness on both sides to compromise was shattered by a new wave of arrests in early March 1936. Reinthaller and Langoth were among those arrested, though they were released immediately owing to insufficient evidence. While Reinthaller was not involved in the Austrian government's July Agreement with Hitler of July 11, 1936,⁵¹ he welcomed it, as its key points—the lifting of the Thousand Mark Fee and the release of political prisoners—met his demands of 1934.⁵² By now, new actors such as Arthur Seyß-Inquart had moved into the foreground.⁵³ In July 1937 Seyß-Inquart officially invited Reinthaller to work for the government, giving him the task of incorporating the "national farming community into the occupational organization."⁵⁴

After 1945 Reinthaller tended to exaggerate the conflicts of the 1930s within the Nazi Party in Austria in order to present himself in a better light. But in fact these conflicts did him no harm. Having positioned himself on the "right" side by 1938, the industrious Nazi was rewarded with a ministerial position and a handsome career. In addition, his activities provided him with contacts that would turn out to be advantageous: Seyß-Inquart and Richard Walther Darré, both of whom he knew well, helped further his career under the Nazis, while his earlier governmental negotiating partners proved useful as witnesses for his defense after 1945.

The Anschluss gave Reinthaller his first major career boost, with the new-

ly appointed Chancellor Seyß-Inquart naming him minister of agriculture on March 11, 1938.⁵⁵ While Reinthaller later claimed that he had held this post for only two days,⁵⁶ he in fact survived the cabinet reshuffle that removed “moderate” figures from their posts the following day. On March 22, 1938, he swore his allegiance to Hitler. On March 13, 1938, Reinthaller attended a reception held by Heinrich Himmler at the Hotel Regina in Vienna and was admitted to the SS (membership number 292,775). A few months later, he was promoted to SS *Oberführer*, and in January 1941 he rose to the rank of SS *Brigadeführer*.⁵⁷

Reinthaller actively campaigned for a “yes” vote in the lead-up to the Anschluss referendum of April 10, 1938. A surviving audio recording of him speaking at a rally in Tyrol reveals that he was not a gifted orator, however.⁵⁸ In his speech Reinthaller concentrated on the agricultural sector, criticizing the “old system” and assuring his audience that the Anschluss would see the economy flourish and unemployment disappear. His paean to the importance of Austrian farmers as the “blood-source” of the *Volk* also contained two antisemitic remarks about “*Finanzjuden*” (Jewish bankers), who, he claimed, had repeatedly taken advantage of farmers.⁵⁹ These comments, though made in passing, demonstrate that Reinthaller shared the Nazis’ antisemitic worldview.⁶⁰

Reinthaller officially worked as minister of agriculture for the German Reich’s “State of Austria” until April 1939, when all Austrian administrative agencies were closed. In late 1939 he was appointed undersecretary of state for agricultural affairs in Berlin.⁶¹ This may have been thanks to Seyß-Inquart, who had suggested that Richard Walther Darré, Reich minister of food and agriculture, establish a department dedicated to mountain farmers and appoint Reinthaller as its head.⁶² The department was duly established within the ministry on February 1, 1940.⁶³ In addition, Reinthaller was made special commissioner for establishing the *Reichsnährstand* (Reich Food Estate, the Nazi body responsible for controlling agriculture and food production) in the *Ostmark*, as the Nazis called Austria. In 1942 he was appointed Regional Farmers’ Leader for the Lower Danube area, a role he continued to perform until the war ended.

During the Nazi period Reinthaller continued to enjoy the reputation he had built prior to 1938 as an agricultural expert who represented the interests of mountain farmers in both his publications⁶⁴ and his political activities.⁶⁵ His primary responsibilities included a “debt relief and development initiative” and “community development in the mountain regions,” which for him involved reducing migration to the cities and supporting the German Reich’s

“old-established farmers” (*Altbauerntum*). Reinthaller opposed German settlement in the East, which he viewed as a threat to a healthy, flourishing old-established peasantry, as it involved uprooting and transplanting mountain populations.⁶⁶ Leaving aside a few isolated critical comments, Reinthaller fully supported Nazi agricultural policies and their ideological exaltation of the peasantry. In promoting mountain farmers as the “best blood donors” for the German *Volk*, he drew on Nazi blood-and-soil rhetoric. And he was not averse to using coercion and repression to push through measures that were not universally welcomed by farmers.⁶⁷ The economic and social historian Ernst Langthaler describes Reinthaller as an extremely active “leader of the mountain farmer lobby from 1938 onward,” but points out that Reinthaller’s work for mountain farmers was always in the interests of his own career.⁶⁸

As far as we know today, Reinthaller was not directly involved in Nazi crimes. However, we can be sure that he was at least aware of these crimes, given the high positions he held within the Nazi regime. For example, in his capacity as regional director of agriculture, he and twenty local agricultural leaders visited Mauthausen concentration camp on June 19, 1942. The camp’s activity log states that on that day, “two Jewish inmates were shot while fleeing” and that “another Jewish inmate died [. . .] by suicide on an electric fence.”⁶⁹ As special commissioner for the *Reichsnährstand* in the *Ostmark*, Reinthaller was one of those responsible for the “de-Jewification” of Austrian agriculture, a process that began directly after the Anschluss and involved “Aryanizing” rural and forest assets and properties.⁷⁰ In addition, in his capacity as director of agriculture for the Lower Danube region, he was responsible for deploying 10,000 forced laborers on Lower Austrian farms, which means that he bore some responsibility for their inhumane treatment.⁷¹ While there have been some studies of Nazi agricultural policies and the use of forced laborers in the Austrian and Lower Austrian farming industry, further research is needed to ascertain what Reinthaller’s exact activities were.

In addition to the positions mentioned above, Reinthaller was a member of the German Reichstag, a *Landesjägermeister* (chairman of a regional hunting association), and a *Landesforstmeister* (regional head forester). He received several Nazi honors over the course of his career, including the SS death’s-head ring in May 1941. At the time Reinthaller said that the ring would be “a constant reminder of the unshakable solidarity and camaraderie within the SS.”⁷² He also wore the SS Honor Chevron and the Golden Party Badge of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP, *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*), an honor he had doggedly pursued.⁷³

Reinthaller on Trial: Self-Justification and Self-Presentation

When the war ended, Reinthaller decamped to his native Upper Austria in the American Zone of Occupation. He was arrested by the US forces there on August 28, 1945, and detained in Camp Marcus W. Orr, an American internment camp in Salzburg (also known as Camp Glasenbach) on October 5, 1945. As a former Nazi minister and SS *Brigadeführer*, Reinthaller appeared alongside eighty-five other Nazi perpetrators on the first war-crime list for Austria, which was published on December 4, 1945.⁷⁴ On October 8, 1946, after a year's internment, he was transferred to the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, where he was heard as a witness several times.⁷⁵ In July 1947 he was transferred to the American internment camp in Dachau, where he was imprisoned for almost a year before being sent back to Nuremberg for another few months in early March 1948. In August 1948 Reinthaller was sent to the Nuremberg-Langwasser internment camp, which was administered by the state of Bavaria, where he remained until his release on November 8, 1948. He then lived for half a year in Traunstein, where, as instructed by the Bavarian denazification authority, he was to await the denazification court's ruling on his case. The ruling was never delivered, however, as on July 1, 1949, the Counterintelligence Corps arrested Reinthaller at the behest of the state police in Vienna and extradited him to Austria. On July 29, 1949, he was held in custody at the Regional Criminal Court in Vienna, where he awaited the beginning of his trial at the *Volksgericht* in Vienna in October 1950.

Reinthaller was not idle during his time in custody. He worked out his line of defense in long letters and essays, which varied in tone from self-pity to aggression to self-righteousness.⁷⁶ Also dating to this time are handwritten notes he titled "Thoughts I Have Been Forced to Mull Over since 1945,"⁷⁷ which focus on the development of Nazism and the phenomenon of antisemitism. These notes provide a good insight into Reinthaller's tendency to trivialize Nazism, but they also reveal that he continued to approve of Nazi racial ideology and the resulting marginalization and persecution of Jews. Yet Reinthaller vociferously distanced himself from the Holocaust, which he described as a calamitous political mistake resulting from Hitler's "insanity."⁷⁸ Most people opposed these "excessive measures" or else were unaware of them, he claimed:

The extermination that began in the final years of the war was planned by a very small group of people around Hitler and carried out by select groups of inhuman individuals. Only those directly involved knew about these things. [...] The annihilation of the Jews had nothing to do with the German public,

the Nazi Party, or “antisemitic” ideology. [. . .] It was not until 1945 that the crimes and atrocities came to light, atrocities that cannot be blamed on the people or the Party, but solely on the individual culprits.⁷⁹

In attributing the Holocaust to a tiny group of perpetrators and claiming to be unaware of what was happening—an interpretive pattern followed by many former Nazis—Reinthaller sought to exculpate not just himself, but also the majority of the population. However, his antisemitic *völkisch* rhetoric demonstrates a complete lack of empathy and guilt feelings and therefore severely undermines his attempts to distance himself from Nazi crimes.

Most of Reinthaller’s notes deal with criminal jurisdiction and denazification in general and with his pending trial in particular.⁸⁰ His sense of victimhood and fulminations against supposedly illegitimate “victor’s justice” are recurring themes in all his writing of this time. A letter to the president of Austria, Karl Renner, for example, reveals his agitated state of mind while in custody. Reinthaller began the letter by asking:

How much longer will you allow your patience to be exploited, Mr. President? How much longer will you look on as the legal system is prostituted by a judiciary that, by the power of law, has been turned into the whore of politics and to some extent enjoys playing this role? [. . .] And how much longer will you allow so-called “people’s courts” to censor world history—something only history itself has the right to do—against the will of the people?⁸¹

In the same letter Reinthaller dismissed denazification as blind “revenge laws” and described himself as someone “who, since 1945, has been incarcerated in concentration camps and prisons with all manner of criminal thugs.”⁸² His pleas for a “return to sense and reason” went unanswered, however, as the *Volksgericht* refused to send the letter on to the president “because of its offensive content, in part punishable under criminal law.”⁸³

The trial ran from October 23 until October 26, 1950, at the *Volksgericht* in Vienna, the defendant’s fame ensuring that it attracted a great deal of publicity.⁸⁴ The indictment presented by the public prosecutor’s office in Vienna on May 24, 1950, included a charge of “high treason against the Austrian people.” Reinthaller was charged under §§10 and 11 of the *Verbotsgesetz* with being a member of the illegal Nazi Party, as proven by his admission to the party in 1928, his designation as an *alter Kämpfer* (a member of the old guard), his numerous party honors, and his SS membership. In addition, Reinthaller was indicted for his work as a minister in Seyß-Inquart’s cabinet, in particular his contribution to the Law on the Reunification of Austria with the German

Reich of March 13, 1938. In signing this law, Reinthaller had facilitated the Nazi seizure of power, which constituted the crime of “high treason against the Austrian people,” the indictment read.⁸⁵ The *Volksgericht* confined itself to formal aspects of the indictment, and so Reinthaller’s other activities, such as his role in the use of forced laborers in the Lower Danube Gau, were mentioned in neither the indictment nor the trial itself.

Reinthaller’s defense attorneys questioned the retroactive application of the laws invoked in the indictment; indeed, before the trial had begun, they had unsuccessfully demanded that the case be dropped.⁸⁶ Once the trial was under way, the attorneys adhered to the line of defense they had worked out with Reinthaller in advance.⁸⁷ They argued (and provided documentation) that, in a preliminary investigation, the US military authorities in Nuremberg had found no incriminating evidence against Reinthaller.⁸⁸ As there was no disputing the fact that Reinthaller had joined the Nazi Party at an early point, his attorneys sought to present him as a “moderate National Socialist” and “peacemaker” who had been repeatedly threatened with expulsion from the party because of his conflict with the “radical” Habicht. Reinthaller’s SS membership and promotions, meanwhile, were depicted as nothing more than “honorary positions” and friendly favors from his superior Darré. When contesting the charge of high treason under the KVG, Reinthaller’s attorneys quibbled over legal technicalities, arguing that Reinthaller had signed the “reintegration law” on March 13, 1938, only because he had been put under extreme political pressure. Furthermore, they argued that as German troops had already marched into Austria by that point, Reinthaller could not be said to have “facilitated” the Nazi seizure of power.⁸⁹ According to newspaper reports, one of the attorneys went so far as to claim in his closing argument that “Reinthaller did more for our beleaguered fatherland than anyone else in this courtroom.”⁹⁰

The defendant put on an equally self-confident performance in court; he did not betray the slightest sense of guilt. The daily *Neues Österreich* described him as a “robust Nordic farmer-type embodying the ideology of ‘blood and soil.’” According to the report, Reinthaller adopted an “Emperor Franz Joseph pose” during the trial: “A little stooped, with white mutton chop sideburns and a gray *Aussee* suit [a traditional Austrian costume], he was suffering from stomach problems, and every now and then he would ask the court for a short break so that he could drink from the thermos of black coffee he had brought along with him.”⁹¹ This rather harmless image was undermined by the brashness of Reinthaller’s statements, however.⁹² As well as pleading not guilty “to a single count in the indictment,” he called into question the legitimacy of the *Volksgericht*. Paradoxically, Reinthaller denied that he had been involved in il-

legal activities between 1933 and 1938, yet he also claimed that his “peacemaking initiative” activities should be regarded as patriotic. Echoing his statements during his examinations as a witness in Nuremberg, he presented himself as a selfless innocent who had been unwittingly forced into various high positions,⁹³ as a dutiful Austrian who had acted solely in the country’s best interests, and as a “victim” of the rapid sequence of events of March 1938. “These events, which came crashing down on us like a torrent, had us all up against the wall,” he rather melodramatically claimed.⁹⁴ In response, the communist newspaper *Volksstimme* commented, “According to his account, Austria was truly blessed to have him put himself at the service of the Nazis. The only thing we were spared was a description of ‘Reinthaller, the resistance fighter.’”⁹⁵

Reinthaller never denied that he had been an early convert to Nazism, but, like many other Nazis, he depicted himself as a “disillusioned idealist” who had “believed” in Hitler only to be politically “deceived and betrayed.”⁹⁶ “To this day, we and the former Nazis are told that we must have known where the road would lead,” he claimed in court. “We are told that we must have known as early as 1927 or 1928 that Nazism would bring nothing but war, concentration camps, crimes, and atrocities. But I must openly confess that I knew nothing of that at the time.”⁹⁷ When asked about the gas chambers in the concentration camps, Reinthaller claimed that he had learned of them only much later, telling the prosecutor, “As a German, I bow my head in sorrow just as much as you, counselor!”⁹⁸

Reinthaller also emphasized that he had been a “critical” National Socialist who had increasingly distanced himself from the Nazi regime.⁹⁹ According to the newspaper *Das kleine Volksblatt*, he told the court, “I believed in Hitler before he went astray. My aversion to him began when he violated international law in 1939. At that point, I was out.”¹⁰⁰ Reinthaller’s defense echoes that put forward by many Austrian Nazis who presented their disillusionment with the Nazi regime as an outright rejection of Nazism, when in reality it had had more to do with disappointment that the Anschluss had not offered them the autonomy and the improved career opportunities for which they had hoped.

Accounts of Reinthaller’s general behavior during the trial reinforce the impression conveyed by his letters. On the one hand, he appeared conciliatory and accommodating, and his argumentation was skilled. On the other hand, he was extremely arrogant, often even domineering, and many of his statements were mawkish and self-pitying. This was particularly evident in his attempts to paint himself as a “victim” of both radical Nazis and denazification.

Reinthaller’s trial provides a striking illustration of the personal and political links and ideological closeness between Christian Socialists and na-

tionists prior to 1938, as well as the Austrofascist regime's grave misjudgment of Nazism.¹⁰¹ Former Nazis and clerical-conservative figures appeared as witnesses for the defense, the latter group including many ÖVP politicians whom Reinthaller had known prior to 1938. Heinrich Gleißner, who attested to applause in the gallery that Reinthaller had always been a "decent person" and a staunch opponent of violence, was a particularly important witness. The former director of security, Revertera, also described Reinthaller as a "moderate," harmony-seeking National Socialist. According to a report in the ÖVP-affiliated *Wiener Tageszeitung*, Revertera vehemently told the court, "I wouldn't label him a Nazi. [. . .] He absolutely was not part of that crowd."¹⁰² Revertera and Gleißner even expressed their personal gratitude to Reinthaller for helping them after the Anschluss.¹⁰³ The statements made by many of these conservative witnesses for the defense were not purely altruistic acts of friendship, however; they also served to exonerate the witnesses themselves, because characterizing Reinthaller as "moderate" helped justify their own fatal willingness to compromise with the illegal Nazis.

To supplement the testimony of these well-known defense witnesses, Reinthaller's attorneys had gathered a considerable number of affidavits attesting to his excellent character from church representatives, political opponents, and former colleagues from the Nazi period.¹⁰⁴ Some of these figures stated that the defendant had assisted them or their (Jewish) relatives, though it is not always clear whether such *Persilscheine* (whitewash certificates) expressed genuine gratitude or were merely written as a favor to Reinthaller. For example, two siblings from Attersee thanked Reinthaller for helping their mother, who would otherwise have "suffered very greatly because of her racial classification." Reinthaller had pointedly kept in contact with the family, they wrote, and prevented their mother from being deported to a concentration camp.¹⁰⁵ A former schoolmate also attested that Reinthaller had prevented his wife—a "full Jew"—from being evicted from their home, a "noble deed" that may have saved her life, he claimed.¹⁰⁶ The conclusion drawn in many of these affidavits was that Reinthaller "did not in any way share the Nazi Party's despicable racial theory."¹⁰⁷ A good example is the following statement from a farmer's wife from Upper Austria:

I have known Mr. Reinthal[l]er, the engineer, for many years. Despite holding a high rank in the party from 1938 onward, he remained the kind, unpretentious person he had always been. Whenever he could help, he did. He helped me too. During the war, I was assigned a Polish farmhand who had an affair with my farm girl, an affair with serious

consequences. Both were threatened with arrest, but Mr. Reinthaller prevented them from being arrested, thereby demonstrating that he opposed Nazi terror.¹⁰⁸

There can be little doubt that this particular affidavit was written as a favor, given that its author was Reinthaller's sister-in-law, a detail she failed to mention. While it is true that Reinthaller saved a few personal and professional acquaintances from persecution, his own claim that he had helped "many thousands of persecuted Austrians between the difficult years 1938 to 1945" was a massive exaggeration.¹⁰⁹

The court's verdict, which was delivered on October 26, 1950, accepted several of the defense counsel's arguments. Reinthaller was sentenced to "three years of hard penal servitude with the additional penalty of *hartes Lager* [having to sleep on a hard floor] once every quarter," and his assets were confiscated—a relatively lenient punishment, considering the range of sentences available. He was found not guilty of high treason under KVG §8.¹¹⁰ Mitigating factors cited by the court included the fact that Reinthaller had assisted prominent opponents of the Nazi regime, had asserted the "Austrian position against the German Reich's advance," and had promoted the interests of Austrian farmers. However, the court's ruling disproved every aspect of Reinthaller's claim that he had not been an "illegal"—that is, that he had not been active in the illegal NSDAP. The time Reinthaller had already served in internment camps was subtracted from his sentence, and as a result, he was released immediately after the trial.

After further submissions were made, proceedings were resumed and transferred to the *Volksgericht* in Linz. Following a hastily arranged hearing on May 7, 1952, which focused solely on Reinthaller's illegal Nazi Party membership, his sentence was commuted to two and a half years, but the court upheld the decision to confiscate his assets.¹¹¹ Despite the commutation, Reinthaller and his attorneys viewed the ruling as a major setback, indeed as a "catastrophe."¹¹² After a short phase of resignation, the defense attorneys leapt back into action, petitioning for another resumption of proceedings. By this stage, Reinthaller had sent a clemency appeal to the Austrian president, Theodor Körner, in which he reiterated his usual arguments and his patriotism for Austria.¹¹³ While he continued to petition ÖVP politicians, he also stepped up his efforts to win over Social Democrats by playing the "red card." Robert Scheuch, a VdU politician from Carinthia who had once worked with Reinthaller in the Nazi ministry, secured a meeting with Vice Chancellor Adolf Schärff, a Social Democrat, with the aim of persuading Schärff to

plead Reinthaller's case before the Ministry of Justice.¹¹⁴ All of these efforts ultimately bore fruit. In early 1953 the ruling of the *Volksgericht* in Linz was quashed and a resumption of proceedings was announced but never occurred. On June 16, 1953, President Körner pardoned the former Nazi minister Anton Reinthaller. This meant that Reinthaller's ability to be politically active was now fully restored.¹¹⁵

Reinthaller and the Establishment of the FPÖ: The "National" Camp Unites

A paradigm shift had taken place in Austrian politics in the early 1950s. The anti-fascist mood of the immediate postwar period had dissipated, and denazification had largely ended in—and indeed been reversed by—a series of amnesties and pardons. As a result, the VdU, having lost one of its key issues, found itself facing a major political crisis. Most Nazi "offenders" had been re-integrated both socially and professionally, and their reinvigorated political ambitions demonstrated that they had found a new sense of self-confidence. In 1949, "implicated" figures had still recognized the importance—in tactical terms, at least—of keeping a low political profile, but by the 1950s, this reticence had largely faded.

This transformed political background provided German nationalist forces both within and outside the VdU with new impetus. Extreme "nationals" who no longer felt represented by the VdU began to focus their hopes on Reinthaller, or "Herr Minister," as they continued to call him. After his pardon he was urged by several old "buddies" to reenter politics. While Reinthaller himself claimed to be tired of politics, he was in fact extremely active, as demonstrated by the many contacts he cultivated at this time. Figures from all sides of the heterogeneous "national" camp came to him with their concerns. For example, Fritz Butschek, who had once worked with him in the *Reichsnährstand*, regularly discussed tensions within the VdU with Reinthaller.¹¹⁶ Ernst Strachwitz, leader of the *Heimkehrer Hilfs- und Betreuungsstelle* (Help and Support Center for *Heimkehrer*), a Graz-based organization with close links to the ÖVP, also expressed interest in working with Reinthaller.¹¹⁷ Stefan Schachermayr, a former Nazi Gau inspector who had worked closely with Gauleiter August Eigruber, kept Reinthaller up to date on the status of incarcerated Nazi criminals and predicted that Reinthaller's political career would soon resume.¹¹⁸ Roland Timmel of the right-wing splinter group *Gemeinschaft Österreich* (Austrian Community) informed Reinthaller that the minister of the interior, Oskar Helmer,

had said that he did not “foresee any difficulties” in Reinthaller becoming involved in politics again, and indeed that Austria was in need of a “proper ‘national’ party headed up by respectable characters.”¹¹⁹ The chairman of the VdU, Max Stendebach, would later comment sarcastically that everyone was “mesmerized by this Dalai Lama” and would “make the pilgrimage” in order to feed Reinthaller misinformation and curry favor.¹²⁰ More than a few of the *Ehemaligen* stated that if Reinthaller returned to politics, they would reenter politics themselves, bringing their years of abstention to an end. One of these was the then-unknown Friedrich Peter, who, when initially offering his assistance, introduced himself to Reinthaller as a former Nazi.¹²¹ All these figures pinned their political hopes on Reinthaller, a seasoned “peacemaker” who they believed would be able to unite the factions within the “national” camp.

It was with similar hopes that the VdU also made overtures to Reinthaller. Herbert Kraus had invited Reinthaller to share ideas in 1952, but Reinthaller had declined on the grounds that his ability to be politically active had not yet been fully restored.¹²² Kraus’s successor, Stendebach, was also in contact with Reinthaller from an early stage and was not opposed to the idea of working with him.¹²³ Helfried Pfeifer, a member of parliament from the extreme right of the VdU, pressed ahead in January 1954, asking Reinthaller if he wanted to run for the position of federal chairman of the VdU.¹²⁴

Electoral defeats in 1953 and internal party conflicts further fueled the debate over how the VdU might reverse its decline. The key question was whether the VdU could be reformed from within, or whether it ought to be completely reinvented under a new, more “national” leadership. In the months that followed, intense negotiations centered on how the party might become a “Third Force” that would unite the divided “national” camp both within and beyond the VdU.¹²⁵ Against this crisis, the VdU began to play the “national card” more overtly. At its annual national conference in Bad Aussee in May 1954, the party adopted a new manifesto that included a stronger commitment to “national convictions” and “national policies.”¹²⁶ At the same conference the VdU chairman and former *Wehrmacht* officer Stendebach spoke provocatively of an “invisible border” between Austria and Germany, another conscious attempt to accentuate the party’s German nationalist orientation.¹²⁷ The party also unanimously agreed to offer Reinthaller a leading role in the VdU, a move that was clearly intended to send a signal to dissatisfied *Ehemalige*.¹²⁸ Reinthaller’s “Glaserbuddies” were certainly very pleased that his name had been put forward, commenting that they hoped to have him “in our ranks as soon as possible.”¹²⁹ The Styrian branch of the VdU, which would be the first to align

itself with him, also pushed for “Reinthaller and other prominent figures from the ‘national’ camp” to be instated in “key positions.”¹³⁰

Reinthaller was skeptical of the VdU’s overtures but generally kept this to himself. Though privately he made no secret of the fact that he saw no future for the party, he believed an immediate intervention would be tactically unwise: “These people are not yet ready for root and branch reforms. Fate will probably have to deliver more slaps in the face than they have already had.” Instead, Reinthaller recommended waiting “until this whole thing [. . .] collapses and meets the fate it deserves so that it can then be freshly built on new foundations.”¹³¹ According to the FPÖ’s version of events, Reinthaller himself did not harbor political ambitions and was reluctant to become involved in politics again because of his Nazi past.¹³² In a letter to Peter, Reinthaller wrote, “I don’t want to enter the picture at all, as I myself feel that I am encumbered by the burden of the past. But I am happy to be the midwife, to help you boys into the saddle.”¹³³ A memo setting out Reinthaller’s three conditions for his return to politics show that his motivations were not entirely selfless, however: “1. Money, 2. Power, 3. A seat (approx. 10,000 s[chillings] per month).”¹³⁴ This memo demonstrates that Reinthaller was certainly not exploited for political purposes, as has often been claimed.

In October 1954, regional elections in a number of Austrian states were a debacle (or “slap in the face”) for the VdU, which suffered severe losses in terms of votes and seats. It was only then that Reinthaller officially rejected the party’s advances.¹³⁵ Having come to the conclusion that the VdU could no longer be reformed, he stated for the first time that his political goal was to put himself at the service of “a *völkisch* freedom party in Austria.”¹³⁶ With that, a de facto decision to create a new party uniting all “national” factions was made. It would appear that word had spread that Reinthaller was prepared to reenter politics, as he received numerous letters expressing delight that “in accordance with the wishes of a large number of people, in particular the majority of our old friends,” he had decided to devote himself to the “Third Force.”¹³⁷ A “Committee for National Unity,” consisting of loyal *Ehemalige* who saw it as their “highest duty to bring together as quickly as possible this country’s national forces and groups,” was immediately established in Carinthia.¹³⁸ Reinthaller’s allies urged him to act, promising their full support.¹³⁹ Convinced that it was the right time for him to make a political return, they dismissed any concerns about “the specter of neo-Nazism being invoked once again,” claiming that “neo-Nazism lost its impact long ago and doesn’t scare anyone these days.”¹⁴⁰

In early 1955, Reinthaller, who until then had remained in the background, entered the political stage and established the *Freiheitspartei*.¹⁴¹ Apart from

Reinthaller himself, the new party's leading figures included the former illegal Nazi and Nazi propagandist Emil van Tongel, the former SS member Friedrich Peter, and Reinthaller's old friend from the *Reichsnährstand*, Fritz Butschek. All of these men would later play a key role in establishing the FPÖ. It is said to have been the Austrian Chancellor, Julius Raab (ÖVP), who ultimately convinced Reinthaller to return to politics, advising him to surround himself with "boost-producing democratic elements."¹⁴² Raab knew Reinthaller personally and saw him as a reliable contact who shared certain ideological positions. Furthermore, Raab assumed that his party's rival, the SPÖ, would never form a coalition with a well-known Nazi, and that this would provide the ÖVP with more political room to maneuver.¹⁴³

External observers occasionally became involved in the ongoing negotiations on a "Third Force." One of these was the German-born Gottfried Griesmayr,¹⁴⁴ who acted as an intermediary between the VdU, on the one hand, and Reinthaller and his followers, on the other.¹⁴⁵ Griesmayr advised Reinthaller to take over the VdU but warned him not to dispense with Kraus altogether because, according to Griesmayr, Kraus's "liberal-clerical veneer, his Western-ness could 'soften' and complement the [party's] strong-as-an-oak nationalism. A Reinthaller–Kraus alliance would be a true compromise to start with."¹⁴⁶ However, the VdU middleman Jörg Kandutsch refused to entertain such a suggestion: "The belief that men had to be used as fig leaves back in 1949 [. . .] because the 'elite of the national movement' were unable or unwilling to step forward, but that these [fig leaves] are now redundant, is in my view reprehensible and politically stupid. I refuse to stoop to this."¹⁴⁷ However, Kandutsch, who was known to be a Kraus supporter, later had a change of heart and played a leading role in the FPÖ from its beginnings.

The establishment of the *Freiheitspartei* was followed by months of negotiations on uniting the national camp. Mutual mistrust brought these negotiations close to collapse on several occasions.¹⁴⁸ Over the course of 1955, the Styrian and Carinthian regional associations of the VdU, followed by others, split from the party and defected to Reinthaller. On October 17, 1955, it was decided that Reinthaller's *Freiheitspartei* would join forces with those factions of the VdU that had been purged of "liberals," as well as diverse right-wing figures who had hitherto not been attached to any political party, to form a new "united freedom party." The new party's organ, *Die Neue Front*, applauded the decision:

Hundreds of thousands of Austrian women and men are sick of the coalition parties' dictatorship and its pernicious forms and are therefore

calling for a strong, freedom-oriented opposition. Over the past few days, these people have witnessed the fulfillment of a long-cherished wish. At last, the many factions that are positioned between and against black and red and share the same political goals have managed to come together to form a single organization.¹⁴⁹

The new party agreed on the name *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, and in November, it published a short manifesto pledging, among other things, support for a “social *Volks-gemeinschaft*” and belonging to a “German *Volks- und Kultur-gemeinschaft*.”¹⁵⁰ According to the FPÖ itself, its members received a tumultuous reception when it made its public debut in December 1955.¹⁵¹ But despite such public support, internal squabbling continued within the supposedly unified “national” camp. In Styria, the radical former SS member Herbert Schweiger led a rebellion by right-wing extremists,¹⁵² while in Upper Austria, some erstwhile Nazi functionaries felt that Reinthaller was not paying them the respect they deserved as “old comrades-in-arms.”¹⁵³ Quarrels also broke out over seats, causing an exasperated Reinthaller to threaten to resign in early 1956. The resignation was averted, however, after van Tongel pleaded with Reinthaller to remain.¹⁵⁴

The FPÖ was officially founded on April 7, 1956, with the slogan “faith, loyalty, and sacrifice. Then the future is ours.” At this first FPÖ party conference, which was held in the relatively modest surroundings of a drab, narrow room in the Weißer Hahn hotel in Vienna, Reinthaller was elected party chairman by a large majority. In his acceptance speech, he called for unity within the “national-liberal” camp and stated unequivocally that Austrians belonged “to the German *Volk*.”¹⁵⁵ This marked a radical departure from Reinthaller’s previous public statements, in which he had professed his allegiance to Austria and distanced himself from the Nazi leadership, comments that had provoked ire within his own ranks.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, at the party conference, Reinthaller also rejected “every form of extremism, no matter whether it is to the right or the left” and advocated a “politics of the center.”¹⁵⁷ He and the FPÖ would continue to follow this two-pronged strategy, pledging support for German nationalism to appeal to its own supporters, on the one hand, yet adopting a moderate tone and rejecting a vaguely defined “extremism” to reassure outside observers on the other.¹⁵⁸ Reinthaller’s positioning of the FPÖ as a centrist party was reflected in the seating arrangement in the newly formed parliament.¹⁵⁹ The FPÖ demanded that its parliamentary group be seated in the middle of the parliament, a demand that was granted in 1956 (unlike in 1949, when the same request from the VdU had been refused). However, the FPÖ had little

time to mobilize when a snap general election was called in May 1956, and so, to its great disappointment, it won only 6.5 percent of the vote, which resulted in six seats.

As agreed, the VdU was dissolved immediately after the establishment of the FPÖ. The deposed Kraus withdrew from politics, explaining with some bitterness that he had decided to leave the party because of a “long-planned coup” carried out “by a small circle of right-wing extremists and Nazi leaders.” The FPÖ’s self-characterization as a “party of the center” was a smokescreen, according to Kraus. In reality, he said, the FPÖ was a party “focused on the past” whose aim was to provide “certain fallen heroes of the Nazi regime with a new political platform.”¹⁶⁰ The FPÖ dismissed Kraus’s criticism, which was clearly directed at Reinthaller, and responded with counterattacks.¹⁶¹ Newspapers such as the *Linzer Volksblatt* reported on a “Nazi coup within the FPÖ,”¹⁶² while the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* warned that “the ‘Gauleiter club’ is stirring once again.”¹⁶³ In the same vein, the communist *Volksstimme* described the FPÖ as a “new Nazi Party” with Reinthaller, “one of the foremost gravediggers of Austrian independence,” at its helm.¹⁶⁴

Despite their hyperbolic nature, these criticisms were not easy to refute. Presiding over the FPÖ was a high-ranking and committed Nazi who determined the party’s direction until his death in March 1958.¹⁶⁵ Reinthaller was succeeded by his protégé, Friedrich Peter, another “incriminated” figure, who, as a member of an infamous SS unit, had been involved in mass murders.¹⁶⁶ Inveterate Nazis had also been installed at many other levels of the party, in the national executive committee, and in the party’s regional branches. While less prominent than Reinthaller and Peter, these figures were characterized as “right-wing extremists” even by historians who were sympathetic to the party.¹⁶⁷ In addition, several “incriminated” figures and German nationalist *Burschenschaft* members began to flock to the FPÖ and its milieu, having received new political impetus from the change in leadership.¹⁶⁸ There were hardly any personnel changes within the parliamentary group, however, as five of the six members of parliament had been active in the VdU, and the only new member—Heinz Zechmann, a former *Reichsredner* (Reich Propaganda Speaker) and Gauamtsleiter (head of a Gau office)—was one of Reinthaller’s men. All things considered, the shifts in Austria’s political landscape that took place in 1956 were less dramatic than has often been claimed. The widespread view that the “liberal” VdU was supplanted by the “national” FPÖ is mistaken, as many former Nazis were members of the VdU and the two parties shared obvious ideological commonalities.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, it is true that the establishment of the FPÖ marked a transfer of

power to the extreme “nationals” who dominated the party. It therefore also marked a clear shift to the right. In the decades that followed, the FPÖ was a small but extremely ideologically driven party with a clear German nationalist orientation.¹⁷⁰ Owing to its Nazi links in terms of both personnel and ideology, as well as its failure to distance itself from National Socialism, the FPÖ has played with right-wing extremism throughout its history.¹⁷¹

Conclusion: Treading the Line between Continuity and Adaptation

The reorganization of the *Ehemaligen* can be understood only in the context of postwar Austria’s political reckoning with the past. After a brief anti-fascist phase, during which denazification barred them from political involvement, former Nazis rapidly began to reorganize. The most successful of the new parties was Herbert Kraus’s VdU, which provided a haven for all those Nazis who did not wish to join the major parties. The fight against denazification was a key point in the VdU’s political agenda, but as denazification wound down, this point quickly became obsolete. The resulting crisis in the VdU led to infighting in the early 1950s between those VdU leaders who were deemed too “liberal” and the increasingly self-confident and politically ambitious “nationals.” After years of internal power struggles, the latter emerged victorious. In the meantime, international affairs had developed to the advantage of the “nationals.” External monitoring of Austrian politics ceased with the Austrian State Treaty of May 1955, which saw the Allies withdraw from the country. From then on there was nothing standing in the way of the full rehabilitation of the *Ehemaligen*. It is no coincidence, then, that the political mobilization of the *Ehemaligen* and the establishment of the FPÖ with its (German) nationalist orientation took place during this period. Numerous former Nazis were active in the FPÖ and its affiliated associations and veterans’ organizations, such as *Soziales Friedenswerk*, *Kameradschaft IV*, *Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher*, *Österreichischer Turnverein*, and German nationalist *Burschenschaften*. Many of these former Nazis had ostensibly (and reluctantly) adjusted to Austria’s new democratic order, but at heart, they had remained largely true to their convictions. The FPÖ served as the political representative of this *Ehemaligen* milieu, a milieu which, despite its heterogeneity, managed to build a community spanning decades and indeed generations based on shared experiences, views, and memories.

Anton Reinthaller was more than just part of this milieu: he was its central political actor. Though it spanned three successive systems—the First Austrian Republic/Austrofascism, Nazism, and the Second Austrian Republic—his

career demonstrates marked biographical and ideological continuities, and so in numerous respects it is representative of many Austrian Nazis. As a high-ranking Nazi functionary, Reinthaller espoused Nazi ideology, actively facilitated the Anschluss, and was implicated in the Nazi regime and its crimes until the war ended. His storybook career under Nazism was typical of elite Austrian Nazi functionaries. There is no evidence at present that he was directly involved in Nazi crimes, but the high political and administrative positions he held within the regime mean that he bore at least partial responsibility for these crimes. Reinthaller was one of the few prominent Nazi functionaries in Austria who, after undergoing the usual denazification procedures, went on to assume a key political position again after the war.

Reinthaller's retrospective explanation of Nazism and his own role within it was typical of the *Ehemaligen* discourse. He presented himself as a passive altruist who had acted only at the behest of others and had never pursued his own political goals. At the same time, he drew on the familiar motif of the "disillusioned idealist," skillfully combining it with the trope of the Nazi who became increasingly critical after 1938. But while Reinthaller retrospectively distanced himself from the Holocaust, he had completely embraced the *völkisch* and antisemitic ideology of National Socialism at the time. In the light of his political activities, the high positions he held, and his convictions, which remained largely unchanged throughout the various political systems he operated in, the image he sought to project can be seen as a retrospective attempt to justify his actions and absolve himself of blame. His insistence that he was a "victim of victor's justice" and the odious parallels he drew between his own internment and the experiences of those imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps were also typical of the self-exoneration strategies deployed in the *Ehemaligen* milieu. Reinthaller was never willing to accept personal responsibility or admit to guilt.

There are several reasons why the *Ehemaligen* rallied around Reinthaller and pinned their hopes on him after 1945. First and foremost, he was one of the few high-ranking Austrian Nazis available after 1945, and thanks to his long political career, he was relatively well known. Furthermore, as an "a member of the old guard," Reinthaller appeared to be committed to National Socialist ideology and was therefore highly regarded by the unreconstructed *Ehemaligen*. Also working in his favor were his political experience as a former Nazi minister and the strong network he had built beyond his own party. Finally, Reinthaller was seen as a "peacemaker," a conciliatory figure who was also a formidable political maneuverer, and as such he was believed to be best placed to unite the divided nationalist camp.

The role of “intermediary”—a role he adopted in three political systems—was one of the constants in Reinthaller’s life. After the war, he downplayed his pre-1938 negotiations with the Austrofascist regime. In describing them as “peacemaking initiatives,” he cleverly cemented his reputation as a “moderate” Nazi. On the one hand, it is true that Reinthaller might be considered “moderate” when compared with the far more radical and violent wings of the Nazi Party in the 1930s. On the other hand, however, Reinthaller’s central role in the negotiations is evidence of his high status within the illegal Nazi Party. Reinthaller’s activities as an intermediary enabled him to cultivate valuable contacts within conservative-bourgeois circles and to use these contacts to his advantage in the changed political landscape of postwar Austria. His flair for forging alliances and his close relationship with the ÖVP were not solely due to the personal contacts he had built up prior to 1938, however; they also owed a great deal to his rural Catholic upbringing, to his professional experience in the agricultural sector, and to the ideological commonalities shared by the nationalist and clerical-conservative camps.

Notwithstanding his ideological convictions and his rootedness in the *Ehemaligen* milieu, Reinthaller proved himself willing and able to adapt to the changed circumstances after 1945. Aware of his vulnerable position as an “offender,” he refrained from making extreme statements, distanced himself from “inveterate” colleagues, and adopted a moderate official position with regard to the state of Austria. In the postwar years, declaring support for Austrian independence was seen as a litmus test for one’s rejection of Nazism and espousal of democracy. In contrast to many of his fellow German nationalists, Reinthaller was prepared to make this declaration (in public, at least). While this provoked criticism from within his own ranks, it also secured him the acceptance of his political opponents. His profession of support for the state of Austria and his half-hearted efforts to distance himself from Nazism were at odds with the German nationalist orientation of the very party he had founded, but it allowed him (along with many other former Nazis) to establish a place within the patriotic Austrian collective.

Anton Reinthaller’s significance in Austrian politics is due not just to his extraordinary career under National Socialism, but also to the central role he played in organizing the *Ehemaligen* into a political force after 1945. As the FPÖ’s founder and first chairman, he was a major political actor in the Second Republic. His postwar political career was a balancing act between biographical and ideological continuities, on the one hand, and adaptation, on the other. Though he remained largely true to his convictions after 1945, he adapted at least partly to the (not very stringent) normative requirements imposed by

official Austrian policies on reckoning with the past. In so doing, he showed himself to be “compatible” with postwar Austrian democracy.

Notes

1. This contribution is a considerably shortened version of my original publication “Anton Reinthaller und die Anfänge der Freiheitlichen Partei Österreichs. Der politische Werdegang eines Nationalsozialisten und die “Ehemaligen” in der “Zweiten Republik,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 66, no. 4 (October 2018): 539–75.

2. Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv (hereafter: OÖLA), Nachlass (personal papers, hereafter: NL) Reinthaller, Verband der Unabhängigen/Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (hereafter: VdU/FPÖ) IV, “Erklärung von Herbert Kraus, 12.4.1956.” See also “Wahlbündnis der SPOe mit der Reinthaller-Nazipartei: Ein Schlag ins Gesicht der sozialistischen Arbeiter,” *Volksstimme*, November 1, 1955. In the present article, every original German citation was translated by Sinéad Crowe unless otherwise stated.

3. See “Transparenz statt Diskretion! Stellungnahme am Österreichischen Zeitgeschichtetag 2018 an der Universität Wien zur sogenannten FPÖ-Historikerkommission,” Vienna, April 5, 2018, accessed November 21, 2019, www.openpetition.eu/at/petition/online/transparenz-statt-diskretion-fpoe-historikerkommission.

4. *Bericht der Historikerkommission: Analysen und Materialien zur Geschichte des Dritten Lagers und der FPÖ* (Vienna: Freiheitliches Bildungsinstitut, 2019), accessed May 7, 2020, https://www.fpoe.at/fileadmin/user_upload/www.fpoe.at/dokumente/2019/PDFs/Buch-Historikerkommission-Web.pdf; Margit Reiter/Oliver Rathkolb/Gerhard Baumgartner: *Wissenschaftliche Stellungnahme zum FPÖ-“Historikerbericht”: Nachwort zum FPÖ-Bericht “Analysen und Materialien zur Geschichte des ‘Dritten Lagers’ und der FPÖ,”* accessed May 7, 2020, <https://www.doew.at/neues/wissenschaftliche-stellungnahme-zum-fpoe-historikerbericht>.

5. See Kurt Piringer, *Der VdU: Verband der Unabhängigen 1949–1955. Eine Dokumentation* (Vienna: Freiheitliche Akademie, 1999); idem, *Die Geschichte der Freiheitlichen: Beitrag der Dritten Kraft zur österreichischen Politik* (Vienna: Orac, 1982); Lothar Höbelt, *Von der vierten Partei zur dritten Kraft: Die Geschichte des VdU* (Graz: Leopold Stocker Verlag, 1999); Dieter Grillmayer, *National und Liberal: Die Geschichte der Dritten Kraft in Österreich* (Vienna: Edition Genius, 2006).

6. See Herbert Kraus, *Untragbare Objektivität: Politische Erinnerungen 1917 bis 1987* (Vienna: Amalthea, 1988); Viktor Reimann, *Die Dritte Kraft in Österreich* (Vienna: Molden, 1980); Fritz Stüber, *Ich war Abgeordneter: Die Entstehung der freiheitlichen Opposition in Österreich* (Graz: Leopold Stocker Verlag, 1974).

7. See Max E. Riedlsparger, *The Lingering Shadow of Nazism: The Austrian Independent Party Movement since 1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978); Kurt Richard Luther, “Zwischen unkritischer Selbstdarstellung und bedingungsloser externer Verurteilung: Nazivergangenheit, Antisemitismus und Holocaust im Schrifttum der Freiheitlichen Partei Österreichs,” in Werner Bergmann, Rainer Erb and Albert Lichtblau, eds., *Schwieriges Erbe: Der Umgang mit Nationalsozialismus und Antisemitismus in*

Österreich, der DDR und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 1995), 138–67.

8. See Lothar Höbel, “Anton Reinthaller,” in Manfred Welan and Gerhard Poschacher, eds., *Von Figl bis Fischler: Bedeutende Absolventen der “BOKU” Wien* (Graz: Leopold Stocker Verlag, 2005), 165–69; Fritz Wolfram, “Anton Reinthaller: Der erste Bundesobmann der Freiheitlichen Partei Österreichs,” in *Freie Argumente* 20, no. 4 (1993): 66–68; Kurt Piringer, “Anton Reinthaller: Ein fester Charakter in stürmischer Zeit,” *Freie Argumente* 22, no. 2 (1995): 71–72.

9. See Lothar Höbel, “Die ‘Aktion Reinthaller’: ‘Ständestaat’ und ‘Nationale Opposition,’” in *Oberösterreich 1918–1938*, ed. by Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv, vol. 1 (Linz: OÖLA, 2014), 47–88; Heinz-Dietmar Schimanko, *Der Fall Reinthaller: Das Strafverfahren gegen Anton Reinthaller vor dem Volksgericht* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2019).

10. Margit Reiter, *Die Ehemaligen: Der Nationalsozialismus und die Anfänge der FPÖ* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2019). The book is based on a project funded by the Austrian Science Fund titled “Antisemitism after the Shoah: Ideological Continuities and Political Reorientation of Former National Socialists in Postwar Austria” (P 27102–G16). See Margit Reiter, “Die ‘Ehemaligen’: Politische Reorganisation und Reintegration von ehemaligen Nationalsozialistinnen in Österreich nach 1945,” special issue, *Zeitgeschichte* 44, no. 3 (May/June 2017). See Margit Reiter, “Die ‘Ehemaligen’ nach 1945: Selbstpräsentationen, Antisemitismus und Antiamerikanismus,” in Lucile Dreidemy et al., eds., *Bananen, Cola, Zeitgeschichte: Oliver Rathkolb und das lange 20. Jahrhundert*, vol. 1 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2015), 575–89; Margit Reiter, “Inklusion und Exklusion: Zur politischen Formierung ehemaliger Nationalsozialisten im Verband der Unabhängigen (VdU) und in der frühen FPÖ,” *Zeitgeschichte* 44, no. 3 (May/June 2017): 143–59.

11. Unfortunately, my numerous requests for access to the FPÖ’s archives were denied.

12. Reinthaller’s papers are held at the OÖLA. When I was conducting my research in 2015/16, these papers had not yet been fully organized. I wish to thank colleagues at the OÖLA for allowing me full access to this important material. A selection of documents from Reinthaller’s papers can be found in Lothar Höbel, ed., *Aufstieg und Fall des VdU: Briefe und Protokolle aus privaten Nachlässen 1948–1955* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2015).

13. See “Verfassungsgesetz vom 8. Mai 1945 über das Verbot der NSDAP” *Staatsgesetzblatt* (hereafter: StGBL.), no. 13 (June 1945), accessed November 21, 2019, www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1945_13_0/1945_13_0.pdf.

14. See “Verfassungsgesetz vom 26. Juni 1945 über Kriegsverbrechen und andere nationalsozialistische Untaten (Kriegsverbrechergesetz)” *StGBL.*, no. 32 (June 1945), accessed November 21, 2019, www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1945_32_0/1945_32_0.pdf.

15. For a general overview of denazification in Austria, see Dieter Stiefel, *Entnazifizierung in Österreich* (Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1981); Sebastian Meissl, Klaus-Dieter Mulley and Oliver Rathkolb, eds., *Verdrängte Schuld, verfehlte Sühne: Entnazifizierung in Österreich 1945–1955* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1986); Walter Schuster and Wolfgang Weber, eds., *Entnazifizierung im regionalen Vergleich* (Linz: Archiv der Stadt Linz, 2004).

16. See Gerald Steinacher, *Nazis auf der Flucht: Wie Kriegsverbrecher über Italien nach Übersee entkamen*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2014).

17. See Wilhelm Svoboda, "... vorbehaltlos meine Pflicht erfüllt." Das Internierungslager Glasenbach (Camp 'Marcus W. Orr'), *Zeitgeschichte* 22, no. 1/2 (January/February 1995): 3–29; Oskar Dohle and Peter Eigelsberger, *Camp Marcus W. Orr: "Glasenbach" als Internierungslager nach 1945* (Linz: Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv, 2009); Gabriela Stieber, *Die Briten als Besatzungsmacht in Kärnten 1945–1955* (Klagenfurt: Verlag des Kärntner Landesarchivs, 2005).

18. See Reiter, *Die Ehemaligen*, 32–47.

19. At the core of the *Ehemaligen* were a heterogeneous mix of Austrian Nazi supporters and accomplices: see Dirk Hänisch, *Die österreichischen NSDAP-Wähler: Eine empirische Analyse ihrer politischen Herkunft und ihres Sozialprofils* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1998); Gerhard Jagschitz, "Von der 'Bewegung' zum Apparat: Zur Phänomenologie der NSDAP 1938 bis 1945," in Emmerich Tálos, Ernst Hanisch and Wolfgang Neugebauer, eds., *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich: Ein Handbuch* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 2000), 88–122.

20. See Margit Reiter, *Die Generation danach: Der Nationalsozialismus im Familiengedächtnis* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2006), 53–57.

21. On the SPÖ, see Maria Mesner, ed., *Entnazifizierung zwischen politischem Anspruch, Parteienkonkurrenz und Kaltem Krieg: Das Beispiel der SPÖ* (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2005); Wolfgang Neugebauer and Peter Schwarz, eds., *Der Wille zum aufrechten Gang: Offenlegung der Rolle des BSA bei der gesellschaftlichen Reintegration ehemaliger Nationalsozialisten* (Vienna: Czernin Verlag, 2005). On the ÖVP, see Michael Wladika, *Zur Repräsentanz von Politikern und Mandataren mit NS-Vergangenheit in der österreichischen Volkspartei 1945–1980*, Vienna 2018, accessed April 15, 2020, <http://www.vogelsanginstitut.at/at/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/forschungsbericht.pdf>; Matthias Falter, "Zwischen Kooperation und Konkurrenz: Die 'Ehemaligen' und die Österreichische Volkspartei," *Zeitgeschichte* 44, no. 3 (May/June 2017): 160–74; Hendrik Schäfer, *ÖVP, CDU/CSU und der Rechtsextremismus der Nachkriegszeit (1945–57): Ein Vergleich der Entwicklung in Österreich und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Munich: GRIN Verlag, 2005).

22. See Peter Autengruber, *Kleinparteien in Österreich 1945 bis 1966* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 1997); Reiter, *Inklusion*, 143–44.

23. See "Das Problem einer neuen Partei," *Berichte und Informationen* (hereafter: *BuI*), May 31, 1946; "Die Mißstände in unserem Parteiwesen," *BuI*, August 22, 1947; "Die möglichen Wege einer vierten Partei," *BuI*, November 26, 1948.

24. The VdU described itself as a *Wahlverband* (electoral league) for legal reasons; in avoiding the word "party," it circumvented the obligation to apply for a permit from the Allies. On the establishment of the VdU, see Höbelt, *Vierte Partei*; idem, ed., *Aufstieg und Fall*; Riedlsperger, *Lingering Shadow*, 39–74.

25. See "Versöhnung," *BuI*, December 20, 1946; "Das Nationalsozialistengesetz: Will man durch ein hochgefährliches Gesetz den Staatsvertrag erkaufen?," *BuI*, February 21, 1947; Viktor Reimann, "Überzeugung," *Salzburger Nachrichten*, June 4, 1947; Viktor Reimann, "Die versäumte Revolution," *Die Neue Front*, April 8, 1949; Reiter, *Inklusion*, 146–47.

26. "Die Ziele unseres Verbandes," *Die Neue Front*, February 25, 1949.

27. See Siegfried Göllner, *Die politischen Diskurse zur "Entnazifizierung,"*

“Causa Waldheim” und “EU-Sanktionen”: Opfernarrative und Geschichtsbilder in Nationalratsdebatten (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2009).

28. For criticism of this view, see Reiter, *Inklusion*, 146–47; Brigitte Behal, *Dr. Viktor Reimann 1915–1996: Historiker, Politiker, Publizist* (Diploma Thesis, University of Vienna, 2005).

29. See Reiter, *Inklusion*, 147–49. It is estimated that 60 percent of the VdU’s members were former Nazis: see Riedlsperger, *Lingering Shadow*, 45.

30. Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv (hereafter: StLA), NL Karl Hartleb, box 1, personal folder, and box 16, VdU folder, 1946–51, “Der Fall Gordon Gollob.”

31. For further detail, see Piringer, *VdU*, 81–106; Höbelt, *Vierte Partei*, 139–78.

32. In the interwar period the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences was a stronghold of antisemitic German nationalist professors and students: see Paulus Ebner, *Politik und Hochschule: Die Hochschule für Bodenkultur 1914–1955* (Vienna: Deuticke, 2002).

33. See “Reinthaller Dipl.-Ing. Anton,” in Harry Slapnicka, *Oberösterreich: Die politische Führungsschicht 1918 bis 1938* (Linz: OLV-Buchverlag, 1976), 217–19, here 218. See also the information on Reinhaller in the OÖLA’s biographical database, accessed November 22, 2019, <https://www.landesarchiv-ooe.at/projekte/biografische-datenbank>.

34. Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, A1-Gauakten, Personalakten des Gaus Wien, Anton Reinhaller, and Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Archiv der Republik, Inneres, Gauakt Anton Reinhaller (77.2.46).

35. On the power struggles within the (illegal) Nazi Party prior to 1938, see Bruce Pauley, *Der Weg in den Nationalsozialismus: Ursprünge und Entwicklung in Österreich* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1988).

36. See Emmerich Tólos, *Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem: Österreich 1933–1938* (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2013), 52–57.

37. See Pauley, *Weg in den Nationalsozialismus*, 105–22.

38. See Thomas Dostal, “Das ‘braune Netzwerk’ in Linz,” in Fritz Mayrhofer and Walter Schuster, eds., *Nationalsozialismus in Linz*, vol. 1 (Linz: Archiv der Stadt Linz, 2001), 21–136, here 79–80.

39. See Höbelt, “Aktion Reinhaller” in *Oberösterreich 1918–1938*; Dostal, “Braunes Netzwerk,” in Mayrhofer and Schuster, eds., *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 1, 79–83; Pauley, *Weg in den Nationalsozialismus*, 146–48.

40. See Höbelt, “Aktion Reinhaller,” in *Oberösterreich 1918–1938*, 50–51.

41. OÖLA, Bestand Sammlungen und Nachlässe 2, Materialien zu NS-Biographien, box 11, “Reinthaller, Schreiben von Theo Habicht an Flüchtlingshilfswerk der NSDAP, Mitgliedschaftsamt, 25.3.1937.” In his postwar trial Reinhaller put forward this expulsion in his defense. In fact he claimed that he had been expelled from the party up to five times, but there is no documentation in the sources to support this: see Hellmut Butterweck, *Nationalsozialisten vor dem Volksgericht Wien: Österreichs Ringen um Gerechtigkeit 1945–1955 in der zeitgenössischen Wahrnehmung* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2016), 667.

42. See Peter Black, *Ernst Kaltenbrunner: Ideological Soldier of the Third Reich* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 89–93.

43. See Kurt Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch: Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*

(St. Pölten: Residenz Verlag, 2014); Hans Schafranek, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen: Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934* (Vienna: Czernin Verlag, 2006).

44. Archiv des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte München (hereafter: IfZ-Archiv), ZS 1348, "Anton Reinthaller, Interrogation Nr. 682, 5.2.1947," 4–5.

45. See Dostal, "Braunes Netzwerk," in Mayrhofer and Schuster, eds., *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 1, 73.

46. See Höbelt, "Aktion Reinthaller," in *Oberösterreich 1918–1938*, 56–57.

47. As of July 1, 1933, German citizens were required to pay a fee of 1,000 Reichsmarks whenever they crossed the border into Austria. The German Reich imposed this economic sanction to weaken the Austrian economy, which was heavily dependent on tourism.

48. See Höbelt, "Aktion Reinthaller," in *Oberösterreich 1918–1938*, 58.

49. See *ibid.*, 61.

50. See Dostal, "Braunes Netzwerk," in Mayrhofer and Schuster, eds., *Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 1, 83–90.

51. See Pauley, *Weg in den Nationalsozialismus*, 161–65.

52. See Höbelt, "Aktion Reinthaller," in *Oberösterreich 1918–1938*, 78.

53. On Seyß-Inquart's role in various "peacekeeping initiatives," see Johannes Koll, *Arthur Seyß-Inquart und die deutsche Besatzungspolitik in den Niederlanden (1940–1945)* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2015), 37–53.

54. Bundesarchiv Koblenz, N 1180/2. I am grateful to Johannes Koll for directing me to this source.

55. On the Anschluss, see Gerhard Botz, *Nationalsozialismus in Wien: Machtübernahme, Herrschaftssicherung, Radikalisierung, Kriegsvorbereitung 1938/39*, new expanded edition (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2018).

56. IfZ-Archiv, ZS 1348, "Anton Reinthaller, Interrogation Nr. 682, 5.2.1947," 7.

57. OÖLA, Bestand Sammlungen und Nachlässe 2, Materialien zu NS-Biographien, box 11, "Reinthaller, SS-Personalhauptamt, Reinthaller, Anton (14.4.1895)."

58. See the clip from a speech given by Reinthaller at a referendum rally in Stumm, Tyrol, on April 1, 1938, available at Österreichische Mediathek, www.mediathek.at/atom/132D86A3-0F2-001ED-00000478-132D043B. The entire speech is available at www.mediathek.at/atom/017831DF-33B-018E6-00000BEC-01772EE2. Both links accessed November 22, 2019.

59. *Ibid.*

60. See Margit Reiter, "Antisemitismus in der FPÖ und im 'Ehemaligen'-Milieu nach 1945 in Österreich," *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 27 (December 2018): 117–49, here 140–45.

61. See Gerhard Siegl, *Bergbauern im Nationalsozialismus: Die Berglandwirtschaft zwischen Agrarideologie und Kriegswirtschaft* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2013), 85.

62. Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter: BArchB), R 43 II/1356, "Arthur Seyß-Inquart an Richard Walther Darré, 3.5.1939." I am grateful to Johannes Koll for directing me to this source.

63. See Siegl, *Bergbauern*, 83–87.

64. See Anton Reinthaller, "Bauern auf kargen Böden," *Deutsche Agrarpolitik* 2, no. 8 (1944): 217–19; Reinthaller, "Die österreichische Landwirtschaft," *Der Vierjahresplan* 2

(1938): 204–05; Reinhaller, “Ein kostbarer Schatz der Nation’: Der nationalsozialistische Staat hilft dem deutschen Bergbauernstum,” *Nationalsozialistische Landpost*, no. 8, February 23, 1940.

65. See Siegl, *Bergbauern*, 87–91.

66. *Ibid.*, 55, 266, 291. See also Ernst Langthaler, *Schlachtfelder: Alltägliches Wirtschaften in der nationalsozialistischen Agrargesellschaft 1938–1945* (Vienna: Böhlau: 2016), 181–84.

67. See Siegl, *Bergbauern*, 230–31.

68. Langthaler, *Schlachtfelder*, 444–45.

69. Explanation supplied in the entry dated June 19, 1942, titled “Dr. Ing. Reinthal[l]er Landesbauernführer besucht mit 20 Kreisbauernführer[n] das Lager Mauthausen,” in Bertrand Perz, *Verwaltete Gewalt: Der Tätigkeitsbericht des Verwaltungsführers im Konzentrationslager Mauthausen 1941 bis 1944* (Vienna: Bundesministerium für Inneres, 2013), 98–99, here 99. I wish to thank Bertrand Perz for directing me to this source.

70. See Langthaler, *Schlachtfelder*, 156–72.

71. See Ela Hornung, Ernst Langthaler, and Sabine Schweitzer, *Zwangsarbeit in der Landwirtschaft in Niederösterreich und dem nördlichen Burgenland* (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2004).

72. OÖLA, Bestand Sammlungen und Nachlässe 2, Materialien zu NS-Biographien, box 11, “Reinhaller, Anton Reinhaller an den Reichsführer SS, 21.5.1941.”

73. Documents relating to Reinhaller’s requests for the badge for old Nazi Party members can be found in OÖLA, Bestand Sammlungen und Nachlässe, box 11, “Materialien zu NS-Biographien, Reinhaller.” See also BArchB, “Parteikorrespondenz, Anton Reinhaller (14.4.1895), Reinhaller an den Reichsschatzmeister der NSDAP, München, 31.5.1939.” This doggedness stands in sharp contradiction to Reinhaller’s postwar attempts to defend himself by emphasizing his expulsion from the party.

74. See “Erste Kriegsverbrecherliste Österreichs,” *Neues Österreich*, December 4, 1945.

75. IfZ-Archiv, ZS 1348, “Anton Reinhaller, Interrogation Nr. 682, 5.2.1945,” IfZ-Archiv, ZS 1348, “Interrogation Nr. 682a, 21.2.1947,” IfZ-Archiv, ZS 1348, “Vernehmung des Zeugen Anton Reinhaller durch Prof. Dr. R.M.W. Kempner, 8.5.1947.”

76. OÖLA, NL Reinhaller, “Gerichte Deutschland 1945ff, An alle, die es angeht, 3.7.1950,” OÖLA, NL Reinhaller, “Reinhaller an Außenminister Karl Gruber, undatiert (1950),” and OÖLA, NL Reinhaller, “Reinhaller an Hans Haider, März 1950”; StLA, NL Hartleb, box 12 (Korrespondenzen), “Reinhaller an Karl Hartleb, 5.7.1950.”

77. OÖLA, NL Reinhaller, “Diverses, Heft 1,” 1. The archive contains five small notebooks densely filled with handwriting.

78. For a more detailed discussion, see Reiter, *Antisemitismus in der FPÖ*, 140–45.

79. OÖLA, NL Reinhaller, “Diverses, Heft 2,” 9–10.

80. OÖLA, NL Reinhaller, “Diverses, Heft 3 bis 5.”

81. OÖLA, NL Reinhaller, “Gerichte 1945ff, Reinhaller an Bundespräsident Karl Renner, 3.7.1950.”

82. *Ibid.*

83. OÖLA, NL Reinhaller, “Gerichte 1945ff, Volksgericht (VG) Wien an Reinhaller, 10.7.1950.”

84. See Butterweck, *Nationalsozialisten*, 665–71.

85. For a detailed account of the trial, see Schimanko, *Fall Reinthaller*, 42–45.
86. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, “Gerichte 1945ff, Antrag um Einstellung des Verfahrens, 9.7.1949”; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, “Eingabe an VG Wien, 6.8.1949.”
87. Numerous documents on this line of defense can be found in OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, “Gerichte 1945ff.” See also Schimanko, *Fall Reinthaller*, 45–47, 161–63.
88. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, “Gerichte 1945ff,” Office of Chief of Council for War Crimes, “Paul H. Gantt an Reinthaller, 14.12.1948.”
89. To support this argument, the defense counsel submitted an expert report by Hans Merkel, a former SS member and Darré’s defense attorney in the 1948 Ministries Trial: see Schimanko, *Fall Reinthaller*, 203–40.
90. Cited in Butterweck, *Nationalsozialisten*, 671.
91. Cited in *ibid.*, 666.
92. On Reinthaller’s behavior in court, see *ibid.*, 666–68; Schimanko, *Fall Reinthaller*, 244–50.
93. IfZ-Archiv, ZS 12.48, “Anton Reinthaller, Interrogation Nr. 682, 5.2.1947,” 5.
94. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, “Gerichte Deutschland 1945ff, Reinthaller an Hans Haider, März 1950.”
95. Cited in Butterweck, *Nationalsozialisten*, 669.
96. IfZ-Archiv, ZS 12.48, “Anton Reinthaller, Interrogation Nr. 682, 5.2.1947,” 7; IfZ-Archiv, ZS 12.48, “Vernehmung des Zeugen Reinthaller durch Prof. Dr. R. M. W. Kempner, 8.5.1947,” 21–22.
97. Cited in Schimanko, *Fall Reinthaller*, 249.
98. Cited in *ibid.*, 96.
99. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, “Diverses, Heft 4,” 2–3.
100. Cited in Schimanko, *Fall Reinthaller*, 97.
101. See Butterweck, *Nationalsozialisten*, 668.
102. Cited in *ibid.*, 670.
103. Archiv des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte Wien (hereafter: IZG-Archiv), NL 48, Felix Hurdes, DO 348, Reinthaller folder, “Eidesstattliche Erklärung von Heinrich Gleißner, 29.5.1948”; IZG-Archiv, NL 48, Felix Hurdes, DO 348, “Eidesstattliche Erklärung von Peter Revertera, 10.5.1948.”
104. IZG-Archiv, NL 48, Felix Hurdes, DO 348, Reinthaller folder, “Gemeindeamt Mettmach, Bestätigung 12.5.1948”; IZG-Archiv, NL 48, Felix Hurdes, DO 348, Reinthaller folder, “Pfarramt Mettmach, Bescheinigung 12.15.1948”; IZG-Archiv, NL 48, Felix Hurdes, DO 348, Reinthaller folder, “KPÖ Ortsgruppe Attersee, Bestätigung 17.5.1948.” The many affidavits are examined in more detail in Schimanko, *Fall Reinthaller*, 172–74.
105. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, “Gerichte Deutschland 1945ff, Geschwister Hintermeyer [sic!] an Reinthaller, 15.5.1945”; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, “Eidesstattliche Erklärung von Rosa Hintermayer [sic!], 17.5.1948.”
106. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, “Gerichte Deutschland 1945ff, Eidesstattliche Erklärung von Johann Exenschläger, 22.5.1948.”
107. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, “Gerichte Deutschland 1945ff, Eidesstattliche Erklärung von Rosa Hintermayer, 17.5.1948.”

108. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, "Gerichte Deutschland 1945ff, Eidesstattliche Erklärung von Maria Lang, 12.5.1948."
109. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, "Gerichte Deutschland 1945ff, Gnadengesuch an Bundespräsident Theodor Körner, 28.4.1952."
110. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, "Gerichte Deutschland 1945ff, Urteil VG Wien, 26.10.1950."
111. See Schimanko, *Fall Reinthaller*, 293–300.
112. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, "Gerichte 1945ff, Karl Günther an Otto Tiefenbrunner, 11.5.1952"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, "Karl Günther an René Marcic, 19.5.1952."
113. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, "Gerichte Deutschland 1945ff, Gnadengesuch an Bundespräsident Theodor Körner, 28.4.1952."
114. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, "Gerichte Deutschland 1945ff, Robert Scheuch an Reinthaller, 27.5.1952"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, "Reinthaller an Adolf Schärf, 3.6.1952"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, "Reinthaller an Adolf Schärf, 17.12.1952."
115. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, "Gerichte Deutschland 1945ff, Bescheid der Republik Österreich über Ausnahme aus Verbotsgesetz, 16.6.1953."
116. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Fritz Butschek an Reinthaller, 10.4.1952"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Fritz Butschek an Reinthaller, 31.5.1952"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Fritz Butschek an Reinthaller, 1.4.1953"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Fritz Butschek an Reinthaller, 2.4.4.1953."
117. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Ernst Strachwitz an Reinthaller, 24.10.1953"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Ernst Strachwitz an Reinthaller, 29.10.1953."
118. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Stefan Schachermayr an Reinthaller, 25.6.1953."
119. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Roland Timmel an Reinthaller, 30.6.1954."
120. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Bericht Landesverband der Unabhängigen (Egon Plachutta) an Reinthaller, 31.1.1955."
121. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Friedrich Peter an Reinthaller, 8.1.1955"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Friedrich Peter an Reinthaller, 17.1.1955." Peter's career went on to have a steep upward trajectory; within just three years, he had become Reinthaller's successor as FPÖ chairman.
122. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Herbert Kraus an Reinthaller, 31.5.1952"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Herbert Kraus an Reinthaller, 16.6.1952."
123. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Max Stendebach an Reinthaller, 18.4.1953."
124. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Helfried Pfeifer an Reinthaller, 25.1.1954."
125. See Höbelt, *Vierte Partei*, 217–50; Piringer, *VdU*, 111–13.
126. The "Aussee Manifesto" is published in *Österreichische Parteiprogramme 1868–1966*, ed. Klaus Berchtold (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1967), 488–91.
127. Piringer, *VdU*, 116. For the stenographic minutes of the parliamentary debate, see 39. Sitzung des Nationalrates der Republik Österreich, 7. Gesetzgebungsperiode, May 19, 1954, accessed November 22, 2019, www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/VII/NRSITZ/NRSITZ_00039/index.shtml#tab-Sten.Protokoll.
128. See Piringer, *Geschichte der Freiheitlichen*, 17. The party suggested the position of

deputy chairman, but this was not enough for Reinthaller, as he made clear in a memo: “Ver[bands] Tagung Aussee, 13.5.1954,” in Höbelt, ed., *Aufstieg und Fall*, 223.

129. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “Josef Maria Gutmann an Reinthaller, 20.5.1954.”

130. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “Resolution des Landesverbands der Unabhängigen in der Steiermark, Landesleitung, 31.10.1954.”

131. “Anton Reinthaller an Roland Timmel, 25.3.1954 (handschriftliches Konzept),” in Höbelt, ed., *Aufstieg und Fall*, 218–22, here 220.

132. See Piringner, *Geschichte der Freiheitlichen*, 18.

133. See “Anton Reinthaller an Friedrich Peter, Mettmach, 10.2.1955,” in Höbelt, ed., *Aufstieg und Fall*, 250–51.

134. “Handschriftliche Notiz Reinthallers auf dem Brief von Max Stendebach an Reinthaller, 24.9.1954,” in *ibid.*, 225.

135. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “VdU-Anfrage zur Besprechung mit Minister a. D. Ing. R., 14.12.1954”; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “Konzept von Reinthaller (ohne Titel), Dezember 1954”; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “Reinthaller an Max Stendebach, 27.1.1955.”

136. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “Konzept von Reinthaller (ohne Titel), Dezember 1954.” The adjective *völkisch* was soon dispensed with and replaced with the less loaded terms *national-freieitlich* (national-liberal) and *freieitlich* (liberal).

137. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “Gerhard Riha an Reinthaller, 30.12.1954.”

138. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “Komitee zur nationalen Einigung an Reinthaller, 21.12.1954.”

139. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “Fritz Butschek an Reinthaller, 14.12.1954”; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “Friedrich Peter an Reinthaller, 17.1.1955” (accompanied by a list of organizations and people in Linz who supported Reinthaller); OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “Klaus Mahnert an Reinthaller, 5.1.1955.” See also “Egon Plachutta an Anton Reinthaller, Graz, 30.12.1954,” in Höbelt, ed., *Aufstieg und Fall*, 229–32, here 231–32.

140. “Emil van Tongel an Anton Reinthaller, Schruns, 9.11.1954,” in *ibid.*, 227–28, here 227.

141. See Piringner, *Geschichte der Freiheitlichen*, 28–29.

142. *Ibid.*, 26.

143. On the role of the ÖVP, see Schäfer, *ÖVP*, 70–76.

144. A former Hitler Youth functionary, Griesmayr became, among other things, a leading member of the radical Deutsche Union after the war. He was also indirectly involved in the Naumann affair. See Beate Baldow, “Episode oder Gefahr? Die Naumann-Affäre,” (PhD diss., University Berlin “Freie Universität Berlin,” 2012); Richard Stöss, *Vom Nationalismus zum Umweltschutz: Die Deutsche Gemeinschaft/Aktionsgemeinschaft Unabhängiger Deutscher im Parteiensystem der Bundesrepublik* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1980), 72.

145. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “Gottfried Griesmayr an Jörg Kandutsch, 5.1.1955”; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, “Jörg Kandutsch an Gottfried Griesmayr, 26.12.1954.”

146. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Gottfried Griesmayr an Reinthaller, 6.1.1955."
147. Cited in OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ I, "Gottfried Griesmayr an Reinthaller, 25.1.1955."
148. See Riedlspurger, *Lingering Shadow*, 150–60; Piringer, *Geschichte der Freiheitlichen*, 17–40; "Freiheitspartei will nicht mit dem VdU," *Die Neue Front*, April 16, 1955.
149. "Einigung der Freiheitlichen," *Die Neue Front*, October 22, 1955.
150. *Parteiprogramme*, 492–93. See also Kurt Richard Luther, "Die Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs," in Herbert Dachs et al., eds., *Handbuch des politischen Systems Österreichs* (Vienna: Manz, 1992), 247–62, here 255–56. "Allegiance to the German *Völk- und Kulturgemeinschaft*" was pledged in all party manifestos until 1985, when it was replaced with a somewhat milder reference to belonging to the German "*Völk- und Kulturraum*."
151. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ II, "Unabhängiger Pressedienst der FPÖ, 2.12.1955." See also "Machtvoller Auftakt der FPÖ in Wien," *Die Neue Front*, December 10, 1955.
152. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ II, "Emil van Tongel an Reinthaller, 20.11.1955"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ II, "Egon Plachutta an Reinthaller, 25.12.1955"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ II, "Karl Heinz Marauschek an Reinthaller, 27.12.1955"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ II, "Herbert Schweiger an Reinthaller, 28.12.1955."
153. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ II, "Friedrich Peter an Reinthaller, 21.12.1955"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ II, "Reinthaller an Friedrich Peter, 29.12.1955"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ II, "Friedrich Peter an Reinthaller, 29.12.1955"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ IV, "Reinthaller an Friedrich Peter, 3.1.1956."
154. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ IV, "Emil van Tongel an Reinthaller, 3.1.1956"; OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ IV, "Emil van Tongel an Reinthaller, 9.1.1956."
155. Cited in Piringer, *Geschichte der Freiheitlichen*, 39.
156. See "Reinthaller gegen Extremismus," *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten*, July 15, 1955; Reiter, *Inklusion*, 151–52.
157. "Machtvoller Auftakt der FPÖ. Dipl.-Ing. Anton Reinthaller zum FPÖ-Obmann gewählt," *Die Neue Front*, April 14, 1956.
158. See for example "Rundfunkansprache von Reinthaller am 9.5.1956," *Die Neue Front*, May 12, 1956.
159. See Matthias Falter, "Reclaiming the Political Center after National Socialism: The Discursive Repositioning of the Far Right in Austrian (Party) Politics, 1949–60," *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 38, no. 1 (2018): 88–103.
160. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ IV, "Erklärung von Herbert Kraus, 12.4.1956." See also Kraus, *Objektivität*, 285–86.
161. OÖLA, NL Reinthaller, VdU/FPÖ IV, "FPÖ-Bundesparteileitung, Stellungnahme der FPÖ-Pressestelle: Die wahren Gründe für das Ausscheiden des Dr. Herbert Kraus aus der FPÖ, 12.4.1956." See also the opinion pieces and letters to the editor in *Die Neue Front*, April 21, 1956.
162. See "NS-Machtübernahme in der FPÖ," *Linzer Volksblatt*, April 13, 1956.
163. "Der 'Gauleiter-Klub' rührt sich wieder," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, May 12 and 13, 1956. Apparently, the term "Gauleiter Club" was an allusion to the Naumann affair within the

FDP. Unlike the FPÖ, the FDP really did have some former Gauleiters as members. See Kristian Buchna, *Nationale Sammlung an Rhein und Ruhr: Friedrich Mittelhaue und die nordrhein-westfälische FDP 1945–1953* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2010).

164. “Eine neue Naziartei,” *Volksstimme*, October 19, 1955.

165. See “Nachruf: Bundesparteioibmann Dipl.Ing. Reinthaller. Anton Reinthallers letzter Weg,” *Die Neue Front*, March 15, 1958.

166. Peter’s past did not catch up with him until the “Kreisky–Peter–Wiesenthal affair” erupted in 1975. Early in his career, Peter was a right-wing hardliner, but he later became a somewhat “reformed” character: see Reiter, *Inklusion*, 153–54.

167. Höbelt, *Vierte Partei*, 244.

168. Bernhard Weidinger, “Im nationalen Abwehrkampf der Grenzlanddeutschen”: *Akademische Burschenschaften und Politik in Österreich nach 1945* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2015), 532.

169. For a detailed account, see Reiter, *Inklusion*.

170. See Luther, “Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs,” 484–512; Susanne Frölich-Steffen, “Die Identitätspolitik der FPÖ: Vom Deutschnationalismus zum Österreich-Patriotismus” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 33, no. 3 (2004): 281–95.

171. The FPÖ’s links with right-wing extremism earned it a fixed place in the *Handbuch des österreichischen Rechtsextremismus* (Handbook of Austrian right-wing extremism), which has been published and updated several times by the Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstands (Documentation Center of Austrian Resistance). See Brigitte Bailer and Wolfgang Neugebauer, “Die FPÖ: Vom Liberalismus zum Rechtsextremismus,” in *Handbuch des österreichischen Rechtsextremismus*, ed. by Brigitte Bailer and Wolfgang Neugebauer, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Deuticke, 1993), 327–428.

From the General Government to the Bundestag?

The Christian-Social Union in Bavaria and the Case of Max Frauendorfer

THOMAS SCHLEMMER

TRANSLATION BY DONA GEYER

The fact that innumerable National Socialists in elite positions were able to continue their careers after 1945 has been a source of widespread criticism for many decades. We nevertheless still lack a thorough understanding how this professional reintegration functioned, and the question of where the limits to this reintegration of former National Socialists were set remains underexamined. Exploring this question could help shed light on a central problem of German postwar history. How could democracy take root in a society strongly shaped by National Socialism? This issue is at the very heart of Thomas Schlemmer's contribution, which aims to show that the democratic state's readiness to integrate former Nazis reached its limit when members of the Nazi elite became politically ambitious and sought elective public office. When they crossed that line, the mechanism that had made their social and professional rehabilitation possible frequently lost its protective character. The case study of Dr. Max Frauendorfer and his political ambitions can serve as an example. Frauendorfer had had a questionable career in the Third Reich as the head of the Labor Division in the so-called Generalgouvernement and as Obersturmbannführer of the SS. Yet between 1957 and 1963 he repeatedly sought a seat in parliament as a representative of the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU, *Christlich-Soziale Union*). This case study shows how the confrontation with the Nazi past changed in Germany between the 1950s and 1960s and illustrates the motives among leading circles of the conservative CSU in either supporting or fundamentally rejecting support for colleagues with questionable political backgrounds.

A National Socialist Career

Max Frauendorfer was born in Munich on June 14, 1909.¹ His father had made a name for himself as a lawyer, and another relative had been appointed minister and elevated to the nobility by Prince Regent Luitpold of Bavaria. At first Frauendorfer appeared to follow in his father's footsteps. After receiving his *Abitur* (secondary-education certificate), he studied law, economics, and journalism in Munich, Berlin, and Erlangen. In October 1931 he passed the first state examination in law in Munich and fourteen months later earned his doc-

torate in law at the University of Erlangen. In addition to jurisprudence, however, Max Frauendorfer quickly became involved in another activity: politics. He joined the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP, *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) (member number 85,562) on May 1, 1928, just a few weeks after completing his *Abitur*. At the same time he joined the *Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* (National Socialist German Students' Association), and in October 1928 he became a member of the SS (number 1,281).²

An intelligent student and persuasive speaker, Frauendorfer displayed extraordinary commitment to the cause, so that it was not long before he came to the attention of party leaders. As early as 1929 he was serving on a voluntary basis as an aide in the Economic Policy Department of the NSDAP national leadership, the *Reichsleitung*. In November 1931 he moved to the Domestic Policy Department of the *Reichsleitung* to work as an aide for the *ständischer Aufbau* (corporatist organization). He also advanced within the ranks of the SS, and in March 1932 he was promoted to the rank of *Untersturmführer*. A year later, when Heinrich Himmler became a key figure in implementing Nazi tyranny in Bavaria as Munich's police chief and commander of the Bavarian Political Police, it was Max Frauendorfer who stood at his side as his adjutant. The ambitious young activist was now promoted at a conspicuously rapid pace and given the rank of *Obersturmbannführer* in April 1935.

By this time Frauendorfer had already enjoyed a meteoric career. In May 1933, Robert Ley had appointed him head of the Office for Corporatist Organization of the German Labor Front (DAF, *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*), and shortly thereafter he also took over the corresponding office of the NSDAP. In May 1934 he became deputy head of the Office for Organizational Affairs of the DAF, to whose top management he also belonged. During this period, the party apparently pinned great hope on Frauendorfer. In September 1934 he was assigned responsibility for both the *Reichsschulungsamt* (Reich Office for Ideological Training) of the NSDAP and the DAF Office for Ideological Training, at first temporarily and then—upon his promotion to *Hauptamtsleiter* (main office head)—permanently, starting in November 1934. By the age of just twenty-five, Frauendorfer had already worked his way amazingly close to the center of Nazi power. Clearly, he was typical of the young lawyers increasingly found even in the upper echelon of the state, party, and security apparatus, young men who had been infected with *völkisch* and radical National Socialist ideas at universities in the 1920s.

Frauendorfer's career in the *Reichsleitung* of the DAF and the NSDAP was, however, ill-fated. Although he was talented, confident, and well educated, he

was also too young, too inexperienced, and insufficiently aggressive to hold his own in his high-level positions when conflict arose, as was quickly evident when he became ensnarled in the power struggle between Robert Ley, Alfred Rosenberg, and Rudolf Heß.³ As head of the offices responsible for corporatist organization at both the DAF and the NSDAP, Frauendorfer had responsibility for developing and propagandizing relevant concepts. The corporatist idea had played an important role in Nazi agitation from the start and had become a pillar of the Nazi ideology of a *Volksgemeinschaft*. Frauendorfer's task was a tricky one, however, because there was no agreement on how a National Socialist body politic organized along corporatist lines should look. The lack of a consensus view quickly helped to push the corporatist idea into the background, and as a result the offices Frauendorfer headed lost their importance. In his role as *Reichsschulungsleiter* (Reich Leader of Ideological Training), however, his task was to "school and instruct" the political leadership corps of the NSDAP.⁴ Moreover, he had to supervise the party's numerous schools and take responsibility for the *Schulungsbriefe* (educational newsletters—a monthly periodical for political indoctrination) of the NSDAP and DAF.

As *Reichsschulungsleiter*, Frauendorfer served several masters, each of whom pursued his own interests. In organizational matters he was subordinate to the national head of the party organization, Robert Ley; in financial matters he had to answer to the Reich treasurer, Franz Xaver Schwarz; and in matters "regarding educational content" he reported to Alfred Rosenberg.⁵ Ley had actually planned to enlist Rosenberg as his ally in struggles with other major Nazi players. The alliance was short-lived, however, because he was not really willing to accept Rosenberg as a partner. Instead of an ally, Ley now had one more rival to contend with, and Frauendorfer's predecessor, Otto Gohdes, experienced the repercussions of this rivalry. Ley fired Gohdes from his job as *Reichsschulungsleiter* on the grounds that Gohdes supposedly had allied himself "too closely [with] Party Comrade Rosenberg." In his place Ley appointed Frauendorfer, but prohibited him from working with Rosenberg, Heß, or any other *Reichsleiter*.⁶ The new *Reichsschulungsleiter* complied with Ley's instructions. For his part, Rosenberg simply waited at first to see how things would develop.

A letter from Rudolf Heß in March 1935 gave Rosenberg the chance to take the offensive. Deputy of the Führer Heß asked Rosenberg to undertake "systematic monitoring of the ideological education work" because of "various reports on the essentially favorable state of ideological schooling in the party, its organizations, and the affiliated organizations."⁷ Rosenberg answered at once and used the opportunity to discredit Frauendorfer.⁸ At

first, his accusations had no negative repercussions for Frauendorfer, especially as Ley made no move to make more concessions to his rival than absolutely necessary. What eventually led to Frauendorfer's downfall was that, at the end of 1935, Ley began to distrust him because he functioned "too independently."⁹ Apparently Reich Organization Leader Ley feared in-house competition, as one of his accusations against Frauendorfer was that the latter had overstepped his authority, despite repeated instructions, and had concerned himself not only with the schooling of NSDAP political leaders but also with the education work in other organs of the party. Therefore, Ley abruptly called off a "gathering of the *Schulungsmänner* [ideological instructors] in the organizations and associations of the party" that Frauendorfer had organized, prohibited the use of the terms *Reichsschulungsamt* and *Reichsschulungsleiter*, and blocked Frauendorfer's appointment as editor of the *Schulungsbriefe*. In turn, Frauendorfer defended himself against Ley's accusations and presented the matter to Heß. After all, he maintained, he had "brought together all the offices dealing with ideological training in all the organizations and affiliated associations of the party" on the basis of an order by the deputy of the Führer. The success of this effort, he said, was now in jeopardy.¹⁰

However, before Frauendorfer could make any headway with Heß, Ley issued a written statement announcing an inquiry and ordered Frauendorfer to forgo "any type of independent decision-making" until further notice. Even though Ley had put little stock in Rosenberg's complaints about Frauendorfer up to that point, he now used them as a weapon against his subordinate. Ley wrote that Rosenberg refused to work with Frauendorfer, viewed his staff as "unreliable and to some extent incapable," and had informed him "officially and unmistakably" that he also considered Frauendorfer "ideologically unreliable." Ley did at least conclude his letter on a more conciliatory note. He offered Frauendorfer his continued "personal comradery" and suggested that Frauendorfer either assume the directorship of one of the elite Nazi ideological training centers or travel abroad for study purposes on behalf of the DAF until the inquiry was concluded.¹¹

Frauendorfer was not deterred. He confronted Rosenberg with Ley's accusations, at which point Rosenberg declared that he harbored "no doubts" about the "National Socialist reliability" of the de facto suspended *Reichsschulungsleiter*. In turn, Frauendorfer informed Rudolf Heß about the state of affairs and took the opportunity also to report incriminating internal information about Ley's administration and his obstructionism regarding Rosenberg. Frauendorfer emphasized to Heß that he was not fighting to keep his job but that he found it "thoroughly unacceptable" to let himself be

“vilified [. . .] in the entire party” and “most gravely insulted.”¹² Frauendorfer had no idea that Martin Bormann, Heß’s chief of staff, would forward his letter to Rosenberg and thereby hand Rosenberg such a lethal weapon in his fight against Ley. This step caused an irreconcilable breach between Frauendorfer and Ley: on January 2, 1936, Frauendorfer was ordered to “refrain from all activity involving the Office for Ideological Training” and was denied access to its premises.¹³

Less than two weeks later, however, Frauendorfer resumed his duties. We can assume that Ley did not voluntarily revoke his harsh suspension of Frauendorfer, but rather that Heß had pushed the *Reichsleiter* for Organizational Affairs to do so. Frauendorfer now sought a *modus vivendi* with Rosenberg to improve the difficult position in which he found himself, but Rosenberg was not interested. It is clear that Frauendorfer had lost all support and become isolated, and once Rosenberg and Ley turned against him, not even the intervention of Heß could save him in the long run. On May 15, 1936, Frauendorfer was forced to resign his position as head of the NSDAP Office for Ideological Training, and only two weeks later Ley terminated his employment at the DAF. By then, he had already lost his directorship of the Office for Corporatist Organization. Pointing out that the “party’s fundamental position” on this issue was established in the NSDAP’s party program, Heß decreed on February 18, 1936, that a separate office for corporatist organization had become “superfluous” and thus would be closed “with immediate effect.”¹⁴

For Reinhard Bollmus, who had the opportunity to interview Frauendorfer himself, the deeper cause of Frauendorfer’s conflict with Ley was that the *Reichsschulungsleiter* was alienated by the “SA spirit of the *Sturmlokale*” (the SA men’s usual tavern hangouts) and that he had not been a “‘real’ National Socialist.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, it should be noted that Frauendorfer was antidemocratic, anti-liberal, and anti-bolshevist. He celebrated the National Socialist revolution, revered Adolf Hitler and the Führer principle, and thought in racist and anti-Jewish categories, even though he does not seem to have been a fanatical antisemite.¹⁶ His removal from the NSDAP’s ideological training apparatus and the DAF executive staff was thus not due to his nonconformist attitude or even his criticism of the regime; rather, his dismissal resulted from one of the many power struggles within the leadership ranks of the Nazi state.

Frauendorfer did indeed fall far in 1936, but he did not crash, and his connection to the NSDAP continued to be close. Hans Frank brought him into the *Reichsrechtsamt* (Reich Legal Office) of the NSDAP, which meant that Frauendorfer, as the head of a main office of the party, could still retain

the title of *Reichshauptamtsleiter*. Frank may well have also had a hand in Frauendorfer's appointment as executive editor of the journal *Deutsche Verwaltung*, the official organ of the administrative lawyers in the National Socialist Association of German Legal Professionals. Until February 1938 Frauendorfer worked as a propagandist of the Third Reich, and then he resigned his office "out of consideration for his other official commitments."¹⁷ In the spring of 1938 Frauendorfer was indeed fully occupied. In addition to his work at *Deutsche Verwaltung*, he had been working since 1937 as an administrator for organizational matters in the *Reichswirtschaftskammer* (Reich Chamber of Economics) and was studying for his second state examination in law. Once Frauendorfer had lost his top positions in the NSDAP and the DAF, he was eager to secure permission to take the second state examination as soon as possible.

Frauendorfer finished the preparatory service required for a legal career in January 1938 and passed the second state examination the following May. The newly minted lawyer then sought to become fully admitted as an attorney on an accelerated basis, and he used his connections to get the most favorable arrangement possible. Not for the first time in his career, his efforts were met with significant goodwill. Roland Freisler, the state secretary at the Reich Ministry of Justice, approved the proposal to exempt Frauendorfer from the officially required probationary period and to classify him immediately as a trainee lawyer. At his own request, Frauendorfer was assigned in February 1939 to the well-known Berlin lawyer Count von der Goltz. It is doubtful that Frauendorfer was truly content with the prospect of becoming a lawyer once he completed his training. After all, on October 1, 1938, he had already begun an internship with Dr. Däschner, the Reich Trustee of Labor (*Reichstreuhänder der Arbeit*) for Berlin and Brandenburg, where he worked primarily on wage policy issues.

A Wartime Comeback: Max Frauendorfer and the Labor Administration in the General Government

The German invasion of Poland and the quick victory of the *Wehrmacht* changed everything for Frauendorfer. Suddenly the young lawyer saw a chance for a new career, and he made the most of it. Frauendorfer belonged to what was effectively the advance command staff that began to organize and install an occupation regime immediately following Poland's defeat. On September 25, 1939, the German-occupied parts of Poland were placed under military administration, and just four days later Frauendorfer was in Poland and taking part in

the first meetings, held in Posen (Poznań). It may be that the traineeship and contacts to leading officials in the Reich Labor Ministry played a role in Frauendorfer's assignment to Poland. However, it is more likely that Hans Frank put Frauendorfer on his staff. On October 26, 1939, Frank had begun serving as Governor General, directly subordinate to Hitler, and was the highest-ranking representative of the German Reich in occupied Poland. At first Frauendorfer acted as the right-hand man of State Secretary Johannes Krohn, who had been delegated to Poland by the Reich Labor Ministry to deal with labor and social matters in the occupation administration. However, personal and professional differences appear to have arisen quickly between Frank and Krohn, making the latter's resignation only a matter of time. A successor was quickly found. As early as October 28, 1939, Frank wrote to Labor Minister Franz Seldte, suggesting that Frauendorfer be entrusted with running the Labor Department. Frank wrote that he would "gladly" support such an appointment; in fact, he would be "particularly" pleased to have one of his "old colleagues" working in the Office of the Governor-General and taking on the "portfolio of the Reich Labor Ministry."¹⁸ Two weeks later, Krohn left occupied Poland, and on November 18, 1939, Frauendorfer was appointed to head the Labor Department, which the following year became the Labor Division (*Hauptabteilung Arbeit*) in the administration of the General Government.¹⁹

The Labor Division had special standing in Frank's administration because of its role in realizing the aims of the Nazis' Poland policy.²⁰ Although the occupied territories also had military significance for Adolf Hitler as both a "forward glacis" and a deployment area, Poland was to serve primarily as the site of a "hard *Volkstumskampf*" (ethnic struggle) that would not permit "any legal restrictions"; under German administration, the Polish rump state was to be reduced to a reservoir of cheap labor.²¹ A key instrument for implementation of this program was the labor administration, which Frauendorfer began to build up at the end of 1939. The most important task of the Labor Division was to register, recruit, and deploy workers. Between June 1940 and June 1942 it was also responsible for assigning the Jewish population to work details. In addition, Frauendorfer's Labor Division had a broad range of other responsibilities, among which were the administration of social insurance, the coordination of housing and settlement, and the provision of care for veterans of the vanquished Polish army.²²

The recruitment of laborers for the Reich began immediately in the fall of 1939. By the end of that year, nearly 40,000 Poles had been recruited.²³ However, in light of the gigantic demands placed on the General Government for 1940, this figure appeared ridiculously small. According to the guidelines

set by Frank at the end of January 1940, the occupied Polish territories were to provide a work force of one million men and women, of whom 750,000 would work in German agriculture and 250,000 in industry. However, it quickly became evident that such demands were utopian. Voices could soon be heard demanding a tougher approach. Like Frank, Frauendorfer had rejected the idea of taking an overly hard line and focused more on recruitment of volunteers than on coercive police actions, although obviously people's willingness to volunteer was decidedly related to the circumstances of occupation rule. Frauendorfer also criticized attacks against the Polish population, and stressed that recruitment efforts suffered both from such actions and from the fact that the Polish workers already in Germany had not yet received any money that they could send to their families back home.²⁴ Among other things, he attributed the increasing failure of recruitment campaigns to effective Polish counterpropaganda, which he felt had caused particularly "the rural population to fall victim to an anxiety psychosis."²⁵ Here, the dilemma in which the labor administration found itself became apparent. In the words of historian Ulrich Herbert, "If you wanted foreign workers to perform at high levels, you could not deport them by force or treat them badly. But if you wanted to supply the large quota of workers needed, then coercive measures were unavoidable."²⁶

In April 1940 the various options were discussed over and over again. Almost apologetically, Frank asked Frauendorfer on April 21 "whether there is any measure left that has not yet been seized upon" to convince the Poles to volunteer as labor recruits destined for Germany. When Frauendorfer answered no, a short debate ensued, after which the Governor General stated that the future path was now clear: "Where the Labor Division can no longer get the job done, the police must intervene."²⁷ Just two days later, Frauendorfer presented the rough outline of how he planned to proceed:

In each *Kreishauptmannschaft* [district administration], the *woids* [correctly: *wódcz*, community leader] and the mayor, under the supervision of the *Kreishauptmann* [district governor], are to call their community inhabitants together and determine how many people they can procure [. . .]. The propaganda has to be designed so that registration for agricultural labor service is presented as something inevitable, so that it is utterly pointless to try to evade this obligation. [. . .] Once the community has been informed of this, then an order must stipulate a specific day on which laborers must be provided. Only if this approach fails should the police intervene. The Higher SS and Police Leader thinks it

will be enough to carry out in every district one exemplary episode of coercive implementation where recruitment appears difficult [. . .]. Yet, even with such coercive measures, we need to ensure that it is possible to continue a dialogue with these people, not only because we have to work together with them here but also because they are, after all, destined to work in the Reich.

Frauendorfer's circular decree of April 26, 1940, expanded on these ideas. All labor offices were assigned quotas adding up to 505,000 workers. The offices were to fill these quotas by subdividing and distributing them among the communities in their districts. Frauendorfer ordered his subordinate labor office directors to set short-term deadlines and to threaten police actions should the communities not fill their assigned quotas of laborers. Moreover, the Polish population was to be brought to heel by making promises that generated as much good publicity as possible and by cutting off benefit payments. According to Gerhard Eisenblätter, this approach established how labor registration would continue to be implemented "with some ups and downs until 1944." "Depending on the availability of coercive means of police force and on the urgency of the Reich's demands," the Germans would rely "on police coercion or propaganda activity."²⁸ Between 1940 and 1942, nearly 925,000 men and women were recruited in Poland and sent by the General Government to work in agriculture or industrial plants in the Reich. Even though the number of Poles recruited lagged far behind the original expectations, Frauendorfer was responsible for a largely forcible transfer of people, one that "in its overall impact" represented what was "perhaps [the] most intensely felt and harshest measure of Germany's policy for Poland" implemented in the General Government.²⁹

Both Frank and the responsible authorities in the Reich were pleased with Frauendorfer's work, and their satisfaction was soon demonstrated by the promotions he received. In May 1941 the Reich Labor Ministry proposed that Frauendorfer be named a Reich Trustee of Labor because he could "guarantee" to do the job responsibly and had long proven that he was prepared to defend "the National Socialist state wholeheartedly at all times."³⁰ Because the post of Reich Trustee of Labor was a political one, any considerations pertaining to the legal stipulations that governed civil service careers were irrelevant. Once it was clear that Martin Bormann, head of the NSDAP Party Chancellery, had no objections to the appointment, Frauendorfer was made a Reich Trustee of Labor on September 26, 1941. One year later, he climbed another rung of the

career ladder when he became the president of the Labor Division in late September 1942.

Frauendorfer did not have much time to relish the prospects of his new position. In the summer and fall of 1942, he found himself in serious trouble when he, a loyal acolyte of Frank, became involved in the confrontation between the Governor General and Heinrich Himmler and his satrap in Poland, Higher SS and Police Leader East Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger.³¹ Because Frank's position of power was greatly weakened in this conflict, Frauendorfer also became more vulnerable. In addition, the labor situation had worsened dramatically in the winter of 1941/42 as a result of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Frauendorfer continually faced new demands to recruit laborers for the German war economy, and he had to undertake the thoroughly futile effort to meet, in equal measure, the needs of the Reich authorities, the *Wehrmacht*, and the industrial plants in the occupied Polish territories. Thus it was only logical that Jewish laborers became increasingly important in Frauendorfer's strategy, and here he ran into conflict with the SS, which laid claim to complete control of all *Judenpolitik* (Jewish policy). Following Frank's decree of October 26, 1939, Krüger was able to issue the corresponding regulations regarding the forced labor of the Jewish population in occupied Poland. However, the Jews were usually deployed as forced labor in a way that was "unregulated, arbitrary, and, above all, unpaid,"³² and Krüger's offices apparently could not agree on a coherent concept or perform the necessary organizational preparatory work to ensure an effective deployment of labor. The situation was chaotic, and this inevitably alarmed the General Government authorities, as the Jewish communities that had to bear the cost of the labor deployment appeared to be overwhelmed, and the families of the Jews forced to work for the Germans threatened to become wholly impoverished. Should this development continue unhampered, it was feared that "one fine day, millions of Jews would then become a burden to the General Government."³³

In June 1940 Frauendorfer also underscored the necessity not to forget "that the Jews, as long as they are still here, have to be provided for in some way," and thereby implied that his agency was demanding a greater voice in decisions about the deployment of Jewish laborers.³⁴ On this point, the civil administration was indeed able to prevail against the SS. Following lengthy negotiations, Krüger approved an agreement in which responsibility for the deployment of Jewish laborers was transferred to the Labor Division. On July 5, 1940, Frauendorfer informed the subordinate offices about this

development. The “purpose of the labor deployment of Jews,” among whom were to be found “good skilled laborers and artisans, in contrast to the Jews in the Reich,” was “to help reduce the shortage of manpower in the General Government.” He then added in his circular memo that the Jews should be employed at first “on a free contractual basis” in order to achieve “the best possible exploitation of their labor” and to secure their means of subsistence. Forced labor without pay, he said, was to be used only for larger projects “in which a large number of forced laborers can be deployed, housed in barracks, and guarded.”³⁵ In addition, Frauendorfer ordered that Jewish workers be paid 80 percent of the wages earned by Poles for the same work—after all, it was necessary to maintain their strength, secure the subsistence of the Jewish families, and prevent disease and epidemics. In pursuing such a course, Frauendorfer frequently encountered incomprehension and resistance. He would not have counted on the support of fanatic antisemites in any case, but others also protested “that the remuneration for Jews is set too high.”³⁶ Odilo Globocnik, the SS and Police Leader for the Lublin district, even refused to transfer official responsibilities to the Labor Administration, which made it necessary for Krüger to intervene so that the agreements reached in Cracow (Kraków) would also be implemented in the Lublin district.

The labor administration had first compiled a special card index to gain a general idea of the number of Jewish laborers and their qualifications. All German agencies and businesses were instructed to report their “needs” to the labor offices, where the officials assigned to the *Judeneinsatzstellen* (Jewish deployment offices) reviewed these requests and then forwarded them to the local Jewish council, which was then responsible for providing certain individuals or an entire contingent of workers.³⁷ In practice, things usually worked differently, and the labor offices were circumvented just as often as Frauendorfer’s remuneration guidelines were. For the labor administration, the year 1942 was overshadowed by a bitter conflict with the SS and police authorities. While Jewish laborers became increasingly vital to the Labor Division and its subordinate agencies in light of the general manpower shortage, the organized genocide of the Jews began in the General Government in March 1942 with the deportation of several tens of thousands from Lemberg (Lviv) and Lublin to the Belzec (Bełżec) death camp.³⁸ The SS strove to deport as many Jews to the death camps as possible and wanted to let only a select number of Jewish laborers live. In this context, the struggle for authority over the use of Jewish labor thus became particularly important.

The labor administration played an ambivalent role in the implementation of the “Final Solution.” On the one hand, officials in the labor offices had an

important say in determining “who lived and who did not” because it was their job to judge Jews’ qualifications and fitness for work. By way of the so-called ABC classification system, they were also directly involved in the preparation and management of deportations. It was not unusual for representatives from the labor offices to take part in the on-site selection process.³⁹ Dieter Pohl even found evidence indicating that the Labor Division “was involved in the overall planning of the ‘Final Solution’ in the General Government” because it conducted a census of all Jewish laborers in late April and early May 1942. On the other hand, among those working in the labor administration were also people who did not allow themselves to be influenced by the murderous atmosphere that was spreading throughout the General Government in 1942. As Bogdan Musial has shown, several officials at least attempted to hamper the Nazi death machinery, although it is difficult to say in individual cases “whether this behavior was due solely to the very real shortage of labor or also to moral scruples.”⁴⁰

The president of the Labor Division certainly shouldered a special responsibility for the involvement, and in some cases the active participation, of his agencies in the murder of the Jewish population. It appears, however, that the exploitation and efficient mobilization of resources was a greater priority for Frauendorfer than the implementation of a *Volkstum* policy driven by racial ideology that stopped at nothing, not even the annihilation of entire ethnic and social groups. He had repeatedly protested against the poor treatment of Polish laborers because it was counterproductive in his eyes, and in February 1941 he had even raised the topic in a meeting with Himmler. He knew about the impending “Final Solution” by December 16, 1941, at the latest, when Frank explained to the circle of his most important colleagues that the problem of the Jews “had to be ended one way or another” and announced “interventions” that would “lead somehow to a successful annihilation.”⁴¹

Frauendorfer thought that this was the wrong path to take. On June 22, 1942, he pointed out in a meeting of main department heads that a “resettlement of the Jews” would “have far-reaching effects in all sectors of public life.” He argued that “in terms of manpower, the country has been nearly skimmed off,” and said that he was “right now absolutely dependent on the use of Jewish labor” because the Jewish laborers could “not be replaced owing to the shortage of skilled Polish workers.” He urged that the Jews “not be exempted from the measures carried out by the SS but merely remain available as a workforce for the duration of the war.”⁴²

It cannot be determined with certainty whether Frauendorfer was motivated solely by the practical necessities of his job as head of the Labor Adminis-

tration or whether he harbored a few moral scruples. His call to spare Jewish workers only “for the duration of the war” supports the former interpretation. However, there are indications that Frauendorfer actually did have reservations about the increasingly radical measures taken by German institutions in occupied Poland and that he was not among those who condoned or even welcomed the organized mass murder. There is even evidence that he attempted to distance himself. In 1941, for example, he made the acquaintance of Ulrich von Hassell⁴³ through one of his colleagues, Fritz Berthold. With increasing openness, Frauendorfer began to tell von Hassell about the atrocities occurring in the General Government. Ultimately he even informed this member of the resistance about the killing of the Jewish population with poisonous gas.⁴⁴ In the summer of 1942 he also protected Adalbert Szepessy, one of his officials, who had prevented the deportation of Jews by issuing the necessary papers to save them and therefore had landed in the clutches of the state security apparatus.

In June 1942 Frauendorfer’s Labor Division was forced to turn over control of Jewish labor deployment once again to the SS and police authorities. On June 25, Frauendorfer informed the subordinate agencies of his office that the “labor deployment of Jews [may] be undertaken only after an agreement has been reached with the police leader responsible for that locality.”⁴⁵ As Peter Longerich has argued, “with this move, the SS now also controlled the one sector that, up to that point, had still acted as the only effective barrier against the full-scale murder of the Jewish population.”⁴⁶

Frauendorfer emerged visibly battered from this turf war over responsibility for the labor deployment of the Jewish population. Not only his health but also his reputation had suffered. During the summer of 1942, it became increasingly evident that Frauendorfer would have to give up his post as head of the Labor Division. At the end of July, during a stay in a Munich clinic, he received written notification from Krüger ordering him in Himmler’s name to report for military duty, and a few weeks later Frank disavowed his former ally in a meeting attended by high-ranking leaders on securing labor for the Reich. As a result, Frauendorfer appears to have decided to exchange his office in Cracow for a barracks room. On October 2, 1942, Frauendorfer had a talk with Himmler about his further assignment and doubtless also about the quarrels of the previous months. The results of this meeting were indeed calculated to save Frauendorfer’s prestige, and by all appearances he succeeded in winning over the Reichsführer SS. It was agreed that he would resign from his post as head of the labor administration in the General Government following a transition period of several weeks, then go on longer sick leave, and subsequently report for duty to the *Waffen* SS. Himmler informed Krüger in

a letter that the *Obersturmbannführer* had “acted very properly” and therefore he asked Krüger in the coming weeks “to engage in particularly good and cordial conduct toward President Frauendorfer in the presence of everyone else.”⁴⁷

Two weeks later, little of this goodwill remained. A serious rift developed between Frauendorfer and Himmler, who felt that his former adjutant had betrayed him. This sense of betrayal emerged because Frauendorfer, who was still highly regarded in the labor administration, had been asked by Sauckel to become his personal commissioner in the Netherlands in charge of organizing the supply of labor for the German war economy. Frauendorfer did not seem opposed to the idea; to the contrary. However, Sauckel’s plan met with resistance—especially within the SS—and was eventually abandoned. When Frauendorfer learned that there were problems, he fired off a forceful telegram to Himmler, asking for his support; after all, his new position had already been officially announced, and he had to avoid “an unjustified and severe loss of prestige.”⁴⁸ Himmler perceived this telegram as extraordinarily pretentious.⁴⁹ Frauendorfer, trying to defend himself, informed Himmler that he was not taking this position to avoid military service, but by accepting the short-term special mission in the Netherlands he had sought instead to stifle the embarrassing rumors about his departure from Cracow. He appears to have been aware, however, that he had now become a *persona non grata* for Himmler.

Perhaps this was why Frauendorfer was seeking to be drafted into the *Wehrmacht* and not the *Waffen* SS after Frank had suspended him on December 1, 1942, and he had subsequently recuperated from a heart condition by February 1943. Perhaps, however, he had also learned that Krüger had denounced him to Himmler. Krüger was obviously set on making things thoroughly impossible for Frauendorfer by informing Himmler in late October 1942 that, in addition to his not insignificant salary as president of the Labor Division, Frauendorfer was earning income as the chairman of the board of a stock company. From October 1, 1940, to July 1, 1941, he had indeed acted as the director general of the *Werke des Generalgouvernements* (General Government Works), a pooling of companies once owned by the former Polish state that he had initiated himself.⁵⁰ When he resigned from this position in the summer of 1941, he was promised a compensation of 27,000 Reichsmarks, a sum more than twice his yearly income. However, Frank had issued a decree back in October 1940 that prohibited those working for him from earning secondary incomes. Himmler sensed a case of corruption and initiated a disciplinary inquiry against Frauendorfer to determine whether he “still is worthy of belonging to the SS.”⁵¹ However, Frauendorfer had

commenced his military service in the *Wehrmacht* in February 1943, so by then he no longer fell under the jurisdiction of the SS, at least for the time being.

There is reason to believe that Frauendorfer had been distancing himself more and more from National Socialism since the end of 1942. His contact with Ulrich von Hassell intensified and enabled him to attend a meeting with Colonel General Johannes Blaskowitz in October 1943, at which von Hassell sought to find out how far the general would support the aims of the resistance movement. Frauendorfer's connection with von Hassell did not have any negative repercussions for him, not even when von Hassell was arrested and executed. The investigation of Frauendorfer by the SS court also petered out once it became clear that he had been given special permission by Frank to pursue his activities as director general of the Works and had exercised this function at the expressed wish of the Governor General himself. Thus the court in charge of the investigation recommended to Himmler that he shelve the inquiry, and he did so in March 1945. By then, however, this rehabilitation by the SS was unimportant to Frauendorfer, as Nazi Germany was on the brink of collapse. On April 26, 1945, Frauendorfer was discharged from the *Wehrmacht*. Only a few days later, German troops surrendered unconditionally.

A Difficult New Start between Illegality and Denazification

Frauendorfer was thirty-five years old when the war ended, and his life, like that of countless other Germans, was in ruins. Moreover, he had good reason to fear that the occupation authorities would be interested in him. In this regard, his greatest fear was not internment in a detention camp but extradition to Poland, a fear that was far from unreasonable, as the Allies had turned over a number of Frauendorfer's former colleagues to the Polish justice authorities. Because the leadership of the German administration in occupied Poland had been declared a criminal organization from the local administrator ranks of *Kreishauptmann* and *Stadthauptmann* (district and city governors) upward, Frauendorfer knew that he had to face extradition and a minimum sentence of three years.⁵²

To avoid being brought to justice, Frauendorfer disappeared into the realm of illegality, living under an assumed identity, at first in the Allgäu region. Eventually he returned to Munich, where—as he would later relate—he pursued private studies and had no income. His deprivation could not have been too great, however, as he claimed in 1950 that he still had assets of around 30,000 Deutschmarks.⁵³ He used this time to arm himself for any eventual-ity. He contacted friends and acquaintances who he hoped would help him,

and he collected testimonies in his defense in Germany, Austria, and even the United States. By emphasizing the supposed threat of his deportation “to the East,” Frauendorfer even moved hesitant contemporaries to put pen to paper on his behalf.⁵⁴ Apparently the risk he ran in abandoning his incognito was a calculated one, because he confided in Catholic clergymen as well as government representatives. The Bavarian State Chancellery became active on his behalf, and its head, Anton Pfeiffer, asked the relevant American authorities how matters stood in Frauendorfer’s case and whether an extradition would still be in the cards. Only after the Americans had given the all clear did Frauendorfer decide to come out of hiding. He revealed his true identity and a short time later underwent the denazification process, which was still obligatory at the time, even though there was little talk of political cleansing by then.

This procedure was burdensome, but Frauendorfer stood a good chance of coming out of it only minimally bruised. First of all, he benefited from the widely held view that the time had come to make a clean break with the crimes of the past regime—or, according to the German formulation, to draw a *Schlussstrich*. Second, he had a well-equipped arsenal of exonerating testimonies, among which were also statements from Ulrich von Hassell and his widow, Ilse von Hassell. The diplomat, who was executed in 1944, had made notes in his journal about his talks with Frauendorfer. These journals had been published in 1946, and his entries about Frauendorfer helped the latter clear his name. In fact, Frauendorfer could not have had a better advocate in the early 1950s, especially as von Hassell was no longer available to supply more details about his contacts with Frauendorfer. Third, one of the people on his side was the Social Democrat Camille Sachs, the man who headed the office responsible for denazification. From the start, Sachs intervened to an exceptional degree in the denazification process and declared “the matter” to be secret for “foreign policy reasons.”⁵⁵

Frauendorfer went about defending himself with extraordinary confidence. On the form he was required to fill out about his background, he claimed to belong to what was known in the denazification process as the category of exonerated persons. As in the years to come, he adopted an offensive stance, even when appearing before the *Spruchkammer* (denazification court), admitted only to what could already be proven, and did not shy away from lying, manipulating facts, and turning unflattering truths to his advantage through his one-sided interpretation. It almost goes without saying that he put particular emphasis on anything that could speak in his favor, and he stressed the usual clichés: he had been so young and had tried to prevent worse things from happening. He argued that von Hassell’s journals proved his resistance to the

regime as well as his Christian and humane disposition and his abhorrence of despotism and injustice.⁵⁶ He defended his decision to go underground after the war as being “unavoidable” and argued that this decision had proven correct, considering “the fate of innumerable Germans who fell or were extradited into the hands of a hate-filled communist enemy.”⁵⁷

The prosecuting counsel was not swayed by these efforts and classified Frauendorfer as a major offender (*Hauptschuldiger*). Frauendorfer’s protest and his insistence that he had “*not* [been] a leading National Socialist” had little effect.⁵⁸ On January 29, 1951, the *Hauptkammer* (main denazification court) in Munich ruled that he was indeed a *Belasteter* (offender) and imposed severe sanctions: whereas the fifty days of work on behalf of the public good may not have been difficult to contend with, the confiscation of 10 percent of his assets and the loss of all retirement and pension rights from public funds were considerably harder to swallow. The court also put an end to his professional legal career by ruling that he was permanently unfit to hold public office, including that of a notary and a lawyer. It also imposed other restrictions on his occupational activity, stripped him of his voting rights and his right to hold elected office, and prohibited him from engaging in any form of political activity.⁵⁹

Frauendorfer immediately appealed against the ruling and emphasized that he had “voluntarily and out of deepest conviction ‘denazified’ himself as long ago as 1934/35” and that he had done this “in the most forceful way,” as demonstrated by his activities “as a member of the [. . .] German resistance movement.”⁶⁰ Camille Sachs emphatically supported this view and instructed the public prosecutor of the Munich appeals court in charge of Frauendorfer’s case to move for his denazification. Sachs argued that the information he had supplied to Ulrich von Hassell had constituted “objective resistance” and therefore Frauendorfer had to be cleared of the charges leveled against him, pursuant to the 1946 Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism (*Gesetz zur Befreiung von Nationalsozialismus und Militarismus*).⁶¹ However, the appeals court was not prepared to go so far. It classified him officially as a *Belasteter* (offender) but made allowances for various circumstances and eventually came to the conclusion that Frauendorfer should be classified instead as a *Minderbelasteter* (minor offender). In 1951, however, sanctions could be leveled only against major offenders and offenders, and the appeals court therefore reversed the decision of the lower court and closed the proceedings. Not only did this revoke all the sanctions, but from this point on Frauendorfer could also maintain with a good conscience that the denazification proceedings against him had been closed.

Now he was free to build a new middle-class existence for himself. His application for permission to finish his training as a lawyer was granted. After he had successfully completed his internship, he applied for his license to practice law, which he received in 1953. It appears that he was not completely confident about his future, however, because in September 1951 he had requested the Bavarian State Ministry for Labor and Social Affairs to reinstate him as a civil servant under Article 131 of Germany's Basic Law, also temporarily and even "disregarding all questions of rank."⁶² It may have come as a surprise to Frauendorfer when his request was unequivocally denied. The ministry argued that his appointments and promotions between 1939 and 1942 contravened civil service regulations and could "have occurred" only because of his "close ties to National Socialism." Therefore he could not make any valid claims based on the legal regulations pertaining to Article 131.⁶³

Once again Frauendorfer appealed, and once again he was successful. However, his appeal was granted on purely procedural, rather than substantive, grounds. His case was thus reopened, but at the end of July 1952 this no longer appeared to interest Frauendorfer much. By then he had gained a foothold in the business world, namely at the Allianz insurance company in Munich. During his legal training period there, he had learned the basics of the insurance business, and he quickly made a career for himself in the years that followed. He rose to a leading position at the company's headquarters, acting as head of the department for corporations and associations, and finally becoming the executive director of the department responsible for industry.

The First Attempt: Party Tactics, Uncertainty, and Indignation

Frauendorfer probably could have enjoyed the fruits of his labor largely undisturbed had he not pursued his old passion for politics. On December 13, 1956, he joined the Christian Social Union (CSU, *Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern*) but not without having conferred with important figures in the party beforehand. When asked about his Nazi past, he appears not to have laid his cards on the table; instead, he must have presented a sanitized version of his personal history. At first, no further questions were asked, not even when Frauendorfer sought higher office. In the summer of 1957 his name was found on the CSU candidate list for the coming federal elections; even though he was only a token candidate, he was still a candidate. His immediate success was due in no small measure to his position as a leading executive at Allianz, a company that had repeatedly supported the CSU with donations, which the party so urgently needed prior to important elections. Thus, the hope for

financial support may also explain why the delegate meeting for the Munich VII *Stimmkreis* (electoral ward) nominated Frauendorfer as a candidate for the Bavarian state elections in 1958, although he was a relatively unknown quantity.

The elections for a new Bavarian state parliament, the Landtag, were to be held on November 23 and were particularly important for the CSU, because in October 1957 it had just succeeded in bringing down a coalition government led by the Social Democrats.⁶⁴ However, the election campaign did not bode well for the party, because it was overshadowed by scandals involving candidates whose political pasts were highly dubious at best. Frauendorfer was certainly the most prominent of these candidates who found themselves under massive scrutiny in the summer of 1958. The affair did not ignite in Munich, but in the rural areas of Lower Bavaria. The delegates of the Mainburg-Kelheim ward had nominated the hops farmer and cattle trader Peter Prücklmayer, even though he had been a member of the CSU for only three years and despite the delegates' knowledge that he had served for several months as an SS *Unterscharführer* guarding the Mauthausen concentration camp. The delegates had quelled their concerns with the belief that there were witnesses who could attest to Prücklmayer's impeccable behavior.⁶⁵ At the end of August, the newsmagazine *Der Spiegel* and the newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) picked up the story, and their revelations turned the Prücklmayer candidacy into a national issue. However, those who came under heavy fire were not the local delegates who had nominated Prücklmayer but rather the party leaders who had failed to prevent the candidacy.

The leading CSU politicians were split over this issue. Some protested strongly against the "Nazi infiltration of the CSU,"⁶⁶ while others expressed obvious discomfort, cautious rebuke, convoluted justifications, or apologetic statements.⁶⁷ The public debate and the critical voices from the party's own ranks forced the party's executive board (*Landesvorstand*) to look into the matter on September 3, 1958. This small cadre attempted to find a way of addressing the issue that would enable the CSU to save face and at the same time to take the wind out of the sails of the attacks against the party. In the subsequent press release, the executive board expressed its conviction that no "personal accusations" could be leveled against Prücklmayer, but in light of "the particular difficulty of this candidacy" the delegates who had nominated him needed the opportunity "to rethink this nomination again." Therefore, the board ordered that the election be repeated.⁶⁸ This was all the executive board could do, at least officially, because legally the delegates in the ward were largely autonomous in their decision-making powers.

Nothing had yet been decided in the Prücklmayer case when the SZ and

Der Spiegel uncovered the next scandal. In the Traunstein ward, the candidate was a municipal official in Ruhpolding named Leonhard Schmucker. Between 1942 and 1945 Schmucker had acted as a contact for the Security Service (SD, *Sicherheitsdienst*) of the SS, and in 1942/43 he headed an SD field office in the Bavarian–Bohemian border region. Like Prücklmayer, Schmucker was a promising candidate who had been denazified after 1945 and could produce people who attested to his personal integrity.⁶⁹

The persistent discussion about politically tainted candidates finally prompted the leaders of the Munich CSU to act. Those responsible, especially the district chairman, Josef Müller,⁷⁰ had taken a long time to realize that the party was sitting on a ticking time bomb, but now they took decisive action to defuse it. On September 8, 1958, the district executive board (*Bezirksvorstand*) met in an extraordinary session.⁷¹ Only one issue was on the agenda: the candidacy of Max Frauendorfer for the Bavarian Landtag. He was given the opportunity to explain his past to the board members and to address the rumors that had been circulating for a while. In defending himself, Frauendorfer did what he had repeatedly done in the past: he pointed out his contacts with the resistance, presented himself as a victim, and either omitted or whitewashed certain incriminating facts. But Josef Müller came to this meeting well prepared, with the support of Erwin Hamm,⁷² a prominent CSU member in the Munich city government. Their probing questioning of Frauendorfer soon dismantled his fragile construct of fact and fiction to the point that no one on the board was willing to support him openly.

Whereas tactical concerns and the fear of public scandal were important reasons why Frauendorfer's candidacy did not appear opportune, these were not the only factors. A number of important Munich CSU politicians found it unacceptable to pave the way to the Landtag for a man like Frauendorfer, both out of moral considerations and for reasons of political hygiene. After all, they themselves had fought against National Socialism or had been persecuted by the regime for various reasons. District chair Josef Müller had been arrested in 1943 for being a messenger for the military opposition and had barely survived his imprisonment in a concentration camp, as had his vice-chair Werner Müller;⁷³ Franz Fackler, the chairman of the city council's CSU caucus, had been sentenced by the infamous *Volksgerichtshof* (People's Court) for being a member of a resistance group that supported restoration of the monarchy in Bavaria; Erwin Hamm had been forced to answer to a special court for comments critical of the regime in 1938. Most likely, the confrontation between a representative of the former Nazi elite and opponents or victims of the regime also helped escalate the discussion that took place among the district's execu-

tive board members. Frauendorfer, however, showed no understanding of his situation. Even after all 27 board members had approved the motion requesting the party leadership to order a new election to pick a party candidate, he refused to resign his candidacy.

Frauendorfer was able to maintain his resistance only for a limited time. Like Prücklmayer and Schmucker, he eventually had to give up his candidacy. Public pressure had simply become too great and criticism within the party itself too loud. Disappointed and bitter, Frauendorfer finally realized that nothing more was to be gained. On September 12 he officially withdrew his candidacy and resigned from his party posts. The editorials in leading daily and weekly newspapers expressed relief over the resignations of Frauendorfer, Prücklmayer, and Schmucker, but they were not reticent about criticizing the CSU and its leaders; in their view, the CSU leadership had acted too reluctantly and hesitantly in handling these cases.⁷⁴

As far as the press was concerned, this closed the book on Frauendorfer, at least temporarily. However, the CSU could not yet shelve the matter, because the accused demanded an inquiry into the charges against him. The executive board of the party took its time. A small commission was not set up until after the Bavarian elections. The men selected for the task of once again investigating Frauendorfer's past were Hans Ehard, the current president of the Bavarian Landtag; Emil Muhler, a Catholic priest who had been imprisoned in the Dachau concentration camp during the Nazi regime; and Werner Müller. Once again, Frauendorfer presented his version of history and supported it with the exonerating documents that had once been useful to him at the denazification court. Without in-depth research into the case, there was little to challenge his defense, especially as the state of research and the availability of sources posed problems even for experts.

On May 2, 1959, Ehard presented the results of the commission to the party's executive board. The commission's report largely concurred with Frauendorfer's depiction of his past, even though it was obvious that the commission attempted somewhat to distance itself from it. In the end, Ehard noted that "absolutely nothing [stood] in the way" of granting Frauendorfer his wish to be rehabilitated. Further, he would be allowed to be both a "member and officeholder" of the CSU, although it was "another question" whether it would be "smart to run for office." The commission was also of the opinion that this rehabilitation by the party should not be announced publicly.⁷⁵ But this was precisely what Frauendorfer was seeking. He wanted a formal written apology, and he wanted it announced in a press release. He even made specific suggestions about the wording of both the apology and the press release. Although

Hans Ehard felt this was not at all “possible and suitable,”⁷⁶ after much back and forth Frauendorfer did indeed receive a written statement of rehabilitation, which thus gave him yet another exonerating document to add to his collection. This latest whitewash was particularly valuable because it was the indispensable prerequisite for his second attempt to launch a political career in the CSU.

The Second Attempt: Limits to Integration

Frauendorfer needed a year and a half before he started this renewed effort. Once again, elections were quickly approaching. His admission ticket, so to speak, was two recommendations by the *Bayerische Staatsbürgerliche Vereinigung* (Bavarian Civic Association), a nonprofit organization that raised funds for political parties through donations from the business community and was closely linked to the influential *Landesverband der Bayerischen Industrie* (State Association of Bavarian Industry). In June 1961 Otto Eberle, the chair of the *Bayerische Staatsbürgerliche Vereinigung*, suggested to CSU chair, Franz Josef Strauß, that Max Frauendorfer be “assigned” a “safe seat” on the party’s list of candidates for the national elections to the Bundestag. Shortly after that, he asked Strauß to ensure that Frauendorfer be given “a suitable job” in the leading bodies of the CSU.⁷⁷ Strauß granted him these favors. After all, his party was in the middle of an election campaign and needed money. Membership dues were far from sufficient to finance such a campaign, and government funding of the parties had not yet developed beyond its relatively modest beginnings. In this situation, it was very valuable to have the goodwill of the business community, so Strauß did not hesitate to suggest to the CSU party committee (*Landesausschuss*) that Frauendorfer be elected to the position of deputy treasurer of the CSU. Strauß argued emphatically for this move:

Several of you will be familiar with the name Frauendorfer, several won't. I do not intend to hide anything [. . .]. During the last state elections, he was subject to a witch hunt by the press, in which accusations were leveled against him in connection with the period of the Third Reich. He was able to refute these accusations so that the honorary committee we established [. . .] recommended a full formal apology to Mr. Frauendorfer, declared all accusations unjustified, and labeled him employable and unobjectionable in every way. When someone has been the victim of political error in the past, then the yardstick by which we judge conservative people should at least not be any stricter than

that which the SPD [*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* – Social Democratic Party of Germany] uses for the communists who fill its ranks in huge numbers. (Applause.) If someone who was a high official with the rank of department head in a ministry of the Third Reich resigns his post in protest against policy and goes to the front as a simple infantry soldier [. . .], I have more respect for him than for someone who talked resistance but made sure that he kept his job. We do not have first-class and second-class party members. Either a person is usable or not.⁷⁸

No objections were raised. Even Werner Müller, the chief treasurer of the CSU, said nothing when the party committee elected Frauendorfer as the man to be his deputy, a man whose candidacy for the Bavarian Landtag he had so adamantly opposed in the summer of 1958.

However, things did not go as smoothly for Frauendorfer when the CSU party committee began to compile the candidate list for the elections to the Bundestag.⁷⁹ He was nominated for place sixteen, but the delegates chose another candidate over him. Not until the deputy party chair Rudolf Eberhard vigorously stood up for him did the delegates select Frauendorfer to fill place twenty on the list. This was hardly a safe place for a seat. Despite the sensational election results of 57.2 percent in 1957, the party had been able to secure a mandate in the Bundestag for only the first fourteen candidates on the list. So after the election on September 17, 1961, it was not surprising that Frauendorfer was not among the CSU candidates who won a Bundestag mandate by way of the party's candidate list. Yet he could hope that, with time, he would make it to Bonn as a substitute. Sure enough, in December 1962 it looked as if that time had come. Prime Minister of Bavaria Alfons Goppel had appointed Hans Schütz and Gerhard Wachter, two CSU Bundestag representatives, as state secretaries. It was only a matter of a few weeks before the two men would clear out their desks in Bonn, and then Frauendorfer would have his chance.

If he really assumed that there would be no protest against him this time, then Frauendorfer had been deceiving himself. The reaction of the press was even louder than it had been in 1958. Once again, *Der Spiegel* started the ball rolling by reporting on Frauendorfer's alleged services on behalf of the CSU finances and his impending move to the Bundestag.⁸⁰ Well-known papers picked up the story, as did those from rural Bavaria, which reported repeatedly on the latest developments. The tenor of most of the articles and editorials was clear: the "line of what was politically acceptable" had been "crossed";⁸¹ it was, in fact, "inexcusable"⁸² and "scandalous"⁸³ that the ranks of the CSU lead-

ership had heaved Frauendorfer into the saddle and put him on the road to Bonn. Former functionaries and high officeholders of the Nazi regime had no place in public office, the press declared, regardless of whether they were guilty or not under criminal law.⁸⁴ It was argued that such affairs cast doubt on the credibility of Germany's democracy and discredited the image of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) abroad.

Such a reception in the press certainly did not please CSU officials, especially as it sparked demonstrations and student protests under the slogan "There's no place for *alte Kämpfer* [members of the old guard] in the Bundestag."⁸⁵ But more disconcerting for the party leadership must have been the criticism growing louder within party ranks. Among those speaking out were Alois Hundhammer⁸⁶ and Baron Karl Theodor von und zu Guttenberg, both of whom had been unequivocal opponents of National Socialism and were now among the best-known critics of their party chairman, Strauß, whose protégé Frauendorfer was considered to be. Despite all these critical voices, the CSU leadership stood by Frauendorfer at first. A party press release of January 17, 1963 emphasized that the accusations against Frauendorfer had already been scrutinized years before and found baseless. Should new suspicions arise, then a "relevant and proper review" would be undertaken by the party.⁸⁷ However, the party's deputy chair, Rudolf Eberhard, expressly rejected the idea that "a second denazification process [would be] carried out" in the Frauendorfer case.⁸⁸

In 1958 it had been CSU politicians like Alois Hundhammer and Josef Müller who had helped put an end to the affairs involving the candidates Prücklmayer, Schmucker, and Frauendorfer. But the CSU of 1963 was no longer the CSU of 1958. Men like Franz Josef Strauß, Friedrich Zimmermann, and Rudolf Eberhard focused first and foremost on achieving political success, no matter how twisted the road they traveled or how dubious the means they used. Strauß, in particular, was perceived as a danger to democracy by both politicians and the public on the left-liberal spectrum. The fact that he was now viewed as the one pulling the strings in the Frauendorfer case may explain the aggressiveness exhibited by some journalists in the early weeks of 1963.

Leading CSU party officials were not about to cave to any pressure to drop Frauendorfer. Hundhammer came to feel their entrenchment the most, particularly as Strauß had more than one score to settle with him. Hundhammer, the Bavarian minister for agriculture at the time, had stated in an interview in January 1963 that Frauendorfer had become "clearly too great a burden for the CSU and the entire FRG." Not only should Frauendorfer be denied a seat in the Bundestag, he went on to say, but it would be wrong in general for former-

ly prominent National Socialists to hold higher public office again. Moreover, Hundhammer emphasized, he had tried to block Frauendorfer's nomination in 1961.⁸⁹ This statement alone provided sufficient reason for the CSU party leadership to disavow Hundhammer publicly and accuse him in a press release of lying. In fact, Hundhammer had said nothing when Frauendorfer's name was placed on the candidate list, and he had even supported the suggestion to elect Frauendorfer as deputy treasurer.

It came as no surprise that Frauendorfer refused to even consider relinquishing his promised seat in the Bundestag. Then again, Gerhard Wachter had not yet resigned his seat, and the longer the matter dragged on, the more loudly the critics voiced their opposition. Nor were these critics assuaged by the announcement that the CSU planned to set up a commission to inquire into the accusations once again. But then came the moment when Hendrik van Dam, the secretary-general of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, spoke out against a seat for Frauendorfer, and trouble began to brew among the CSU members of the Bavarian Landtag. The CSU party leadership had to act, and Strauß took it upon himself to have the decisive talk with Frauendorfer. Soon thereafter, on February 1, 1963, Frauendorfer announced at a press conference that he had decided to forgo any claims to a seat in the Bundestag, even though he had nothing to reproach himself for.⁹⁰

It was obvious that Frauendorfer's decision had not been prompted by any honest introspection on his part, and the CSU also presented a half-hearted stance on the matter. The Bavarian party leaders welcomed Frauendorfer's decision as "a reasonable resolution in light of the current situation," but at the same time they affirmed that Frauendorfer would keep his party office.⁹¹ Franz Josef Strauß was equally ambivalent. While stating that he himself had told Frauendorfer to forgo the seat, he simultaneously acknowledged that there was a "right to political error" and demanded that, "in accordance with principles of fairness, former National Socialists and communists be judged by the same standard" because communism had "brought no less disaster upon the world than National Socialism." With Frauendorfer's announcement, Strauß assumed that the matter had been "resolved in a way" that did not alienate "former party comrades who are members and voters of our party."⁹²

As had been announced, a commission was formed by the executive board of the CSU to reexamine all the accusations against Frauendorfer. In doing so, the commission based its evaluation primarily on documentation that he himself had provided, and it concluded that it had found no grounds on which to criticize him. On the contrary, it adopted Frauendorfer's version of his own biography almost completely and came to the remarkable conclusion,

announced in a press release, that he had “opposed National Socialism more boldly than many who today call themselves ‘enemies of the Third Reich.’”⁹³ Thus, Frauendorfer was rehabilitated yet again, but even so, his career in the CSU was over. The negative publicity had cost him his executive post at Allianz, making him no longer of much use to the CSU. At the same time, it could not be ruled out that Frauendorfer might continue to throw a shadow over the party. For that reason, he was removed from the office of deputy treasurer before the end of 1963. However, for the top CSU leadership, the topic of the Nazi past was not over. In November 1963, at a meeting of the executive board, Friedrich Zimmermann asked, “How far may a former Nazi advance in a democratic party?” He was of the opinion that this question had to be settled once and for all.⁹⁴ Such debates were irrelevant for Frauendorfer. His venture into politics was over before it had properly begun.

From that point onward, the course of Frauendorfer’s life was unspectacular. An official investigation of him was started rather accidentally in 1963, but it ceased once opinions had been obtained from the Central Office of the State Justice Administrations for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes and from the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich. He was less fortunate in the suit he filed against the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung* (Federal Agency for Employment Services and Unemployment Insurance), as the federal employment agency responsible for employment and unemployment insurance was then called. His lawsuit to have his years as head of the Labor Division in the General Government counted toward his pension failed in two courts in 1964 and 1966, respectively. This was another indication of the limits to which German society was willing to integrate members of the Nazi elite, limits that had become increasingly strict since the late 1950s. After his unsuccessful fight for expanding his pension rights, the public heard no more from Frauendorfer, who lived a reclusive life in Tutzing in Upper Bavaria. On July 25, 1989, he died at the age of eighty.

Appendix

MINUTES

of the special executive board meeting of the Christian Social Union, Munich district chapter, on Monday, September 8, 1958, 7 p.m., in the room of the CSU parliamentary party in City Hall.

[...] ⁹⁵

The chair of the party’s district chapter,⁹⁶ in an official letter of the CSU district chapter dated September 3, 1958, called for a meeting of the extended

executive board on September 9, 1958. Those present at the meeting signed an attendance list. Shortly after the meeting was opened, the undersigned was requested by District Chapter Chair Dr. Josef Müller to prepare the minutes.⁹⁷

City Councillor Franz Fackler⁹⁸ opened the meeting and requested the report on the meeting of the CSU executive board. Werner Müller⁹⁹ reported on this meeting, which resulted in instructions to repeat the candidate selection process in the Kelheim ward. Reference was made to the case of Schmucker, Traunstein. As Müller emphasized, he had argued strongly for new elections in Kelheim on grounds of the fundamental position of the CSU.

[City Councillor] Fackler indicated that similar accusations about the Munich CSU candidate Dr. Frauendorfer have been raised concerning his functions in the Third Reich. Dr. Hamm,¹⁰⁰ he said, could elaborate on this.

[City Councillor] Dr. Hamm requested that Dr. Frauendorfer first be given the chance to disclose his functions before 1945. Only afterward would he [Hamm], if necessary, expand on this, for it would embarrass him for the party's sake to level accusations personally.

Dr. Max Frauendorfer reported: The ideas of the papal social encyclicals had greatly appealed to him. When the NSDAP was still a small party, he believed that it was a place where he could put his ideas into practice. This is why he joined the NSDAP early and worked for it. He became the head of the office "*für ständischen Aufbau*." On December 13, 1935, he resigned all his posts in the party (at age twenty-six) due to disapproval by Dr. [Robert] Ley. The process of terminating the posts lasted into the spring of 1936.

"After that I made an effort to work against the undesirable development occurring in the Third Reich." He made many connections to circles in the resistance movement; in particular, the cooperation with Ambassador von Hassell¹⁰¹ was underscored by Dr. Frauendorfer. He maintained that he had never spoken about this activity, even though he had references from recognized members of the resistance movement, but "I have had to say these things because the relationship to the party before 1935 has been questioned."

Of the six years of peace during the Third Reich, for four of them he was unable to find employment suitable to his legal training, "because neither the state nor the city would employ me, as I was a dismissed Nazi employee." "I was one of those people belonging to the resistance who were fully aware of the danger involved."

Dr. Frauendorfer concluded by saying that he would answer any further questions.

Dr. Josef Müller asked: "What were your functions in Poland?"

Fr.: “I was head of the state social administration; I did not hold any party office.”

In answer to repeated questioning: he was the head of the entire department, “labor minister,” that is, of the social administration, including the provision of food¹⁰² to plants and factories, first as an employee, then as a civil servant.

Interjected question by Dr. Hamm: “Which offices did you hold?”

Dr. Müller added: “in the General Government?” and quoted from the notes of Ambassador von Hassell:

... page 179¹⁰³—Ebenhausen, Hassell talks about Dr. Frauendorfer’s Golden Party Badge

– ... page 209¹⁰⁴—about Frauendorfer’s despair over what he had to witness in Poland ... about Frauendorfer’s objection to the murder of agricultural workers, etc., that he raised with [Heinrich] Himmler. In another quote from the abovementioned source, reference is made to SS member Frauendorfer, who wanted, out of distress over what was occurring in Poland, to serve as a common soldier on the front line and, like [Hans] Frank, volunteered to serve in the *Wehrmacht*, something for which Frauendorfer was criticized by the SS ...¹⁰⁵

Dr. Müller: “What were your responsibilities? Even in a high-level position you could have been a respectable person, but we are making a political decision here that is not concerned with passing judgment on an individual.” The quotes showed that Fr. was obviously a member of the SS in a high position, because there is no other way to explain the personal allegations expressed to Himmler. The aforementioned Golden Party Badge could indeed have served as protection for resistance activities.

Dr. Müller elaborated on the difference between hearing news (over banned radio), transmitting news to resistance circles, and [engaging in] active¹⁰⁶ resistance efforts. Then Dr. M. reworded the question, roughly as follows: What functions [did you have] on the official side, how far [did you go] on the side of the resistance?

Answer from Dr. Frauendorfer: He became a NSDAP member at the age of eighteen, his membership number was under 100,000, [and] therefore [he received] a Golden Party Badge automatically.

Also [he] went to the SS at eighteen years of age (cavalry); in 1932 he announced his resignation, which was not accepted. At the time of his quarrel with Dr. Ley in 1935 (see above), he had the rank of *Truppführer*. From 1932 to 1945 he held no SS position, but the last “listed promotions” were to *Sturmabführer* and *Obersturmbannführer*.

Objection by Dr. Müller: “How could you be promoted if you resigned from the SS?”

Dr. Fr.: In 1932 he officially resigned in order to prepare for the Dr. jur. [law doctorate] (*letter was read aloud*).

Interjected question by Werner Müller: “Did you pay dues?”

Dr. Fr.: Party dues until 1939 or 1940, “as far as the SS goes, I don’t know.”

Dr. Steinkohl:¹⁰⁷ “How could you be promoted if you had resigned?”

Dr. Fr.: “I was not allowed to resign . . . therefore I was promoted on lists . . .” Szepessy,¹⁰⁸ one of Frauendorfer’s head officials, landed in a concentration camp and Fr. got him released because together they had issued identification cards to Polish intellectuals, classifying them as skilled workers.

Fackler asked whether Frauendorfer’s position would have been comparable to the position of a son of Kolping¹⁰⁹ who became known in the resistance . . .

Fr.: To be precise, he had been the director of the *Landesarbeitsamt* [state labor office] . . .

Dr. Müller: “Did that have anything to do with the deployment of labor?”

Fr.: That was a “small side job” next to many other responsibilities.

Then Fr. read aloud a statement by a Polish count,¹¹⁰ who had been an envoy in Berlin and after 1939 the head of the Polish relief organization (similar to [the] Red Cross), and who acknowledged in 1947 Frauendorfer’s helpfulness on behalf of the Polish people.

Dr. Müller insisted on clarification as to whether Fr. hadn’t indeed been the head of a ministry, seeing as how the position of Governor General could be equated with that of governor of a German state . . . ?

Fr.: “Yes, in Bavaria I would have been labor minister.”

At this point Dr. Hamm reported on the conversation between Frauendorfer and himself: Dr. Frauendorfer had described his party activity as “actually peripheral,” for he was campaigning for office as a resistance fighter . . . For him, Hamm, the conversation had become unpleasant because he did not wish to level accusations. But he could no longer contain himself when Fr. put the party [CSU] in danger of appearing in a notorious newspaper in a notorious article . . . “Your remarks today were so convincing at the start that I wanted to believe it when you said that you had ended your party activity in 1935 and had refused from this point on to take any other position (interjection by Frauendorfer: “in the party”) . . . You were even out of work for four years.”

With this Fr. had given the impression that he had severed ties with everything in 1935. Then in answer to the interjected question[s]¹¹¹ of Dr. Müller, concessions gradually emerged . . .

Dr. Hamm verbatim: “You have attempted to lie to the executive board of the party.”

Then Dr. Hamm read from photocopies of official documents that he had in his possession: in 1934, *Reichsschulungsleiter* of the NSDAP and the aforementioned responsibilities in Poland . . . “How can you say that you lost four years? You should spare the party the scandal.”

Dr. Fr. “I said expressly, no party offices.” (After 1935.)

Dr. Hamm: “We remember the Third Reich all too well for me to have to listen to such rubbish . . .”

Dr. Müller repeated that he had asked only because of the Hassell book, in which Frauendorfer did “not come off unfavorably.” “I have to say, it took a long time before we discovered that you held a ministerial-level position in Poland.”

Dr. Fr.: “I explained that I was head of the Labor Division in the General G[overnment].”

Dr. Müller: “If someone was of ministerial rank, he ultimately would have landed in the Prinz-Albrecht-Straße cellar [prison in Gestapo/SS headquarters].” Whoever served Hitler in such a high position would have had to give his life for being in the resistance . . .

Fr.: “You cannot reproach a person because, thanks to fortunate circumstances, he did not get killed.”

Dr. Müller stated that the CSU would get into big trouble if the facts recorded in the Nuremberg trial records were to become public.¹¹² (Concurring comments!)

Once again, Hamm read the section of the Nuremberg trial records on the forced labor issue.

Dr. Fr.: “I only said that as much as could happen by choice, did happen.”

Dr. Müller asked if it had to be read aloud again.

Dr. Fr.: “But, why?”

Fellow CSU member Engel asked how Fr., as a candidate, would explain to the public that he continued to be promoted until 1945 . . .

Dr. Fr.: From 1936 on, he had no longer held any party office and began work in Poland only after the war started and against the will of the party . . .

Once again the excerpt from the Nuremberg records is read aloud; it states that because of the lack of volunteers, Polish workers had to be made available by force.

Dr. M.: “This laid the foundation for the use of force.”

Dr. Fr.: “I had nothing to do with that.”

Dr. M.: “Good, we will let you believe what you want.” However, if a news-

paper published the excerpts just read, no one would understand a candidacy for public office of someone who helped to put these coercive measures into action and who denied being able to find further voluntary¹¹³ way[s].¹¹⁴ No one would understand that, and for him, Dr. Müller, this would be taking things too far.

Fellow CSU member [Adolf] Lohrer advised careful consideration of the human aspect. The remarks by Dr. Hamm went too far. On the other hand, he himself had experienced some of the horrible events in Poland as a non-commissioned officer working in the outer office of the general responsible for transportation (or something like that). Therefore, he would have to say: "It's nothing personal against you, but don't do it. We cannot justify and defend this publicly; the party stands no chance because this cannot be defended."

Lohrer requested Dr. Fr to "withdraw his candidacy."

Fellow CSU member Glaser¹¹⁵ noted that numerous party members who had come into conflict with the NSDAP in the Reich had been sent to the East, where they were to prove themselves. Turning to Dr. Frauendorfer: "But regardless of how much good you may have done, if you were the director of such a Reich division, then it shows prudent tact not to campaign now for parliamentary government in Bavaria. You cannot convince anyone that you meant well. I cannot follow your reasoning when you say that your involvement ended on December 13, 1935, because you were Catholic and black [politically conservative]. You cannot make us believe that you did not serve the NSDAP after 1935 . . . How could it be that you were given this function if you didn't want it; you must have rendered certain services . . ."

Fellow CSU member Schmidhuber, Peter:¹¹⁶ Was Dr. Müller aware of what Dr. Fr. was during the Third Reich? Dr. Fr. had said that, before starting his work in the CSU, he had described his career to Dr. Müller and Dr. Hundhammer.¹¹⁷

Dr. Müller: "I knew that he had been in the General Government, and what you told me [then] corresponds roughly with what you said at the start (of this meeting)." After President Riedmayr¹¹⁸ called his attention to the Hassell book, he had posed such precise questions because he, Dr. M., realized he was not fully informed.

Dr. M. mentioned his earlier statement on the denazification law and asked Dr. Fr.: "Where were you immediately after 1945?"

Dr. Fr.: "After 1945 I was in Munich; at first I could not go by my own name, that was quite clear, of course . . ." He spoke with Father Rupert Mayer¹¹⁹ and Father Rösch,¹²⁰ among others, and they expressed their hope that he would soon be able again "to play an active role himself."

Fellow CSU member Stütze:¹²¹ He [Stütze] came to this meeting fully uninformed and had not even known that Dr. Hamm had some concern to raise regarding Dr. Fr. But he then ascertained that Dr. Fr.'s introductory statement gave the impression, intentionally or unintentionally, that he had been a young idealist who rejected Nazi ideology by 1935 at the latest and therefore found himself discredited and in dire straits professionally. If Dr. Fr. does not step down, the state executive board of the party will be forced to make a decision because, in light of Dr. Fr.'s responsibilities, the personal conduct of the candidate cannot be justified to the public. Even if Dr. Fr. is granted a clean bill of conduct, the propaganda efforts of the CSU would not be enough to defend this conduct against attacks leveled by the opposition's propaganda.

Fellow CSU member Lemmrich¹²² asked what position Dr. Fr. had taken when it was decided that the recruitment of Polish workers would continue to be possible only through coercive measures. Dr. Fr. referred to the letter of the aforementioned Polish count, who had confirmed his helpfulness on behalf of the Polish people.

Dr. M. interjected that Frank had also possessed a written statement from a Polish bishop to Rome and yet he was still hanged . . .

Fellow CSU member [Anton] Thanbichler pointed to the task that lay ahead: to conduct a successful election campaign for the party. It would not be acceptable to have a man run for office who had had such high-level responsibilities in the Third Reich. The man on the street could never be made to understand that.

The further course of the meeting was very heated.

Dr. Fr.: "I feel personally disappointed by the way Dr. Hamm has portrayed me here. I have not sought to conceal anything. . . ." Hamm's behavior is "impertinent." "I can assure you of one thing: I went four years without a position suitable to my training, and I landed in this job as a civil servant of the social administration only as a result of the war. I did not carry out any party functions after 1935/36. The other job was a government position, that is something else. By referring to the Polish statement, I have shown how I carried out my duties. I have gone through so much in ten years and will not let myself be portrayed now as some enthusiastic Nazi . . ."

(Objections from the participants that no one had portrayed him as an "enthusiastic Nazi,"¹²³ but as a high-level Nazi officeholder.)

Dr. Fr. wanted to refer to a statement written by the widow of Ambassador von Hassell,¹²⁴ but was interrupted by Dr. H. and, turning to Dr. Hamm, in essence said: I can understand that you are in a "personally difficult position" in the party . . . Dr. Hamm countered, asking what this had to do with him and

with the topic on the meeting's agenda. Dr. Frauendorfer countered, saying that marriage to "FDP Landtag member Dr. Brücher"¹²⁵ naturally creates difficulties in the CSU [...].

At this, Dr. H. rushed over to Frauendorfer and warned, "I'm going to belt you one, this is none of your business . . ." Remarks were made such as "You *Reichsschulungsleiter*, you filthy Nazi pig . . ." Interjections by the other meeting attendees caused Hamm to desist: This is not the way to handle things either.

Dr. Müller: "Frauendorfer, is there something you still want to say?"

He asked permission to read aloud the aforementioned statement by Hassell's widow in which Fr. is confirmed as having transmitted valuable information to resistance groups. This was said to be an important contribution to the resistance made under full awareness of the risk.

Dr. Fr. stressed his role as a resistance fighter and argued that the annual ceremonies honoring the dead resistance fighters are worthless when the living resistance fighters are not being acknowledged . . .

Dr. M. protested against dragging the remembrance of resistance fighters into the hearing. He asked Dr. Fr.: "What would have happened to you had Hitler been victorious?"

Dr. Fr.: "I would have died that first year."¹²⁶

Dr. M.: "Do you voluntarily relinquish your candidacy?"

Dr. Fr.: "I am profoundly convinced that I have no reason to relinquish it. If you believe that, then the *Landesführung* [state leadership] (interjection Dr. Müller: "There is no *Führung* in the CSU"), the state executive board of the CSU, as a more objective body, should decide" (interjection by Stützle, "outrageous"; protest from City Councillor Lutz¹²⁷ against the accusation of a lack of objectivity).

Dr. M. pointed out that he had requested fellow CSU member Stützle to take notes. The minutes of the meeting can thus be submitted. He said he mentioned this because Dr. Fr. doubted the objectivity of the hearing.

Dr. Fr. left the parliamentary party chamber at 9:05 p.m. to give the expanded board the opportunity to come to a decision.

Dr. M. started the discussion by declaring that he had come here without really knowing what the outcome should be. Now he is "100 percent clear what the outcome should be." He hopes that the board shares this opinion unanimously.

Stützle asks, because the objectivity had already been placed in doubt, whether any other people were present, besides Dr. Fr., who were not board members. Dr. Hamm then also left the room.

L. Huber said he was puzzled how it could happen that the relatively un-

known Dr. Fr. had even been allowed to run for office. “He was managed,” he said.

Pflüger:¹²⁸ He had known him as chairman of local CSU Chapter 9.

Dr. M. disclosed that *Der Spiegel* had already announced it would be taking up the case of Dr. Fr. “I can only remedy this in the interests of the party.”

On the question how it came about that Fr. could even run, Dr. M. said: The director general of Allianz asked him to suggest Dr. Fr. for the elections to the Bundestag, because in the past he “had occasionally supported the CSU.” “I didn’t know him [Frauendorfer] then, he was somehow there for the first time, and I heard that he was supposed to be a man who, early on, was in the NSDAP as a young person . . .” This would not have been grounds to oppose him had no new incriminatory revelations surfaced. For the Bundestag elections, he [Müller] had rejected the suggestion made by the director general, referring instead to Hugo Geiger,¹²⁹ a member of the Bundestag. The Allianz director had said that Dr. Fr. had been granted leave with a monthly salary of such and such for politics. “Then it was called to my attention by the JU [Junge Union, the youth organization of the CSU and CDU¹³⁰] that in Gauting he had founded a ‘humanistic society,’ the bylaws of which I didn’t like. So I did not go to the nomination meeting.” Dr. Fr. was said to have promised the campaign generous financial backing, and that is why Pflüger could nominate him, particularly as it was an electoral ward in which his chances were hopeless. In the meantime it has been called to his attention that Fr. wanted to procure the second votes¹³¹ of other electoral districts by financing campaigns . . . It was thought that Fr. would “bring in Nazi votes”; by then Fr. had set to work to procure second votes at the expense of others . . .

Dr. Müller continued: “What was decisive for me, informed about the positions by the Hassell book, was that he spoke of the encyclicals . . .” He was already familiar with that. Furthermore, Fr. tried to explain what an insignificant Nazi dignitary he had been—the rank of noncommissioned officer in the SS!—“And only when he is grilled is he suddenly—although he had quit the party—a lieutenant colonel in the SS and on Himmler’s staff; otherwise he could not level accusations against Himmler, and in occupied Poland he held a minister-level position.”

City Councillor Fackler said that he could suddenly vividly remember red posters, “*Reichsamtsleiter* Dr. Frauendorfer.” . . .

Peter Schmidhuber asked whether the delegate assembly itself could withdraw a candidacy.

Werner Müller answered that this had already been checked in the Prücklmayer case, and it was not possible. W. Müller said further that the Prücklmay-

er hearing was fundamentally different from the hearing with Frauendorfer. Prücklmayer had made all incriminating facts known at the candidate nomination meeting. No new accusations surfaced either before or during the hearing of the state executive board. “In the interest of and commissioned by the district committee, I took to the barricades to ensure that the Prücklmayer election would be repeated. I will take the same standpoint in the Schmucker case. We also have to take the same standpoint in this case with Frauendorfer. We have to request Mr. State Chairman¹³² to repeat the election based on the minutes of this hearing. I am convinced that the delegate assembly in the Munich VII ward will make other nominations after the withdrawal of this candidacy. . . . As I have emphasized to the state executive board, what is at stake here is the fundamental principle of the CSU in Bavaria.”

Dr. M.: Before any new decision is taken in the Munich VII ward, the state executive board must first rescind the first election.

Dr. Steinkohl: States that he was an electoral delegate in the Munich VII ward. They had nominated Dr. Fr. at the urging of Pflüger for financial reasons. “We have Dr. Hamm to thank for avoiding this humiliation. He has been trying for weeks to bring this to light.”

Dr. M.: “Is anyone against us passing the resolution unanimously? If someone is of another opinion, he should say so now.”

No requests to speak.

Dr. M.: “Shall we vote?”

Dr. Besold:¹³³ “It was, for example, deception to make us drag it out of him that he was promoted ‘automatically’ as a former SS member. Second, he said that he never got anything more through the party. Yet wasn’t this office in Poland strictly a party office?”

Dr. M.: “Frank was appointed by Hitler.” Frank had concerns about going over [into Poland]. Certainly Fr. was brought over [to Poland] by Frank as *Reichsleiter*. Back then, the aforementioned Max Dorn¹³⁴ went to the *Abwehr* [German military intelligence] to avoid having to go to Poland. “Actually, everyone knew what was coming in Poland.” Dr. Besold maintained that whoever went to Poland had to have been reliable in the political party sense. Also, he noted, Dr. Hamm should not have “reacted” as he did.

On the motion of City Councillor Lutz, the vote was to be taken by secret ballot. Dr. Besold: “Isn’t it still possible to get him to withdraw voluntarily?”

Dr. M.: He [Müller] plans to inform him of the unanimous rejection of his candidacy by the board and then ask him again.

The motion read as follows:

“The Munich District Chapter requests the State Chairman of the CSU in

Bavaria to order that candidate selection be carried out again in the Munich VII ward.”

The twenty-seven persons present were eligible to vote. Twenty-seven yes votes were submitted.

Dr. Müller noted that he would be adding the following to the text of the resolution sent to the state chairman: “This motion was passed unanimously in a vote by secret ballot by twenty-seven eligible voters—with no abstentions.”

At 9:30 p.m. Dr. Fr. and Dr. Hamm were requested to enter the caucus room again.

Dr. Müller announced: “We have made the following decision: The district chapter requests the State Chairman of the CSU in Bavaria to order that the election to select candidates in the Munich VII ward be repeated.”

“Twenty-seven eligible voters cast their ballots secretly. All twenty-seven approved this resolution.” Addressing Dr. Fr.: “In light of this unanimous decision, may I ask you again whether you are willing to withdraw voluntarily from your candidacy in the VII ward? We are not going to resume the discussion because the decision now rests with another authority; I would appreciate a yes or no.”

Dr. Fr.: “I am forced to say no, because otherwise it would look as if there were something to accuse me of.” That was what motivated his answer. He would now have to have his activities on behalf of the resistance clarified in greater detail than before.

Minutes taken on September 9 and 10, 1958, based on the stenographic record of the meeting.

Bundesarchiv Koblenz, NL 1397 Karl Theodor Freiherr von und zu Guttenberg, vol. 249, fols. 219–30.

Notes

1. This contribution is a considerably shortened version of my original publication “Grenzen der Integration: Die CSU und der Umgang mit der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit—der Fall Dr. Max Frauendorfer,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 48, no. 4 (October 2000): 675–742. The footnotes have been limited primarily to the source citation of quotations, although references have been added to several studies that have appeared since the original version was published in 2000.

2. Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter: BArchB), R 3901—PA/2977-A 1, fols. 9–10, “Lebenslauf Max Frauendorfers vom 5.5.1939”; Archiv des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte (hereafter: IfZ-Archiv), Sp. 58, “Meldebogen Max Frauendorfers vom 7.11.1950”;

Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter: BArchK), R 41/350, fols. 40–42, “Auskunft des Berlin Document Center über Max Frauendorfer vom 30.12.1954.”

3. See Reinhard Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner: Studien zum Machtkampf im nationalsozialistischen Herrschaftssystem. Mit einem bibliographischen Essay von Stephan Lehnstaedt*, 2nd ed. (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006), 61–103; Ronald Smelser, *Robert Ley: Hitlers Mann an der “Arbeitsfront”: Eine Biografie* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1989), 108–12, 279–82.

4. IfZ-Archiv, MA 595, “Robert Ley an Max Frauendorfer vom 18.12.1935.”

5. IfZ-Archiv, MA 595, “Martin Bormann an Alfred Rosenberg vom 29.3.1935.”

6. IfZ-Archiv, MA 595, “Max Frauendorfer an Rudolf Heß vom 19.12.1935.”

7. IfZ-Archiv, MA 595, “Rudolf Heß an Alfred Rosenberg vom 21.3.1935.”

8. IfZ-Archiv, MA 595, “Alfred Rosenberg an Rudolf Heß vom 25.3.1935.”

9. Bollmus, *Amt Rosenberg*, 91.

10. IfZ-Archiv, MA 595, “Max Frauendorfer an Rudolf Heß vom 14.12.1935.”

11. IfZ-Archiv, MA 595, “Robert Ley an Max Frauendorfer vom 18.12.1935.”

12. IfZ-Archiv, MA 595, “Max Frauendorfer an Rudolf Heß vom 19.12.1935.”

13. IfZ-Archiv, Sp. 58, “Rudolf Schmeer an Max Frauendorfer vom 2.1.1936.”

14. IfZ-Archiv, Sp. 58, “Verfügung Rudolf Heß’ Nr. 27/36 vom 18.2.1936.”

15. Bollmus, *Amt Rosenberg*, 92.

16. See the writings of Max Frauendorfer: *Was ist ständischer Aufbau?* (Berlin, n.d., ca. 1934), 5–16; “Grundsätze des Nationalsozialismus,” *Der Schulungsbrief* 2, no. 7 (July 1935): 220–22; “Der Tag der Gemeinschaft,” *Deutsche Verwaltung* 15, no. 8 (April 1938): 225.

17. BArchK, R 41/351, “Auszugsweise Abschrift aus Deutsche Verwaltung 15 (1938), S. 95,” “Notiz: Wechsel in der Hauptschriftleitung.” Frauendorfer would continue to work on the editorial staff.

18. BArchB, R 3901—PA/2977-A 1, fol. 23, “Hans Frank an Franz Seldte vom 28.10.1939.”

19. In 1942, the administration of the General Government consisted of the Secretariat of State as General Governor Hans Frank’s office for coordination and control and of 12 divisions (Hauptabteilungen) which functioned as ministries. See the overview in *Taschenbuch für Verwaltungsbeamte 1942*, ed. by Dr. Warnack (Berlin: Heymanns, 1942), 197–205; for an overview of the administrative structure of the Labor Division which consisted of eight departments, see *ibid.*, 201.

20. On this point see also Martin Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik 1939–1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1961), 18–25; Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, “Der Überfall auf Polen und der neue Charakter des Krieges,” in Christoph Kleßmann, ed., *September 1939: Krieg, Besatzung, Widerstand in Polen. Acht Beiträge* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 16–37.

21. “Besprechung des Führer mit Chef OKW über die künftige Gestaltung der polnischen Verhältnisse zu Deutschland,” on October 17, 1939, repr. in *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal 14 November 1945–1 October 1946*, vol. 26 (Nuremberg, 1947), 377–83, here 379.

22. See Max Frauendorfer, “Neuordnung auf dem Gebiet der Arbeit,” in Max Freiherr du Prel, ed., *Das Generalgouvernement*, 2nd rev. and expanded ed. (Würzburg: Triltsch, 1942),

135–40, 379, which also provides an overview of the structure of the Hauptabteilung Arbeit in *ibid.*, 379.

23. Detailed information can be found in Gerhard Eisenblätter, *Grundlinien der Politik des Reichs gegenüber dem Generalgouvernement, 1939–1945* (PhD diss., University of Frankfurt a. M., 1969), table 3; on the following numbers see *ibid.*, 325. A concise overview is provided by Mark Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz: Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und Häftlinge im Deutschen Reich und im besetzten Europa 1939–1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2001), 44–56; Elizabeth Harvey, “Arbeitsverwaltung und Arbeitskräfterekrutierung im besetzten Europa: Belgien und das Generalgouvernement,” in Alexander Nützenadel, ed., *Das Reichsarbeitsministerium im Nationalsozialismus: Verwaltung, Politik, Verbrechen* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017), 348–86.

24. See Werner Präg and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, eds., *Das Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939–1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1975; hereafter: *Diensttagebuch*), 85, entry dated January 11, 1940. IfZ-Archiv, Fb 105/2, “Diensttagebuch von Generalgouverneur Hans Frank, Eintrag vom 6.2.1940.”

25. *Diensttagebuch*, 149, entry dated March 7, 1940.

26. Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler’s Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich*, trans. William Templar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 82.

27. *Diensttagebuch*, 176–77, entry dated April 21, 1940; following quotation, *ibid.*, 188–89, entry dated April 23, 1940.

28. Eisenblätter, *Grundlinien*, 329; the following information, *ibid.*, table 3.

29. Broszat, *Polenpolitik*, 110.

30. BArchB, R 3901—PA/2977-A 1, fol. 57, “Franz Seldte an die Reichsminister des Innern und der Finanzen vom 31.5.1941.”

31. See Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 234–36.

32. Bogdan Musial, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung und Judenverfolgung im Generalgouvernement: Eine Fallstudie zum Distrikt Lublin 1939–1944* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 115. See also Stephan Lehnstaedt, “Die deutsche Arbeitsverwaltung im Generalgouvernement und die Juden,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 60, no. 3 (July 2012): 409–40.

33. *Diensttagebuch*, 216, entry dated May 30, 1940 (SS *Brigadeführer* Bruno Streckenbach).

34. See *ibid.*, 230–31, entry dated June 6/7, 1940 (quotation, 231).

35. “Auszug aus einem an alle Abteilungen und Arbeitsämter in den Distrikten gesandten Rundschreiben der Abteilung Arbeit beim Amt des Generalgouverneurs über die Zwangsarbeit der jüdischen Bevölkerung,” July 5, 1940, published in *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges*, ed. Jüdisches Historisches Institut Warschau, selected, edited and initiated by Tatiana Berenstein et al., 2nd ed. (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), 210–12, here 212.

36. “Protokoll einer Sitzung zur Frage der jüdischen Zwangsarbeit unter dem Vorsitz Max Frauendorfers am 6.8.1940,” repr. in *ibid.*, 214–15.

37. See Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941–*

1944: *Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996), 134.

38. On this point, see Peter Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung: Eine Gesamtdarstellung der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung* (Munich: Piper, 1998), 504–11.

39. See Pohl, *Judenverfolgung*, 136 (quotation), 184–85, 189, 287–88. In the ABC classification system, the Jewish population was divided into the groups skilled laborer (A), generally fit for work (B), and unfit for work (C). The following quotation, *ibid.*, 287.

40. See Musial, *Zivilverwaltung*, 273–76 (quotation, 273).

41. *Diensttagebuch*, 457–58, entry dated December 16, 1941.

42. *Ibid.*, 516, entry dated June 22, 1942.

43. See footnote 101.

44. See Ulrich von Hassell, *Aufzeichnungen vom Andern Deutschland: Die Hassell-Tagebücher 1938–1944*, ed. Friedrich Hiller von Gaertringen (Berlin: Siedler, 1988), entries dated January 19, 1944 (224), May 18, 1944 (254), December 20, 1942 (339), May 15, 1943 (339).

45. “Rundschreiben Max Frauendorfers an die nachgeordneten Dienststellen der Hauptabteilung Arbeit vom 25.6.1942,” repr. in *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord*, 439–40.

46. Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung*, 509.

47. IfZ-Archiv, MA 309, “Heinrich Himmler an Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger vom 3.10.1942.”

48. IfZ-Archiv, MA 309, “Max Frauendorfer an Heinrich Himmler vom 18.10.1942.”

49. IfZ-Archiv, MA 309, “Heinrich Himmler an Max Frauendorfer vom 20.10.1942.”

50. On the General Government Works, see Czesław Madajczyk, *Die Okkupationspolitik Nazideutschlands in Polen 1939–1945* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1987), 559. On Frauendorfer’s initiative, see *Diensttagebuch*, 269, entry dated September 4, 1940.

51. IfZ-Archiv, MA 309, “Heinrich Himmler an Obersturmbannführer Bender vom 3.12.1942.”

52. See Bogdan Musial, “NS-Kriegsverbrecher vor polnischen Gerichten,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 47, no. 1 (January 1999): 25–56, here 36–37, 49.

53. IfZ-Archiv, Sp. 58, “Meldebogen Max Frauendorfers vom 7.11.1950.”

54. Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Nachlass (personal papers, hereafter: NL) Ehard 487, “Fritz Berthold an Hans Ehard vom 20.1.1963.”

55. IfZ-Archiv, Sp. 58, “Camille Sachs an den Generalkläger beim Kassationshof vom 10.11.1950.”

56. IfZ-Archiv, Sp. 58, “Max Frauendorfer an die Hauptkammer München vom 27.1.1951.”

57. IfZ-Archiv, Sp. 58, “Lebenslauf Max Frauendorfers vom 1.11.1950.”

58. IfZ-Archiv, Sp. 58, “Max Frauendorfer an die Hauptkammer München vom 27.1.1951”; emphasis in the original.

59. IfZ-Archiv, Sp. 58, “Spruch der Hauptkammer München gegen Max Frauendorfer vom 29.1.1951.”

60. IfZ-Archiv, Sp. 58, “Max Frauendorfer an die Berufungskammer München vom 10.2.1951.”

61. IfZ-Archiv, Sp. 58, “Camille Sachs an den Berufungshauptkläger der Berufungskammer München vom 19.3.1951.”

62. BArchK, R 41/350, fol. 3, "Max Frauendorfer an das bayerische Arbeitsministerium vom 27.9.1951."

63. BArchK, R 41/350, fol. 26, "Bayerisches Arbeitsministerium an Max Frauendorfer vom 15.1.1952."

64. On the history of the CSU, see Thomas Schlemmer, "Zwischen Tradition und Traditionsbildung: Die CSU auf dem Weg zur Hegemonialpartei 1945 bis 1976," *Mitteilungshefte des Instituts für Soziale Bewegungen* 24, no. 24 (2000), 159–80.

65. See "KZ-Wachmann als Landtagsanwärter," *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (hereafter: SZ), August 27, 1958; "SS im Landtag," *Der Spiegel*, August 27, 1958.

66. "Was ein Christ nicht kann," *Der Spiegel*, September 10, 1958 (quotation from Josef Müller).

67. "Korrektur eines Fehlers," SZ, September 10, 1958.

68. Archiv für Christlich-Soziale Politik der Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung (hereafter: ACSP), Vorstand/Präsidium 19580903, "Presseerklärung des geschäftsführenden Landesvorstands der CSU zum Fall Prücklmayer vom 3.9.1958."

69. See "Früherer SD-Mann als CSU-Kandidat in Traunstein," SZ, September 8, 1958; "Was ein Christ nicht kann," *Der Spiegel*, September 10, 1958.

70. See footnote 96.

71. The text of this document is printed at the end of the current article.

72. See footnote 100.

73. See footnote 99.

74. See "Die Prücklmayers," *Der Tag*, September 17, 1958; "Dreimal gereinigt . . .," *Rheinischer Merkur*, September 19, 1958.

75. ACSP, Vorstand/Präsidium 19590502, "Protokoll der Sitzung des geschäftsführenden Landesvorstands der CSU am 2.5.1959."

76. Hans Ehard to Hanns Seidel, repr. in Schlemmer, "Grenzen der Integration," 737–38.

77. IfZ-Archiv, ED 720/34, "Otto Eberle an Franz Josef Strauß vom 21.6. und 22.6.1961."

78. IfZ-Archiv, ED 720/12, "Protokoll der Sitzung des Landesausschusses der CSU am 24.6.1961."

79. Since 1953 voters have received two votes in federal elections. With the first, voters directly elect a federal district representative, and with the second they vote for a party. Party candidate lists are compiled in all of the federal states.

80. See "Frauendorfer: Milde Gaben," *Der Spiegel*, January 9, 1963.

81. "Guttenberg—Frauendorfer," *Echo der Zeit*, January 20, 1963.

82. "Unentschuldigbar," *Mann in der Zeit*, February 1963.

83. "Schatten," *Ketteler Wacht*, February 1, 1963.

84. See "Damals im Generalgouvernement," SZ, January 26/27, 1963.

85. "Studenten-Protest gegen Frauendorfer," SZ, January 23, 1963.

86. See footnote 117.

87. ACSP, Schiedsgericht, Ordner "Dr. Max Frauendorfer," "Presseerklärung der CSU vom 17.1.1963."

88. "Mandatsverzichte sicher," *Nürnberger Nachrichten*, January 18, 1963.

89. "Hundhammer ist gegen Frauendorfer," SZ, January 28, 1963.

90. See "Frauendorfer verzichtet auf Mandat," SZ, February 2/3, 1963.

91. "Den Verzicht erklärt," *Nürnberger Nachrichten*, February 2/3, 1963.
92. ACSP, Schiedsgericht, Ordner "Dr. Max Frauendorfer," "Franz Josef Strauß an Alois Hundhammer vom 1.2.1963."
93. "Protokoll der Sitzung der Kommission zur Prüfung der Vorwürfe gegen Max Frauendorfer," June 5, 1963, repr. in Schlemmer, "Grenzen der Integration," 739–42.
94. ACSP, Vorstand/Präsidium 19631130, "Protokoll der Sitzung des geschäftsführenden Landesvorstands der CSU am 30.11.1963."
95. According to the distribution list (omitted here), copies were to be provided to Josef Müller, Werner Müller, Heinrich Pflüger, Erwin Hamm, and Max Frauendorfer. Misspellings and punctuation were discreetly corrected, obvious duplicate wording and superfluous quotation marks were deleted, and handwritten corrections were added. A copy of the minutes can also be found in ACSP, NL Müller F 49. The version of the minutes printed here includes numerous corrections and changes, as compared with the copy in NL Müller, but these have no significant effect on the content.
96. Dr. Josef Müller (1898–1979), Catholic, lawyer, as of 1939 served as an officer of the *Abwehr* (German military intelligence) and became a go-between for the military opposition at the secret negotiations with the British government in which the Vatican acted as the intermediary; incarcerated in various prisons and concentration camps, 1943–45; temporary and then first official chairman of the CSU, 1945–49; chairman of the CSU Munich district chapter, 1951–60; member of the Bavarian Landtag (MdL, CSU), 1946–62; Bavarian minister of justice, 1947–52.
97. The minutes were taken by Hans Stütze, but—in contrast to the copy in the NL Müller—they are unsigned.
98. Franz Fackler (1895–1963), Catholic, baker and advertising specialist; held in pre-trial detention as a member of a pro-monarchy resistance group, 1939–44; sentenced by the *Volksgerichtshof* (People's Court) to twenty-seven months' imprisonment, 1944; served as city councillor (CSU) in Munich, 1946–63, and as chairman of the CSU caucus in the city council, 1949–63; vice-chair of the CSU Munich district chapter, 1949–59.
99. Werner Müller (1910–1996), Lutheran, authorized notary, imprisoned in a concentration camp, 1944/45; served first as vice-chair and then (1960–67) as chair of the CSU Munich district chapter; CSU treasurer, 1959–67; MdL (CSU), 1965–74.
100. Dr. Erwin Hamm (1909–2008), lawyer; after denunciation in 1938 appeared before a special court and was then excluded from service in the justice system; for a while one of the vice-chairs of the CSU Munich district chapter; city councillor (CSU) in Munich, 1948–56; administrator for the city of Munich, 1945–74; married Hildegard Hamm-Brücher in 1956.
101. Ulrich von Hassell (1881–1944), lawyer and diplomat; ambassador in Rome, 1932–38; arrested, 1944; sentenced to death by the People's Court and executed.
102. In Josef Müller's copy: "food, etc." (*Lebensmitteln usw.*)
103. On January 19, 1941, Ulrich von Hassell noted (*Tagebücher*, 224): "Berthold visited me and brought his friend [. . .] (with the Golden Party Badge). It was highly impressive how distressed he was about events in Poland and overall developments in general."
104. Entry dated May 18, 1941: "Several days ago [Frauendorfer] visited me [. . .]. He is distressed about what he has to witness in Poland." Hassell, *Tagebücher*, 254.

105. Probably in the entry dated May 15, 1943 (Hassell, *Tagebücher*, 365). However, it is not stated here that it was Hans Frank who also voluntarily joined the German army, but Frauendorfer's friend Friedrich Berthold.

106. Handwritten correction of German spelling in Josef Müller's copy.

107. Dr. Hans Steinkohl (1925–2003), Catholic, consultant surgeon, last employed as medical director of the Munich-Harlaching hospital; city councilor (CSU) in Munich, 1952–72; deputy mayor of Munich, 1968–72.

108. In the original: "Schempeßy (?)."

109. This is a reference to the Catholic social service agency *Kolpingwerk*. It was founded in the 19th Century by the Catholic priest Adolph Kolping.

110. Count Adam Ronikier (1881–1952), Polish architect and politician; president of *Rada Główna Opiekująca* (official German name: *Polnischer Hauptausschuss*; Central Welfare Council), 1940–43; removed from office by the German occupation administration and imprisoned for several months; immigrated to the United States after the war ended.

111. As it appears in Josef Müller's copy.

112. On January 10, 1946, an excerpt from the official diary of Governor-General Frank was read aloud. See *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*, vol. 5 (Nuremberg: 1947), 103. On this, see also p. 181 of this article.

113. In the original the word "voluntary" is marked or crossed out by hand; the sentence makes sense only with the inclusion of this word.

114. In Josef Müller's copy, the wording is in plural form: "voluntary ways."

115. Ernst Glaser (1904–1990), Catholic, sales director; since 1946 member of the CSU; district chairman of the *Union der Vertriebenen* (Federation of Expellees) in Munich, 1946–74.

116. Peter Schmidhuber (1931–2020), Catholic, economist and lawyer; city councillor (CSU) in Munich, 1960–66; member of the Bundestag (MdB, CSU), 1965–69 and 1972–78; MdL (CSU), 1978–87; Bavarian state minister for federal affairs, 1978–87; member of the European Commission, 1987–94.

117. Dr. Dr. Alois Hundhammer (1900–1974), Catholic, economist and historian MdL (Bavarian People's Party, BVP—*Bayerische Volkspartei*), 1932/33; in Dachau concentration camp, 1933; chairman of the CSU Upper Bavaria district chapter, 1946–70, except for a short period in 1948; MdL (CSU), 1946–70; chairman of the CSU caucus in the Bavarian Landtag, 1946–51; president of the Bavarian Landtag, 1951–54; Bavarian minister of culture, 1946–50; Bavarian minister of agriculture, 1957–69.

118. Martin Riedmayr (1896–1989), police officer (ultimately a lieutenant colonel in the Schutzpolizei, urban police); temporarily deployed in the Soviet Union, 1941; co-founder and candidate (1950) of the *Bayerische Heimat- und Königspartei* in the elections to the Bavarian Landtag; president of the Bavarian State Office for the Protection of the Constitution, 1954–60.

119. Rupert Mayer, SJ (1876–1945), Catholic priest in Munich; repeatedly arrested for his public criticism of National Socialism; died in November 1945 of health problems resulting from imprisonment.

120. In the minutes the name "Pater Schröder" appears here. However, the name is crossed out and a handwritten note in the margin probably means "Rösch." Augustin

Rösch, Societas Jesu (1893–1961), Catholic priest; as of 1935 provincial superior of the Upper German Province of the Jesuits, member of the Kreisau Circle; arrested and severely mistreated during interrogations, 1945; director of Caritas in Bavaria, 1947–61.

121. Hans Stütze (1928–2003), Catholic, politician, appointed as social affairs secretary at the CSU state headquarters, 1953; executive secretary of the CSU faction in the Bavarian Landtag and editor of the *CSU-Korrespondenz*; as of 1966 employed at the Bavarian Ministry of Labor; city councillor (CSU) in Munich, 1956–60 and 1963–79; chairman of the CSU caucus in the city council, 1963–70; head of the social services department of Munich, 1979–93.

122. Karl Heinz Lemmrich (1926–2018), Lutheran, civil engineer; vice-chair of the Junge Union in Bavaria, 1959–64; MdB (CSU), 1961–88.

123. In Josef Müller's copy, handwritten inserts identify this as a verbatim quotation.

124. Ilse von Hassell (1885–1982), née von Tirpitz; married Ulrich von Hassell, 1911. Probably reference is being made to the sworn statement made by Ilse von Hassell on February 4, 1951, a notarized copy of which is in the denazification court file on Dr. Max Frauendorfer.

125. Dr. Hildegard Hamm-Brücher (1921–2016), chemist and journalist; city councillor (Free Democratic Party, FDP—*Freie Demokratische Partei*) in Munich, 1948–54; MdL (FDP), 1950–66 and 1970–76; state secretary in the Hessian Ministry of Culture, 1967–69; state secretary in the Federal Ministry for Education and Science, 1969–72; minister of state in the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1976–82; MdB (FDP), 1976–90.

126. In Josef Müller's copy, there is a handwritten insertion here of the words "somewhat later."

127. Josef Lutz (1882–1965), Catholic, employee of the health insurance provider Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse in Munich; city councillor (BVP) in Munich, 1925–33; arrested, 1933 and 1943; city councillor (CSU) in Munich, 1946–48 and 1949–65; chairman of the CSU employees' groups in Munich.

128. Heinrich Pflüger (1908–1968), Catholic, white-collar worker; arrested as a member of a pro-monarchy resistance group, 1939, and sentenced to five years' jail time in 1944 by the People's Court; vice president of the Bavarian Restitution Office, 1949–52; as of 1953 administrative head of the CSU Munich district chapter; MdL (CSU), 1958–68.

129. Hugo Geiger (1901–1984), Catholic, teacher; after 1929 worked in various positions for Allianz-Lebensversicherungs AG; state secretary in the Bavarian Ministry of Economics, 1947–50; chairman of the CSU Munich district chapter, 1949/50; CSU treasurer, 1952–59; MdL (CSU), 1950–53; MdB (CSU), 1953–61.

130. Christian Democratic Union of Germany (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*)

131. In the elections for the Bavarian parliament voters have two votes. With the first vote, a candidate for a voting district is elected, with the second vote, a candidate on a party's constituency list is chosen; there is a constituency list for each of the seven administrative districts in Bavaria.

132. Dr. Hanns Seidel (1901–1961), Catholic, lawyer, district administrator in Aschaffenburg, 1945–47; CSU chairman, 1955–61; MdL (CSU), 1946–61; Bavarian minister of economics, 1947–54; minister president of Bavaria, 1957–60.

133. Dr. Anton Besold (1904–1991), Catholic, lawyer; city councillor (Bavaria Party, *Bayernpartei*, BP) in Munich, 1948/49; MdB for the BP, 1949–53, and then the CSU, 1957–69; secretary-general then chairman of the BP, 1950–53; as of 1955 member of the CSU; vice-chairman of the CSU Munich district chapter, 1961–67.

134. Max Dorn (1892–?), Catholic, lawyer, as of 1934 judge at the Munich I Regional Court (*Landgericht*).

The Limits of Integration

Nazi Officials and Their New Political Careers
after 1945 in West Germany and Austria

GERALD STEINACHER

Gerald Steinacher assesses the afterlife of Nazism in Austria and West Germany from the immediate postwar years to the most current developments. While there were some similarities between these two nations, in contrast to West Germany, former National Socialists in Austria could form their own enduring political party, the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ, *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*), soon after 1945. The myth of Austria as a victim of National Socialism, and Austria's neutrality during the Cold War years, helped the country avoid both scrutiny from the outside as well as inner reflection about guilt and responsibility until the 1980s. Since that time, the FPÖ's inclusion in coalition governments has led to criticism. For instance, in 2000, when the conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP, *Österreichische Volkspartei*) and the FPÖ formed a coalition government, the European Union put Austria under a symbolic "diplomatic quarantine." An unusual outlier in Europe at that time, the Austrian experience has become the norm twenty years later. In 2018 the governments of eight EU countries were run by far-right political parties. While Austria was among them, Germany was not.

The Limits of Integration: A Closer Look

For decades after the Second World War, there was a widespread belief that key Nazi figures had committed suicide, been executed, or fled overseas. The notion that, since the 'really bad Nazis' had all left Germany, a fresh and new democratic start was possible proved to be wishful thinking, as most of the former Third Reich elites remained in Germany and Austria. Only more recently have scholars taken a closer look at their fates, biographies, and careers after the downfall of the Hitler state.¹ Only a few historical works have examined the history of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ, *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*), which is particularly surprising given the fact that this party continues to play a significant role in society and politics. In 2018 the FPÖ announced the formation of a commission of historians to look into the party's Nazi past. In December 2019 the report was officially made public and received

harsh criticism from professional historians. Their assessment was that the volume was a mishmash of opinions, with controversial aspects of the FPÖ's history and pre-history left out.² However, their main critique was that there were almost no independent historians working for the commission. Many of its members were very close to the FPÖ.

Margit Reiter's contribution to this volume fills a major gap in our understanding of the history of the FPÖ.³ Her archival research examines some prominent Nazi careers in postwar Austria. Reiter asks a crucial question: How was it possible for a number of notable Nazis to retain powerful political roles in Austria? She takes an in-depth look at the founder of the FPÖ, former SS officer Anton Reinthaller, and his networks. Given the FPÖ's relevance to contemporary Austrian politics, Reiter's essay in this volume is particularly timely and much needed. In my commentary I will extend Reiter's work by providing a brief overview of what happened in the FPÖ after the Reinthaller era. I will also try to answer some questions about the limits of integration raised by Reiter, especially regarding specific similarities to and differences from Germany.

Thomas Schlemmer's article considers the situation in West Germany and the case of ex-Nazi official Max Frauendorfer in particular. Schlemmer provides a detailed account of how Frauendorfer and others were prevented from taking up new political careers in Germany.⁴ But why was Frauendorfer pushed aside, while Reinthaller's ambitions came to fruition in Austria? Are case studies like these representative of what unfolded after 1945 in West Germany and its neighboring nation to the south? What were the differences between Austria and Germany after 1945 when it came to the integration of individuals *belastet* (burdened) by their past careers? These are important questions for further discussion. In my commentary I will focus primarily on Austria, as far less is known about the Nazi legacy in Austria than in Germany.⁵ When probing the possibilities and limits of integration, it is useful to start with closer attention to fields in which ex-Nazi leaders were allowed to play prominent roles in the postwar period.

The Bargain: Prosperity but Not Politics

The number of studies about the postwar professional lives of former high-ranking Nazis and SS officers is increasing. Many high-ranking Nazi leaders reinvented themselves after 1945, transforming from political actors into successful "apolitical" businessmen. The economic boom of the 1950s revealed how swiftly and easily former SS and Nazi officials reintegrated into German

and Austrian social and economic life. In his biography of SS *Obergruppenführer* Werner Best, the German historian Ulrich Herbert coined the phrase *Ausgrenzung in den Wohlstand*, or “exclusion into prosperity.” According to Herbert, “for those excluded from politics and public service, there remained the free professions and business, mostly provided by old contacts, some dating from their student days.”⁶ Herbert stated that “West Germany’s political and economic ascent offered [former Nazi elites] the possibility of social elevation,” and thus “their interest in new political activity, particularly in the field of the radical right, constantly diminished.”⁷ This reorientation did not necessarily mean that these men ever broke with their Nazi pasts or stopped idealizing the Hitler regime.

Just as Cold War geopolitics encouraged the reintegration of former high-ranking Nazis, West Germany’s postwar “economic miracle,” or *Wirtschaftswunder*, rewarded the old comrades for staying out of politics and tolerating democracy. Private sector enterprises, including the large industrial firms on the Rhine and Ruhr, offered many opportunities to such men. Rudolf Rahn, the former Nazi ambassador to Italy, became secretary-general of the Coca-Cola Company in Essen. Konstantin Canaris, commander of the Nazi security police in Belgium, found a position with Henkel-Werke in Düsseldorf. Werner Best, the former Reich commissioner for occupied Denmark, and Heinz Wilke, the former Hitler Youth leader, worked for the Hugo Stinnes Company in Mühlheim.⁸ SS *Oberführer* Reinhard Höhn became West Germany’s leading expert in management training.⁹ Walter Emmerich and Dr. Rudolf Gater had been advisors for the confiscation of Jewish property (“Aryanization”) first in Austria after the Anschluss and later in Nazi-occupied Poland. After the war both continued to be big players as “rationalization experts” in the German economy.¹⁰

Moreover, the careers of these prominent Nazis were not exceptions to the general pattern of integration but rather the rule. This conclusion seems confirmed when looking at the postwar careers of German industry leaders. Wilhelm Zangen (1891–1971), a key figure in the German war economy, was the chairman of Mannesmann from 1934 to 1957. Having joined the Nazi Party in 1937, Zangen had served in various positions for the Reich, including as director of the *Reichsgruppe Industrie* (Reich Group Industry) substitute director of the *Reichswirtschaftskammer* (Reich Chamber of Economics), and *Wehrwirtschaftsführer* (war economy leader). His name was even on the US list of suspected Nazi criminals to be brought to justice, though he never was. Instead, in 1956, he received the *Bundesverdienstkreuz mit Stern* (federal cross of merit with star) from the West German government.¹¹ Companies like

Mannesmann were safe havens for old Nazis and high-ranking army officers. In addition to Zangen, SS *Obersturmbannführer* Bernhard Baatz, ex-leader of a killing squad and commander of the Security Police (*Sicherheitspolizei*) and the Security Service (SD, *Sicherheitsdienst*) in Nazi-occupied Estonia, became director of Mannesmann-Wohnungsbaugesellschaft in Duisburg. And in 1962, Egon Overbeck, ex-officer of the *Wehrmacht* in the general staff, was made general director of Mannesmann.¹² As the case of that company shows, there were many continuities in business, which also holds true for the legal profession, journalism, public service, the military, and medicine.¹³ However, postwar careers in politics was a different matter. As Schlemmer's case study of SS officer and Nazi Party member Max Frauendorfer in this volume convincingly shows, leading Nazis were rarely able to continue their political careers in the spotlight after 1945, at least not in West Germany. As Schlemmer points out, Frauendorfer managed to avoid serious repercussions or punishment for his role as a Nazi official in occupied Poland. During his late denazification proceedings, he stressed his "opposition" to Hitler's regime and was eventually classified as *Minderbelasteter* (lesser offender) in 1951, and was therefore free to start a new career in private business. But the trained lawyer Frauendorfer was not satisfied with his well-paid job in the Allianz insurance company in Munich. He also wanted a political career in Bavaria's powerful Christian Social Union (CSU, *Christlich-Soziale Union*). Schlemmer makes clear that former SS officials and Holocaust perpetrators such as concentration camp personnel were not deemed suitable for political office in the CSU. The opposition by the media, the public, and political circles was too strong. Yet, within the CSU there was no consensus over the limits of integration. Schlemmer points out that in Frauendorfer's case it was, ultimately, the fear of a major scandal that rendered him unfit to be a candidate for higher political office.¹⁴

The approach of the first West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer (1876–1967), toward ex-Nazis was pragmatic. His goal was to include the millions of fellow travelers but also as many former hardcore Nazis as possible in the new society, provided they were willing to accept the new realities after 1945 and not openly challenge the democratic system. Adenauer remained aware of international sensibilities. Therefore, prominent Nazi officials in top political positions were to be avoided. Adenauer, himself head of the conservative Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU, *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*), had been mayor of the City of Cologne until 1933, when he was fired by the Nazi government. During the war years, he kept a low profile and survived the terror regime. With his anti-Nazi record, anticommunism, and political experience, this Catholic from the Rhineland

seemed a very acceptable candidate to the Western Allies, despite his age. But Adenauer's government could not do without some former Nazis in its ranks. The most prominent of them was Hans Globke (1898–1973), a high-ranking civil servant in the Nazi state who had helped to draft the infamous Nuremberg Laws of 1935 (the so-called race laws), about which he also published an influential commentary. They provided the “legal” basis for the persecution of German and later Austrian Jews. From 1949 to 1963, Globke served in Adenauer's cabinet, most of the time as his chief of staff, despite repeated attacks against him by the West- and East-German press because of his role during the Hitler regime. Why was Globke allowed to play such a prominent role in politics when Frauendorfer was not? There are no easy answers, but some elements are noteworthy. Globke enjoyed the protection of Adenauer, but still the chancellor was cautious. Although Globke was his closest advisor for a number of years, Adenauer gave him the title of *Staatssekretär* only after a major electoral victory in 1953.¹⁵ Also, the well-educated Globke was a trained lawyer and had never been a member of the SS. A Catholic from the Rhineland like Adenauer, Globke had had some contacts to the anti-Nazi opposition, and did not fit the profile of an SS killer. Another prominent case for continuity in Adenauer's West Germany was Dr. Theodor Oberländer, who was a federal minister for refugees and expelled Germans from 1953 to 1960. Oberländer had been an early follower of the Nazi party and a university professor of Agricultural Policy. He had held a number of important positions during the Hitler regime, planning for a German occupation of Eastern Europe. After the war, he briefly worked for US intelligence as an “expert” on communism in Eastern Europe, before his political career in West Germany took off. Accusations of his involvement in war crimes, public pressure, and political strategizing ultimately led to his dismissal as a minister in the Adenauer government.¹⁶

Enforcing the Bargain? The Role of the Allies in Setting Limits

In Germany, there were numerous attempts to create a political home for hardcore Nazis. However, most of them, like the Socialist Reich Party (SRP, *Sozialistische Reichspartei*) were short-lived. The US high commissioner and other Allied decision makers were immediately concerned about the revival of Nazism and willing to intervene when necessary. In October 1952, the SRP was declared to be in violation of the German democratic constitution and banned by the German Constitutional Court.¹⁷ The so-called Naumann affair

is another good example of how neo-Nazi developments in Germany were under the scrutiny of the Allies. In 1953 British intelligence officers arrested a group of former Nazi officials; most notable among them was Dr. Werner Naumann (1909–1982). He had been a close collaborator of Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels and his designated successor. Following Germany's defeat, Naumann went underground. He reemerged after the 1950 amnesty, reconnected with some of his former comrades, and reengaged in politics. The British feared a conspiracy to strengthen Nazi influence in West Germany as Naumann and his friends attempted to infiltrate and take over the Free Democratic Party (FDP, *Freie Demokratische Partei*) in the state of North Rhine Westphalia. Although the British had never previously intervened against former Nazis in West German politics, in this case they prevented this kind of re-nazification. The Naumann affair exemplifies how closely the Allies watched developments in Germany in the early 1950s.¹⁸

The situation in Austria was both similar to and different from Germany. Like Germany, Austria was occupied by the four major Allies. Vienna, like Berlin, was divided into occupation zones. Austria was also to be de-nazified and Nazi criminals held responsible, but with significant differences. For example, in November 1943, the Allies declared that Austria had been the first victim of Hitler's aggression, a reference to Austria's annexation by Nazi Germany in 1938 (the Anschluss). The second paragraph of this declaration did refer to Austria's culpability in the crimes of the Third Reich, but this was often downplayed or overlooked by the Austrians themselves. In stark contrast to Germany, Austria had a recognized national government in place by the end of 1945. In February 1946, the Allies handed authority regarding denazification to the Austrian government. There was no Austrian Nuremberg, though Austrian people's courts initially judged Nazis severely. These courts focused on early members of the Nazi Party as well as on those engaged in the unsuccessful Nazi coup of July 1934. But after a few years, the denazification and defascization—as in Germany and elsewhere—lost momentum.¹⁹

During the Cold War, many Austrians adopted the facile label of "Hitler's first victim," a notion that was accepted by the Allies as they welcomed the rebirth of a viable new Austrian republic.²⁰ In 1955 the Allied powers signed a state treaty with Austria, and all Allied forces left the country. Shortly thereafter, Austria declared its permanent neutrality and stayed out of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Austria's new image in the world was quickly established: a small, peaceful, neutral European country with scenic nature which had fallen victim to Nazi aggression. This representation was immortalized in

the 1965 film *The Sound of Music*, which portrays the Austrians in a rather sympathetic light. Although most Austrians had never seen this American movie, the narrative was certainly compatible with their own views.²¹

Austrians successfully distanced themselves from their Nazi past and from Germany as well. Austria focused on its thousand-year history, only seven years of which had been spent as part of a German nation-state (during the Anschluss years, 1938–1945). Austrians now embraced their own national identity as distinct from everything German. Austria was not the homeland of Adolf Hitler anymore, but rather his first victim. The prominent Austrian political scientist Anton Pelinka highlights this revision with a striking example:

There is an old joke about the [Austrian] Second Republic's ability to make people forget Hitler's Austrian [Catholic] background: The biggest success story of post-1945 Austria was making the world believe that Beethoven was an Austrian, but Hitler was a German. Of course, there is some truth in it: Beethoven's career took off in Austria, notably in Vienna, whereas Hitler had no career at all until he moved to Germany.²²

Whatever the historical facts, Austrians focused on the bright side of their history, quickly sweeping the brown Nazi leftovers under the carpet.²³

It was under these conditions, even before the Allies had left the country, that the Federation of Independents (VdU, *Verband der Unabhängigen*) was established in 1949. The Allies allowed the formation of the VdU, never seriously intervening against it. The British supported the party's foundation, stressing Austria's complete freedom to form political parties, which was also the consensus among the Western Allies. The Austrian Social Democrats had more selfish reasons: they hoped to weaken the conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP, *Österreichische Volkspartei*) with the VdU in the race.²⁴ The lack of Allied oversight was astonishing, considering the VdU quickly attracted many of those Austrians who felt they had been treated unfairly and harshly by denazification. The VdU also provided a political home for traditional pan-German nationalists and right-wing students. The rather small ideological group of pan-German nationalists, although officially accepting Austria as an independent country, rejected the notion of a distinct Austrian nation and people. These are important elements that characterize the *national-freibeitlich* (national-freedom) camp of Austrian politics from the party's early beginnings to the present.²⁵ In addition, the ranks of the VdU and its successor, the FPÖ, repeatedly included party officials either with Nazi pasts or pasts that glorified

elements of the Nazi regime. The FPÖ soon became the third largest political party, though remaining significantly smaller than the Social Democrats and the Austrian People's Party. To be clear, all political parties integrated former Nazis, but not always so openly and in smaller numbers. "The FPÖ, the far-right party, had become the natural home for the former Nazis," as one Austrian-British historian put it.²⁶ There were hardly any limits to integration of former Nazi officials in the FPÖ. Austrian scholar Walter Manoschek explains: "The FPÖ had never been a normal third party like the German Liberals (FDP) or other small liberal parties in West European countries. The FPÖ, indirectly at least, was also the successor of the Austrian NSDAP [National Socialist German Workers' Party, *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*]."²⁷

In the first postwar decades, the student organization aligned with the FPÖ, the *Ring Freibeitlicher Studenten* (RFS), played a significant role in society and for the party. It had a strong presence at universities and in the 1950s won up to 30 percent of the votes in Austria-wide university student parliamentary elections.²⁸ As a result, the FPÖ/RFS could influence the Austrian higher education system and play a crucial recruitment role among young people. The RFS also had strong ties to the *völkisch Burschenschaften* (German nationalist fraternities)—still in existence in Austria and Germany after 1945—, which propagated the unity of all German speakers as one *Volk*.

Integration without Limits?

In the FPÖ there were very few limits to integration. People like Frauendorfer would likely have found a home there too, but he lived in Germany. There were fewer internal conflicts in the FPÖ than in the CDU/CSU when it came to member biographies with a Nazi past. The FPÖ was clearly the home of many Nazis, a reality also indicated by the background of its leaders at federal and state level. The CDU/CSU, with anti-Nazis like Adenauer at the lead, signaled something else. Furthermore, the ideological background of former hardcore Nazis proved much more compatible with FPÖ views than with the traditional Christian teachings of the CDU/CSU. And, last but not least, top German politicians were under significantly more scrutiny nationally and internationally than Austrian politicians. The history of the early FPÖ and the case of party leader and former SS officer Anton Reinthaller is explained in detail in Margit Reiter's contribution in this volume.²⁹ Reinthaller did not need to give up his basic ideological convictions, but did not openly challenge the postwar

political realities in Austria either. He adapted to certain requirements of political correctness, enough to be considered “compatible” with postwar Austrian democracy, as Reiter states.³⁰

Leaders of the FPÖ with a Nazi past, like Reinthaller, were not the exception but the rule. The long-term chairman of the party was Friedrich Peter (1921–2005), a former Nazi Party member and soldier of the *Waffen SS*.³¹ During the 1975 parliamentary elections, Holocaust survivor Simon Wiesenthal published a report on Peter’s Nazi past with the notorious 1. SS-Infantry Brigade, in which Peter had served during the war and which had been responsible for the murder of thousands of civilians in the Soviet Union. The result was not only that ex-Nazi Peter drew a great deal of fire, but Wiesenthal did as well. Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky defended the former SS *Obersturmbannführer*, which might have come as a surprise given Kreisky’s background. A mainstay of the Social Democrats and of Jewish ancestry, Kreisky spent the Nazi years in Swedish exile. Even the *New York Times* noticed that a career as a head of government in Austria was unusual for someone who was a “Socialist and non-Catholic of Jewish ancestry.”³²

Somewhat similar to Adenauer, Kreisky too embraced *realpolitik*. “Like Kaiser Franz Joseph, Kreisky sought stability and consensus, and to create a united nation,” British historian Hella Pick wrote.³³ His reaction to the Friedrich Peter scandal was certainly politically motivated, given that his Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ, *Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs*) had relied on FPÖ support in parliament. Additionally, the conflict between Kreisky and Wiesenthal went back years, as Wiesenthal the “Nazi hunter” had repeatedly pointed to the brown spots (alluding to the Nazi Party’s brown shirts) on Social Democratic political careers. One famous case was that of Johann Öllinger, a former member of the *Waffen SS*, who sided with the Austrian Social Democrats after the war (although he never officially joined the party), and who rose to the level of minister in Kreisky’s 1970 cabinet. But Wiesenthal and many others felt that Kreisky’s integration of former Nazis had gone too far, and Öllinger’s tenure was cut short. The *New York Times* stressed:

Austria, with a population of just over seven million, had more than half a million members of the Nazi party during the war, and Austrians have become used to former members of the party turning up in high positions. Mr. Kreisky’s Interior Minister [Otto Rösch], for example, belonged to the party and there has been hardly a ripple of criticism. But the troops of the SS, which had 20,000 Austrian members, is different. Known SS men have rarely, if ever, reached the highest government levels.³⁴

Öllinger was to be no exception. He would remain the minister of agriculture and forestry for barely one month. Like Frauendorfer in Germany, Öllinger in Austria also became a burden for the government. His SS membership was likely an important element that pushed him over the edge in the eyes of a wider public. Inside the ÖVP, as well as within the SPÖ, there were certain limits of integration in regard to former Nazi officials, which does not change the fact that Kreisky had six former Nazi members in his cabinet.³⁵

Such appointments offered Wiesenthal plenty of reasons to attack Kreisky's choices. The public dispute between the two became particularly bitter and personal when the chancellor insinuated that the Jewish Holocaust survivor had actually been a Gestapo collaborator. Wiesenthal reacted with a libel suit, which he withdrew once Kreisky backpedaled. The Kreisky–Peter–Wiesenthal affair caused a great deal of controversy and friction in the Alpine republic. The conflict reignited in the mid-1980s when Kreisky repeated his accusations, and Wiesenthal again filed a libel suit against him, which Wiesenthal won in 1989. Kreisky used his power as head of government and had the help of the intelligence services “but never managed to prove anything.”³⁶

Austrian SS *Sturmbannführer* Walter Reder (1915–1991) had been responsible for the murder of at least 770 civilians (216 children among them) in the Italian town of Marzabotto in 1944, one of the worst and most notorious massacres committed by Nazi forces in Italy. Reder was sentenced to life in prison after the war, but in 1985 was released to Austria.³⁷ There he received a hero's welcome with a handshake by the Austrian minister of defense, Friedhelm Frischenschlager (born 1943), who was also the chairman of the FPÖ at the time. In both Italy and Austria, this event incited controversy and media coverage. Yet in Austria, the critique was often about the “bad handling” of the situation and not so much about the principal question of the Nazi past.³⁸ This semi-official welcome by the republic for a convicted Nazi war criminal burdened the coalition government, causing friction between the Social Democrats and the FPÖ. It was a bit ironic that Frischenschlager was damaged by a scandal involving a Nazi war criminal, as he represented the more liberal branch of the FPÖ and wanted to overcome the “brown” legacy of the party.

Austria was not Germany, and such activities were not typically met with outrage on the international stage. Within Austria, the event did not trigger a widespread discussion of the Nazi past. Such blasé attitudes would change in the 1980s. In this decade, one name stands out above all others: Kurt Waldheim (1918–2007).

Waldheim had a very successful diplomatic career that culminated in his serving twice as secretary-general of the United Nations from 1972 until 1981. In 1985 he ran for president of Austria (a mostly symbolic office, given that Austria, unlike the US, does not have a presidential system). During the campaign, allegations of Nazi affiliation and involvement in war crimes surfaced, which caused a good deal of worldwide media attention putting not just Waldheim, but also Austria's past, in the international spotlight.³⁹ In particular, many younger Austrians took offense at Waldheim's defense that "I was only doing my duty," like hundreds of thousands of others. Initially, Waldheim did not apologize for his role as an officer of the *Wehrmacht* in the Balkans, where countless atrocities against partisans, Jews, and other civilians were committed. In the end, Waldheim (who was running on the ÖVP ticket) was elected president, but the country was internationally isolated, and he was barred from entering the US. An international commission of historians looked into his wartime past and, by extension, into Austria's National Socialist history.⁴⁰ As Austrian historian Günter Bischof put it: "Waldheim's personal amnesia reminded the world about Austria's larger national amnesia when it came to facing up to her World War II past."⁴¹ International and national media and historians began aggressively challenging the Austrian victim myth. The "big lie" was under siege.⁴²

It was not long before a new historiography in Austria and beyond replaced this one-sided picture with a more balanced and factual accounting of the Nazi past. The year 1988, the fiftieth anniversary of the Anschluss, saw intensive internal reckoning with that past. Austrian schoolbooks and university textbooks since the 1990s have reflected this change. Ever since the Waldheim affair, the country has been under scrutiny. This became evident shortly thereafter when an Austrian right-wing populist entered the political stage.

Long-Term Consequences of Unlimited Integration: The Haider Phenomenon⁴³

The late 1980s in Austria saw the rise of another leader of the FPÖ, but unlike with Reinthaller and Peter, this time the world took notice. Jörg Haider (1950–2008) was the son of two committed Nazis. His father, Robert Haider, had joined the Nazi storm troopers at sixteen and fled to Germany after the failed Nazi putsch in Austria in 1934. He reentered Austria in the wake of the triumphant German troops during the Anschluss in 1938, quickly becoming a Nazi youth official and volunteering for Hitler's war. Robert Haider survived the war and was interned by the Allies in a camp for notorious Nazis. In her essay,

Reiter describes the experience in Camp Glasenbach near Salzburg as crucial for the new postwar identities and networks of the Nazi elite. In Glasenbach, the senior Haider forged close networks with men like Anton Reinhaller, Friedrich Peter, and Hermann Foppa. A former Nazi official, Foppa was a close family friend of the Haider's as well as Jörg's godfather.⁴⁴ They were all involved in the foundation of the VdU in 1949. The family's Nazi past overshadowed much of Jörg Haider's life. In his later years Haider resided in a large estate in Bärenthal in Carinthia, which had been "aryanized" (the euphemism for the plunder of Jewish property) by Jörg's South Tyrolean *Wahlonkel* (a friend of the family who was like an uncle to him). Austria's southern state of Carinthia also served as his power base and he as its long-time governor.

In fourteen years, Haider built up the FPÖ from 5 percent to just over 27 percent in the elections of 1999.⁴⁵ He was a forerunner of the right-wing populism we have seen on the rise all over Europe and elsewhere in recent years, and he was aptly called "the father of modern right-wing populism" by the Swiss daily *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*.⁴⁶ Under his leadership, the FPÖ pushed xenophobia, anti-immigration rhetoric, and nativism, and also flirted with Nazi ideology and language. During a 1995 reunion of *Waffen SS* veterans and their sympathizers, Haider called the former members of the Nazi army "decent people of good character."⁴⁷ He called Nazi concentration camps mere punishment camps for criminals and lauded the "orderly" employment policies of the Third Reich. As his provocations were quickly reported abroad, *the populist* firebrand Haider became a controversial star of the international media. This attention is somewhat surprising, given that Haider was just a governor of one state in a small European country. Yet he was polarizing both inside and outside Austria.⁴⁸ Since the Waldheim affair, Austria had come under increasing scrutiny and was losing its *Sound of Music* image.

Compared to Germany, it looked like Austria was never really denazified and had gotten off too easily. Austria's national government made some modest but symbolically important statements concerning the Nazi years. Since the 1990s, Social Democrats and the Green Party have been the most outspoken in critically confronting the past. After Haider's provocative remarks about the allegedly good policies of the Third Reich, in July 1991 Austrian Social Democratic Chancellor Franz Vranitzky (born 1937) apologized to Nazi victims for all the evil committed by certain elements of the Austrian people. Two years later, on the occasion of an official state visit to Israel, Vranitzky asked the victims of Austrian perpetrators for forgiveness. The theme was straightforward: Austrian perpetrators were guilty, but not the Austrian republic. This careful wording reflected the official view that Austria did not

exist as a country between 1938 and 1945. Therefore, not Austria itself but only individual Austrians should be held responsible.

In the 1999 federal election, Jörg Haider's FPÖ managed to come in second behind the Social Democrats and slightly ahead of the ÖVP. This was widely seen as a major success, and it was Haider's chance to be a key player in national government. But Haider was too controversial to become chancellor, and his appointment would have caused international outrage. Therefore, the FPÖ and the ÖVP formed a coalition government, with Wolfgang Schüssel (ÖVP) as Chancellor and an FPÖ politician as Vice-Chancellor. Austria had joined the European Union only a few years earlier, in 1995, and its European partners were not amused by this move by the young member state. Walter Manoschek identifies two major reasons why the new Austrian center-right government was treated as a pariah by its European partners: "the participation of the FPÖ in the government, and the inadequate review and reappraisal of National Socialism in Austria. Only the combination of the two makes the categorical reaction of the EU partners understandable."⁴⁹ "Europe rallies against Haider coalition," wrote *The Guardian* in February 2000, and the European Union states embarked on a (largely symbolic) diplomatic quarantine against the Alpine republic.⁵⁰

These "sanctions" provided Haider with additional ammunition for his patriotic rallying cry against foreign intervention. Soon, the European Union realized its approach had done more harm than good and eventually returned to a more pragmatic approach. Internally, Austria was divided, and Haider remained a polarizing figure.⁵¹ Not surprisingly, Simon Wiesenthal was among the outspoken voices attacking the government in Vienna. The FPÖ-ÖVP coalition did not last long, ending in 2002 after only two years. Haider died in a car accident six years later.⁵² Though the center-far-right government in Vienna was short-lived, the consequences for Austria were significant. Walter Manoschek's foresight proved perspicacious when he wrote: "The political system in Austria, under strain for a decade, has finally capsized: the change from a democracy of concord to one of conflict is now final."⁵³

This was not the last time Austria and the world would see an FPÖ and ÖVP coalition. In December 2017 the ÖVP, under its young leader Sebastian Kurz (born 1986), again formed a coalition government with the FPÖ and its new populist leader Heinz-Christian Strache (born 1969). In his youth, Strache had been a member of far-right organizations and had close contacts with neo-Nazi groups. He polarizes Austrian society in ways similar to Haider, though this time there are no "sanctions" against Austria. The populist right-wing trend is no longer an outlier; it has become the mainstream in a num-

ber of European countries and beyond. Policies and statements made recently by FPÖ politicians have once again created shock, outcry, and media headlines. In 2018 it was reported that right-wing student songbooks called for the murder of one million (more) Jews, and in 2019 FPÖ officials referred to immigrants as “rats” (a dehumanizing, racist term used by Hitler’s regime in the 1930s for Jews).⁵⁴ After these and other scandals, the FPÖ leadership declared that a commission of historians would look into the history of the party and its Nazi connections. Besides its chair, Wilhelm Braunecker, little was initially known about this commission: its independence was questioned by university professors and journalists from the beginning. Robert Knight, a prominent British historian of postwar Austria and Central Europe, came to the conclusion that the commission of historians put together by the FPÖ was a “joke.”⁵⁵

The Kurz–Strache government collapsed in May 2019 in the midst of a major scandal about alleged corruption and collusion with Russia. In August 2019 a preliminary thirty-two-page summary of the commission findings was presented in Vienna. The reactions of independent historians ranged from very cautious to very critical. Walter Manoschek spoke of a “very cheap show” and Margit Reiter stated that the “whole tendency is of course very relativizing.”⁵⁶ As stated earlier, the final report was released in December 2019 and received similar critiques.⁵⁷ Commissions of historians have become fashionable in recent decades, and they can make important contributions if done right, but they are not a universal remedy to historical amnesia. Historical findings are not influential if ignored by the people, societies, or political parties in question.⁵⁸ Despite efforts at education about the Nazi regime in Austria since the late 1980s, serious deficits remain obvious. Many Austrians still do not seem to know the basics of their Nazi past. A 2019 survey on Austria garnered a great deal of international attention. “Most Austrians don’t know 6 million Jews were killed in Holocaust, survey finds,” read the *Times of Israel* headline. Of those surveyed, 56 percent did not know that six million Jews were murdered in the Shoah, and half had never heard of Adolf Eichmann; 42 percent of Austrians could not identify Mauthausen, the camp near Linz, which is particularly disturbing because it was the main concentration camp on Austrian soil. The study found that the lack of knowledge was even more pronounced among younger people.⁵⁹

Conclusion

The Allied policies of denazification were very thorough in the immediate postwar years. Most former Nazi officials faced sanctions or even criminal

proceedings. As the Cold War heated up, denazification became less and less of a priority. For the Western Allies, fighting communism was now the top priority. Former Nazi officials, including war criminals, soon had little to fear and could continue or start their careers in business and academia, medical and legal professions, and so on. However, prominent Nazis remained for the most part excluded from political leadership positions at least in West Germany, as the case of Frauendorfer illustrates. In Austria, the situation was somewhat different because the country was under less scrutiny from the Allies, and therefore there were fewer limits to integration. As a result, new political careers for former Nazi officials were more often possible, as research to date suggests. The Allies were primarily interested in an independent and viable Austria and accepted Austria's victim status. Unlike in Germany, former Nazi officials in Austria could form a political party with little interference. The FPÖ was tolerated as long it would not openly challenge Austria's independence and its democratic system. As Margit Reiter points out, the FPÖ continued to serve as the political home of many former Nazis, and "despite its heterogeneity, managed to build a community spanning decades and indeed generations based on shared experiences, views, and memories."⁶⁰ Prominent former Nazi officials like Reinthaller again played important roles in Austrian politics. The Nazi past and the responsibility and guilt of many Austrians in the crimes of the Third Reich were swept under the carpet. The Alpine republic largely got away with it for decades. Meanwhile, although not currently in power, the FPÖ is still tipping the scales in Austrian politics, and likely will do so for years to come.

Notes

1. See Norbert Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 1996). For the English edition, see Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration*, transl. by Joel Golb (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). See also Gerhard Paul and Klaus-Michael Mallmann, eds., *Die Gestapo: Mythos und Realität* (Darmstadt: Primus, 2003); Norbert Frei, ed., *Karrieren im Zwielficht: Hitlers Eliten nach 1945*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2004); Christian Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Richard Breitman et al., eds., *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Gerald Steinacher, *Nazis on the Run: How Hitler's Henchmen Fled Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Eckart Conze et al., eds., *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (Munich: Pantheon Verlag, 2012); Andreas Eichmüller, *Die SS in der Bundesrepublik: Debatten und Diskurse über ehemalige SS-Angehörige 1949–1985*

(Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2018); Felix Bohr, *Die Kriegsverbrecherlobby: Bundesdeutsche Hilfe für im Ausland inhaftierte NS-Täter* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2018); Thomas W. Maulucci, Jr., *Adenauer's Foreign Office: West German Diplomacy in the Shadow of the Third Reich* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2012).

2. "Sammelsurium': Historiker zerpflückten FPÖ-Historikerbericht," ORF online, February 3, 2020, <https://orf.at/stories/3153029/>.

3. See Margit Reiter, "National Socialism in Austria before and after 1945: Nazi Minister Anton Reinthaller and the Origins of the Austrian Freedom Party," in this yearbook.

4. See Thomas Schlemmer, "From the General Government to the Bundestag? The Christian-Social Union in Bavaria and the Case of Max Frauendorfer," in this yearbook.

5. On this topic see also Katrin Hammerstein, *Gemeinsame Vergangenheit—getrennte Erinnerung? Der Nationalsozialismus in Gedächtnisdiskursen und Identitätskonstruktionen von Bundesrepublik Deutschland, DDR und Österreich* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2017).

6. Ulrich Herbert, *Best: Biographische Studien über Rechtsradikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft, 1903–1989*, 2nd ed. (Bonn: Dietz, 1996), 472, 475. All translations by the author if not stated otherwise.

7. *Ibid.*, 475.

8. See *ibid.*

9. See Tim Schanetzky, "Unternehmer: Profiteure des Unrechts," in Frei, ed., *Karrieren*, 73–126, here 116. For postwar networks, see also Nina Grunenberg, *Die Wundertäter: Netzwerke der deutschen Wirtschaft 1942–1966* (Munich: Siedler, 2006).

10. See Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2002), 16–24.

11. See Gerald Steinacher, "'A Man with a Wide Horizon': The Postwar Professional Journey of SS Officer Karl Nicolussi-Leck," in David A. Messenger and Katrin Paehler, eds., *A Nazi Past: Recasting German Identity in Postwar Europe* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 225–48, here 232–33.

12. Herbert, *Best*, 475. See also Schanetzky, "Unternehmer," in Frei, ed., *Karrieren*, 96.

13. See Frei, ed., *Karrieren*; Gerhard Paul, "Zwischen Selbstmord, Illegalität und Karriere: Ehemalige Gestapo-Bedienstete im Nachkriegsdeutschland," in Gerhard and Mallmann, eds., *Gestapo*, 529–47.

14. See Schlemmer, "General Government," 176–77.

15. See Daniel E. Rogers, "Hans Globke at Nuremberg: Testimony as Rehabilitation, 1948–1949," in Messenger and Paehler, eds., *Nazi Past*, 17–28.

16. For more on Oberländer see Aly and Heim, *Architects of Annihilation*, 52–54.

17. See Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik*, 326–60; *Adenauer's Germany*, 251–76.

18. See Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik*, 361–96; *Adenauer's Germany*, 277–302.

19. See Klaus-Dietmar Henke and Hans Woller, eds., *Politische Säuberung in Europa: Die Abrechnung mit dem Faschismus und Kollaboration nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991). For Austria, see Dieter Stiefel, "Der Prozeß der Entnazifizierung in Österreich," in *ibid.*, 108–46.

20. Christian Karner, "Multiple Dimensions and Discursive Contests in Austria's Mythscape," in idem and Bram Mertens, eds., *The Use and Abuse of Memory: Interpreting World War II in Contemporary European Politics* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers,

2013), 193–210, here 195–96. Crucial for this topic see Günter Bischof, “Victims? Perpetrators? ‘Punching Bags’ of European Historical Memory? The Austrians and Their World War II Legacies,” in *German Studies Review* 27, no. 1 (February 2004): 17–32; Günter Bischof, Barbara Stelzl-Marx and Alexandra Kofler, *Zukunftsfonds der Republik Österreich: Entstehung, Entwicklung und Bedeutung* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2015). See also Oliver Rathkolb, *Die paradoxe Republik: Österreich 1945–2005* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 2005); Heidmarie Uhl, “From Victim Myth to Co-Responsibility Thesis: Nazi Rule, World War II, and the Holocaust in Austrian Memory,” in Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner and Claudio Fogu, eds., *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 40–72.

21. But—spoiler alert—“Edelweiss” is not the Austrian national anthem!

22. Anton Pelinka, *Austria: Out of the Shadow of the Past* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 173.

23. By the 1950s most Austrians had accepted the quiet integration of Nazis into their ranks, with the exception of a few individual dissenting voices. Simon Wiesenthal (1908–2005), a Jewish Austrian Holocaust survivor, reminded mainstream society what it did not like to hear about: many (Austrian) Nazi criminals were never held responsible. Many Austrians hated him for that. In my opinion, Wiesenthal was the personification of the guilty conscience of many Austrians. For Wiesenthal, see Tom Segev, *Simon Wiesenthal: The Life and Legends* (New York: Doubleday, 2010); Hella Pick, *Simon Wiesenthal: A Life in Search of Justice* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996).

24. See Thomas Albrich, “Die Linken für die Rechten: Labour Party, SPÖ, und die ‘Vierte Partei’ 1948/49,” *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 19 (1990): 383–410.

25. See Walter Manoschek, “FPÖ, ÖVP, and Austria’s Nazi Past,” in Ruth Wodak and Anton Pelinka, eds., *The Haider Phenomenon in Austria* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 3–15.

26. Pick, *Simon Wiesenthal*, 250.

27. Manoschek, “FPÖ, ÖVP, and Austria’s Nazi Past,” in Wodak and Pelinka, eds., *Haider Phenomenon*, 6–7.

28. In recent decades the RFS has lost much of its influence and has only received 2–3 percent of the votes in student parliamentary elections.

29. See Reiter, “National Socialism in Austria.” See also idem, *Die Ehemaligen: Der Nationalsozialismus und die Anfänge der FPÖ* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2019), and “Inklusion und Exklusion: Zur politischen Formierung ehemaliger Nationalsozialisten im Verband der Unabhängigen (VdU) und in der frühen FPÖ,” *Zeitgeschichte* 44, no. 3 (May/June 2017): 143–59.

30. See Reiter, “National Socialism in Austria,” 141.

31. See Brigitte Bailer and Wolfgang Neugebauer, “Die FPÖ. Vom Liberalismus zum Rechtsextremismus,” in *Handbuch des österreichischen Rechtsextremismus*, ed. by Brigitte Bailer and Wolfgang Neugebauer, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Deuticke, 1993), 327–428, here 357–65.

32. Henry Tanner, “Austrian Leader Weathers First Crisis, over Ex-Nazi,” *New York Times*, June 8, 1970.

33. Pick, *Simon Wiesenthal*, 250.

34. Tanner, “Austrian Leader Weathers First Crisis,” *New York Times*, June 8, 1970.

35. There would of course be many others, such as the case of SPÖ member Dr. Heinrich Gross—a leading court-appointed psychiatrist in postwar-Austria. He was co-responsible for the murder of children in a Vienna hospital, who were deemed “unfit” for the Nazi state.

36. Segev, *Simon Wiesenthal*, 310.

37. See Joachim Staron, *Fosse Ardeatine und Marzabotto: Deutsche Kriegsverbrechen und Resistenza – Geschichte und nationale Mythenbildung in Deutschland und Italien (1944–1999)* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002). See also idem, “Marzabotto oder der Fall Walter Reder,” in Michael Gehler and Maddalena Guiotto, eds., *Italy, Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany in Europe: A Triangle of Mutual Relations and Perceptions from the Period 1945–49 to the Present* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2012), 317–37.

38. See Heinz P. Wassermann, “Zuviel Vergangenheit tut nicht gut!”: *Nationalsozialismus im Spiegel der Tagespresse der Zweiten Republik* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2000); for the Frischenschlager–Reder scandal, see 130–58.

39. See *ibid.*, 171–218.

40. The commission of historians concluded that Waldheim had no personal criminal guilt in a strictly legal sense. But the historians also made clear that he had always downplayed his own role during the Second World War, particularly in Greece and Yugoslavia. See Michael Gehler, “. . . eine grotesk überzogene Dämonisierung eines Mannes . . .” Die Waldheim-Affäre 1986–1992,” in idem and Hubert Sickinger, eds., *Politische Affären und Skandale in Österreich: Von Mayerling bis Waldheim* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2007), 614–65; Cornelius Lehniguth, *Waldheim und die Folgen: Der parteipolitische Umgang mit dem Nationalsozialismus in Österreich* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2013).

41. Günter Bischof, “Cornelius Lehniguth, *Waldheim und die Folgen: Der parteipolitische Umgang mit dem Nationalsozialismus in Österreich* (Campus),” in Günter Bischof and Ferdinand Karhofer, eds., *Austrian Federalism in Comparative Perspective* (New Orleans, LA: University of New Orleans Press, 2015), 255–67, here 258 (book review).

42. See Pelinka, *Austria, 192–94*.

43. For the title of this subchapter, see Wodak and Pelinka, eds., *Haider Phenomenon*.

44. See Christa Zöchling, “Der Gründungsmythos der FPÖ,” in *profil* 32/18, August 8, 2018, accessed December 5, 2019, www.profil.at/oesterreich/gruendungsmythos-fpoe-10258762.

45. See Hella Pick, *Guilty Victim: Austria from the Holocaust to Haider* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 182.

46. Meret Baumann, “Der Vater der Rechtspopulisten,” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, October 11, 2018, accessed December 5, 2019, www.nzz.ch/international/joerg-haider-vater-der-rechtspopulisten-ld.1425784.

47. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “Jörg Haider, Austrian Politician,” by Robert Rauch, accessed April 27, 2019, www.britannica.com/biography/Jorg-Haider.

48. Wodak and Pelinka, eds., *Haider Phenomenon*. See also Pick, *Guilty Victim*.

49. Manoschek, “FPÖ, ÖVP, and Austria’s Nazi Past,” in Wodak and Pelinka, eds., *Haider Phenomenon*, 4.

50. Ian Black, “Europe Rallies against Haider Coalition,” *The Guardian*, February 4, 2000, accessed December 5, 2019, www.theguardian.com/world/2000/feb/04/austria.ianblack.

51. See Allyson Fiddler, *The Art of Resistance: Cultural Protest against the Austrian Far Right in the Early Twenty-First Century* (New York: Berghahn, 2018).
52. See Günter Bischof and Fritz Plasser, eds., *The Schlüssel Era in Austria* (New Orleans, LA: University of New Orleans Press, 2010).
53. Manoschek, "FPÖ, ÖVP, and Austria's Nazi Past," in Wodak and Pelinka, eds., *Haider Phenomenon*, 3.
54. "Outcry Sparked by 'Deeply Racist' Rat Poem in Austria," *BBC News*, April 23, 2019, accessed December 5, 2019, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-48018110.
55. Robert G. Knight, "Historiker Robert G. Knight: 'Die Historikerkommission der FPÖ ist ein Witz,'" interview by Marie-Theres Egyed and Peter Mayr, *Der Standard*, May 4, 2019, accessed December 5, 2019, derstandard.at/2000102471142/Historiker-Robert-Knight-Die-FPOe-Historikerkommission-ist-ein-Witz.
56. "Scharfe Kritik an FPÖ-Bericht zu Parteigeschichte," *Der Standard*, August 7, 2019.
57. It should be mentioned that the SPÖ and ÖVP had historical commissions earlier than the FPÖ, which looked into the background of (former) Nazis in their parties.
58. See Christoph Cornelißen and Paolo Pezzino, eds., *Historikerkommissionen und historische Konfliktbewältigung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017).
59. See "Most Austrians Don't Know 6 Million Jews Were Killed in Holocaust, Survey Finds," *Times of Israel*, May 2, 2019, accessed December 5, 2019, www.timesofisrael.com/most-austrians-dont-know-6-million-jews-were-killed-in-holocaust-survey-finds/.
60. Reiter, "National Socialism in Austria," 138.

Nazi Legacies?

New Research on the Question of Continuities in Postwar Germany

ANDREAS WIRSCHING

The contribution by Andreas Wirsching deals with the recent significant expansion of historical research into the continuities of personnel and mentalities between the Nazi regime and the early Federal Republic of Germany. Concentrating on the ministerial bureaucracy, and specifically on the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Wirsching notes a pattern of considerable continuities, the careful evaluation of which has been made possible by the availability of new archival sources. Summarizing the current state of research, the article focuses on how the burdens of the Nazi past were addressed in the German bureaucracy and how they related to the longer-term continuities of anti-pluralism, socio-moral conservatism, and authoritarian étatism. At the same time, Wirsching emphasizes the manifold learning processes that took hold during the postwar period, which allowed former officials of the Nazi regime to adapt to the conditions of the new democracy or even to help shape it.

Preconditions

In recent years German historiography has seen a substantial expansion of research on the Nazi period and its legacies after 1945. This trend was initiated first by private business enterprises and later by federal ministries and other public institutions. Following the opening of new archival sources, the question of the extent to which the policies of the early Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) were influenced by former members of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP, *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) and by an antidemocratic mentality has become a dominant issue in research on German contemporary history. This trend raises a number of questions, inviting us to engage in critical reflection.

There is certainly one important, albeit underrated, precondition for the current wave of so-called *Aufarbeitung* projects,¹ and that is the disappearance of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The regime of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED, *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*) had

a strong interest in portraying West Germany as a “fascist” state. It collected as much material as possible in order to prove that major representatives of West German elites had been Nazi Party members, supporters, functionaries, or even perpetrators. The propagandistic attacks contained in the famous *Braunbuch* (“Brown Book”) caused major uneasiness in Bonn.² Following the end of the GDR, however, the German discourse on how to come to terms with the country’s Nazi past changed. The subject was no longer one that was discussed between two German states, but it became a matter of internal debate instead.

German reunification was important in another regard, too, as it changed Germany’s position in European and global politics as well as within the increasingly close network of the global economy. As paradoxical as it sounds at first, dealing with the past lay in reunified Germany’s economic interests. The first main actors to become involved were the big German multinational corporations. These corporations possessed an increasingly pressing interest in investigating their company’s Nazi pasts. In an economy that was becoming more and more global, and especially in order to be accepted on the American market, they needed proof that their corporate culture was now reformed. From the mid-1990s onward, this essentially economic motivation provided the incentive for a number of significant research projects into company histories. These included the Deutsche Bank and the Dresdner Bank in the banking sector;³ the Flicks and the Quandts, to mention the two most important families in the armaments sector;⁴ and finally, more recently, Dr. Oetker, a large manufacturer of processed foods.⁵

These corporations were important trailblazers, leading the way in a new wave of *Aufarbeitung*. What emerged was more or less a new seal of approval for businesses, and more recently also for ministries, public authorities, and associations. This seal of approval, or certificate, states: “National Socialism and its consequences have been evaluated and dealt with.” What the actual results are is almost secondary (to exaggerate slightly). The most important fact is that this *Aufarbeitung* has taken place as an act of reformation—even purification—of the respective corporate or ministerial culture.

However, this has only become possible because—and this is another important precondition—by the 1990s there had been a fundamental generational shift. Speaking of generational change may seem trite. But it needs to be emphasized as it was, and indeed is, of huge significance. The disappearance of personal loyalties is a necessary precondition of historical distance, making it possible for history to be evaluated critically. For—as we all know from our private lives—as long as persons are still alive, their individual narratives shape

our image of their history. Simple admiration, relationships of obligation, and feelings of loyalty prevent us from asking deeper questions and maintaining critical distance. Rather, biographical and institutional self-images are adopted more or less without questioning over a long period of time. Any potential criticism is mainly voiced in private. Examples of this include Karl Dietrich Erdmann and Theodor Schieder in the academic discipline of history,⁶ Theodor Eschenburg in political science,⁷ and—to mention one important business figure—Rudolf August Oetker.⁸ Only after these protagonists had died was it possible for questions to be asked more openly and a freer discourse to be established. Incidentally, a parallel movement (which would also be worth investigating in greater detail) could be observed in the archives. Well into the 1990s, it was still sometimes possible for research into Nazi history in municipal archives, for example, to be blocked by older archivists who were close to retirement, who either stated that no sources existed or refused to present inventories. This has changed fundamentally, thanks to the emergence of a new and younger—a genuinely postwar—generation of archivists.

Generational change is also associated with the challenges presented by a culture of remembrance. Which names ought to be remembered, which achievements acknowledged? The answers to these questions are as changeable as cultural memory itself. For example, the trend of renaming schools, barracks, and streets because their old namesakes are seen as tainted by the Nazi period continues unabated. The study of the Federal Foreign Office, which garnered much attention, famously also had its starting point in the question of how the history of the ministry and its individual officials could and should be commemorated adequately.⁹ This shift in the culture of remembrance, of which much more could be said, also plays a very important role.

In parallel, since the 1980s research has adopted a much broader definition of the concept of the “perpetrator.”¹⁰ When we speak of the perpetrators of the Nazi regime today, this no longer means just the SS, the henchmen of the Holocaust, and the bureaucrats who were undeniably “desk criminals” (*Schreibtischtäter*) acting behind the scenes. The more the regime’s driving force comes to be located at the center of German society, the larger the group of perpetrators becomes. Thus, it has been shown that the National Socialist propaganda concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft* could indeed have a mobilizing effect. Its fundamentally exclusionary and thus essentially violent nature attracted “ordinary” Germans. As soon as they actively opted for the National Socialist *Volksgemeinschaft*, they chose the path of political and racist violence and often became perpetrators themselves.¹¹ The boundary between hangers-on and perpetrators becomes blurred. This poses a considerable

methodological challenge to all commissions dealing with the past, and more about this will be said later.

The fact that an obviously unjust regime carried out state-sanctioned mass crimes led to a loss of innocence for the state bureaucracy. In historical analysis, bureaucracy, which defines itself as acting objectively and rationally, apolitically and neutrally, becomes an inseparable part of the *Unrechtsstaat*, the state of lawlessness. One result is that the elite functionaries of the Nazi regime, whether in the civil service, the justice system, technology, or science, are no longer suitable candidates for creating identity within the culture of memory. There are many examples of this.

We might mention individuals such as Wernher von Braun or the airplane pioneer Willy Messerschmitt. In the 1970s, streets and schools were still named after these personages, who were seen as great pioneers of technological progress. Twenty or thirty years later, these names were changed. It had come to light that both had been responsible for the mass use of forced labor, and overall awareness had grown that any technological progress under the Nazi regime could hardly be “neutral.”¹²

The underlying reasons for this change are to be found not least in the progress made by historical research. Not only do we now know far more details; the history of forced labor, for example, which is the subject of an important, compulsory chapter in any study of corporate history, is thus now well investigated. Beyond such specific empirical findings, since the 1980s research on National Socialism has also developed some groundbreaking interpretative models that make it possible to gain a far better understanding of the behavior of elites, as well as that of many “normal” people under the Nazi regime. And this applies to an even greater extent to the ministerial bureaucracy, which has formed the main focus of *Aufarbeitung* over the past ten years.

Nazi Continuities

This brings us to my second point, where I would like to concentrate on the projects carried out on the history of the most important ministries. It is still too early to take stock. Some projects have not yet been completed, nor have all of the completed studies been published.¹³ Furthermore, the commissions deal with some very different subjects and issues. In some projects the Nazi period itself forms the focus of enquiry. This was the case in the vast majority of corporate histories, for example. While there are always certain prehistories, the Nazi period itself forms the main focus of interest. This also applies, for example, to projects on the Reich Ministry of Finance or the Reich Ministry of Labor.¹⁴ By

contrast, the study of the Foreign Office presented its findings in one single volume that goes from the Nazi years to the postwar period.¹⁵ The project on the Federal Ministry of Economics has adopted an even more comprehensive approach, looking at the ministry's history during the Weimar Republic, the Nazi period, and the postwar period, including the GDR ministry and the East German economy.¹⁶ The Federal Ministry of Justice and the Federal Ministry of the Interior have chosen a different approach yet again, deciding not to focus on the Nazi period in a narrower sense but rather on the postwar period.¹⁷ This may seem regrettable, given that it could create the illusion that the Nazi period has already been researched sufficiently.

Still another category of projects, such as those examining the *Bundeskriminalamt* (Federal Criminal Police Office), the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (Federal Intelligence Service), and the *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz* (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution), are devoted exclusively to the history of the FRG.¹⁸ Here the key question is how the German ministries dealt with their Nazi pasts in terms of staffing and policies, that is, how pervasive the burdens of complicity (*Belastungen*) actually were in the politics of the early FRG. This is currently a more widely used approach than that of researching the National Socialist period itself. It almost seems as if unified Germany desires to assure itself of its postwar political roots. On the one hand, these disparities in research focus may seem unfortunate, but on the other hand they are also the result of an autonomous research process. Be that as it may, however, they sometimes make it more difficult to take stock, and blind spots are created. For example, due to the different designs and structures of these projects, the important question of what happened to the staffs of the Reich ministries directly after the end of the Nazi regime has been widely ignored.

What happened to the staff of the Reich Ministry of the Interior after 1945, for example? What happened to the staff of the Reich Ministry of Finance? What happened to the personnel of ministries that had no direct successor, such as Goebbels's Reich Ministry of Propaganda? These questions are both intriguing and important but lie outside the scope of the design of the current research projects.

There is, however, an undeniably positive result of all of these efforts: significant amounts of new source material that were previously inaccessible are being made available on an ongoing basis. Strong support from the ministries has led to the opening up of some of these sources—particularly personnel files and classified information, which are being disclosed on a grand scale. This in itself constitutes an important step forward for research. This can be illustrated by the findings of the project about the *Bundesinnenministerium* (BMI,

Ministry of the Interior) that has been conducted jointly by the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History and the Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History in Potsdam.¹⁹

One initial finding is that staff continuity was high, in the sense that former members of the NSDAP were strongly represented in the upper tiers of the civil service, and in this regard the various studies, individual nuances aside, will not differ greatly. The proportion of NSDAP members was higher than previously assumed. In the initial phase, directly after 1945 or 1949, respectively, when Allied influence was still strong, this continuity was smaller. From the early 1950s to the early 1960s, under waning Allied influence and the application of Article 131 of the Basic Law, the number of former party members rose markedly, peaking in 1961: the proportion of former NSDAP members in the higher levels of the civil service was 67 percent, and the proportion of former SA members 47 percent. By contrast, the share of former SS members was comparatively low and remained broadly stable at five to seven percent. In some of the main departments, such as the Department for Cultural Affairs (*Abteilung für Kulturelle Angelegenheiten des Bundes*), at times up to 85 percent of senior civil servants had belonged to the NSDAP.²⁰

One important reason for that development was the officials' networks and personal connections. For many years the BMI's staffing policy, for example, was shaped significantly by a small circle of people. All of them had been employed in the Reich Ministry of the Interior prior to 1945 and thus had known each other for a long time. Besides Secretary of State Hans Ritter von Lex, this circle included the *Zentralabteilungsleiter* (head of personnel) and former ministerial official of the Reich Ministry of the Interior Sklode von Perbandt and, above all, the Department Head Erich Keßler. The latter had joined the NSDAP and the SA in 1933. His career as an administrative lawyer under the Nazi regime had not been straightforward, as he came into conflict with National Socialist authorities on several occasions. Nevertheless, he served as the deputy to the president of the Katowice governmental district from 1940 to 1944, before being transferred to the Reich Ministry of the Interior.²¹ As the appointment of leading civil servants was always approved by the Chancellor's Office, its head, Hans Globke, Adenauer's protégé, also played an important role.

Not a few leading civil servants had clearly contributed to the bureaucratic establishment and workings of the Nazi regime, a *Belastung* (burden of complicity) that was visible at least in outline. But if they were personally acquainted with, or had been strongly recommended to, the ministry's inner circle, this burden ultimately proved to be no obstacle to their employment. From the

point of view of their colleagues in the BMI, these individuals' professional experience as trained administrative lawyers and the manner in which they acquitted themselves in their new positions spoke in their favor. Today, of course, our stance is much more critical, or at least we place far greater emphasis on the ambiguities typical of the Nazi system. Many civil servants actively helped the Nazi regime to get the "normative state," to which they were bound, up and running in accordance with National Socialist measures. Civil servants made available the bureaucracy the regime needed in order to function, a bureaucracy bound to rational criteria, and thus dissolved what Ernst Fraenkel calls the difference between the "normative state" (a state in which the state bureaucracy and institutions operate according to the law) and the "prerogative state" (a state in which Nazi organizations could operate without any legal constraints) to a far greater extent than they were willing to admit after 1945. Even though they believed they had maintained a subjective distance or even opposition to the regime, and even though they believed they had prevented worse from happening, from today's point of view they must be seen as *belastet* (burdened by complicity) on the basis of the functions they performed.

The high numbers of former members of the NSDAP highlight a fundamental problem associated with research on the ministries. Naturally, the aim of these studies is not to initiate, so to speak, a kind of new and comprehensive denazification process. However, there is an increasing tendency to dismiss such findings as mere "Nazi counting" and thus make light of them. That is problematic. In the BMI's Main Department for Public Law, Constitutional Law, and Administrative Law, for instance, there were 58 department heads, division heads and subdivision heads (*Abteilungs-, Unterabteilungs- and Referatsleiter*) between 1949 and 1970. Of these, a full two thirds had been in the NSDAP and a full third in the SA. Five percent had been former SS members and 64 percent had belonged to other Nazi organizations.²² This is significant and cannot be simply "argued away." Rather, we need to take such findings seriously while at the same time using scholarly analysis to categorize, differentiate, and explain them.

This raises important questions that are not easy to answer, however. Blanket judgments may mislead, and in the end, one has to take a close look at the career of each individual in order to arrive at a well-founded judgment. Mere membership in the NSDAP or other National Socialist associations does not tell us much, even if joining the party had been a willful and deliberate act. Persons who are thought of as the ideological main perpetrators of the Nazi regime, who provided the SS leadership and were described as an "Uncompromising Generation,"²³ were rarely found in the postwar German

bureaucracy. Thus, between 1949 and 1969, of the leading officials of the BMI, only about two percent had been members of the SS and only about 4 percent had joined the NSDAP before 1933.²⁴

While it would be wrong to concentrate only on spectacular cases, which in any event hardly existed in the BMI, it is all the more important to name those officials whose burden was considerable. This applies, for example, to Gerhard Scheffler, born in 1894, who was mayor of Posen before 1945 and was clearly involved in the extermination policy in the Warthegau. After the end of the war he managed to go into hiding under the false name of Dr. Otto Jungfer. When the pressure of prosecution on Nazis decreased, Scheffler reappeared using his real name and was classified as “exonerated” by the denazification committee in 1949. Therefore, nothing stood in the way of his appointment in 1950 to the BMI, where he was also no longer asked about his past. We know from his personal notes that Scheffler essentially remained true to his National Socialist convictions, but kept silent about them so as not to expose himself.²⁵

Individuals who were more or less severely tainted thus entered the BMI's service, in addition to job candidates who simply falsified their curriculum vitae and remained unrecognized. Among these was the former judge Kurt Breull, who had gained prominence through antisemitic judgments and then was put in charge of none other than the BMI's Division for Foreigners and Residency Law.²⁶ By these means Friedrich Rippich, a former temporary NSDAP *Kreisleiter* (district leader), SS *Sturmabführer*, and district administrator in the district of Sieradz in the Warthegau, also gained a job in the Federal Ministry of the Interior. From 1945 to 1949 he was recorded as “missing,” but he had probably already escaped to Argentina at this time. It is characteristic of the atmosphere in the FRG during the 1950s that he was able to successfully apply for a position at the BMI from his Argentinian exile.²⁷

Old Nazi networks strongly influenced the ministry's Main Department for Social Affairs, where Gerhard Scheffler succeeded to become its head in 1956. His predecessor, Wilhelm Kitz, had been involved in National Socialist euthanasia crimes as a leading official in the Rhineland Provincial Administration. Johannes Duntze, who became Scheffler's successor in 1958, had been a specialist in welfare administration under the Nazi regime. During the Second World War he had been a senior official of the military administration in Belgium, responsible, among other things, for the infamous Breendonk prison camp. The department had close contacts with old acquaintances such as Hans Muthesius, who from 1940 to 1945 had worked in the Department of Public Health in the Reich Ministry of the Interior, where he had been responsible for setting up concentration camps for youth in the occupied eastern territo-

ries. Muthesius was successful in gaining influence on the legislation of the BMI. When preparing the new *Bundessozialhilfegesetz* (Federal Social Assistance Act) of 1961, the Main Department for Social Affairs wanted to include the forced detention of adults who were considered to be “at social risk” in the Federal Social Assistance Act. This clearly reflected an authoritarian, repressive tradition of socio-moral conservatism that, between 1933 and 1945, had turned to Nazism.²⁸

Long-Term Continuities of Etatism and Socio-Moral Conservatism

These examples clearly show that Nazi legacies did exist in the higher ranks of the Federal Ministry of the Interior as well as in other ministries. But this continuity must be placed into the context of longer-term continuities in Germany. We need to ask how much further back the continuities from the Nazi period reach, that is, to the time before 1933 and indeed to the time before 1914. Many long arcs of continuity of this kind can be seen in the careers of the civil servants and staff at the BMI. Most trained administrative civil servants cultivated an “apolitical” self-image that insisted on the “nonpartisanship” of state power. They saw themselves as members of a technical, purely “factual,” and professional administration. Their focus was a conservative (in the sense of preservative) efficiency. In German conservatism, this form of seemingly apolitical nonpartisanship was both an expression of anti-pluralism and a specific form of political self-deceit. For when political or politically relevant decisions have to be made, the fiction of the “apolitical” can no longer be upheld—and nowhere did the results of this self-deceit become more fatally clear than in the relationship of the German civil service to the Nazi regime. This holds true even though this self-deceit continued long after 1945 as a central narrative of self-exculpation. Thus the German Association of Civil Servants wrote the following to Federal Minister of the Interior Robert Lehr in 1952: “The civil servant’s membership in political or trade union organizations—past and present—has nothing to do with his professional activity.”²⁹ This corresponds to the typical self-description of a civil servant from Württemberg in 1948: “I was trained under the monarchy, then held office in the Weimar Republic, and in 1933 I became part of the Third Reich, simply as a professional civil servant.”³⁰

This fiction of apolitical nonpartisanship arose from an abstract understanding of the state that was all too easily instrumentalized under the Nazi regime and was still strongly present in the early FRG. One example of this is the anticommunism that became probably the most significant

overlap between Hitler and the German elite in 1933.³¹ This can be seen in a conversation that Ritter von Lex, who himself was by no means a Nazi, had with Hitler in mid-March of that year: “The Bavarian People’s Party [BVP, *Bayerische Volkspartei*],” Lex assured the new Reich chancellor, “approved of the destruction of Marxism, but in forms consistent with Christian moral law. Where communism was concerned [. . .] the BVP could for the most part go along [with the National Socialists]. [. . .] Social democracy constituted a branch of Marxism that needed to be overcome mentally rather than physically eradicated.”³² Accordingly, the “physical eradication” of the communists was consciously factored in. The same Ritter von Lex, as state secretary in the Federal Ministry of the Interior, led the proceedings before the Federal Constitutional Court banning the German Communist Party (KPD, *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*) in 1954, at which he delivered the opening statement on behalf of the federal government.³³ This, too, forms part of the continuities in the German interior administration.

Finally, German history’s long continuities include a specific social and moral conservatism. Sociopolitically, this conservatism was evident in the manner that peripheral social groups—so-called “antisocials,” “alcoholics,” “work dodgers,” and “gypsies”—were dealt with. For example, the language of the Bavarian “Law for countering gypsies, travelers and work dodgers” anticipated the social exclusion and repression that were to become the characteristics of Nazi persecution practice.³⁴ Its adherents also believed that authoritarian state intervention could curb and reverse those *cultural* movements that were regarded as indecorous and subversive, challenging the traditional social order. Such socio-moral conservatism was, for example, the cultural and political foundation of the controversial law against *Schmutz und Schund* (filth and trash) of 1926 which banned the sale of publications considered to be harmful (filth and trash literature) to underage Germans. After 1945 its traces could still be found in the BMI’s Main Department for Cultural Affairs.³⁵

After 1933 these older conservative and authoritarian traditions were radicalized and indeed perverted by the Nazi regime and thus ultimately compromised. However, many of these traditions became permanently discredited only in the 1970s. Thus, all of these phenomena constitute a time span in German history running from around 1890 to 1960 that is characterized by a relatively homogeneous, conservative attitude with a markedly antidemocratic and anti-pluralist impact. For civil servants in particular, this resulted in a considerable affinity to National Socialism. National Socialism—which was, after all, a parasitic movement—incorporated as much of this

conservative attitude as it found useful. Thus, many civil servants joined the NSDAP after 1933 and supported the dictatorship at the middle administrative level. Opting for the *Volksgemeinschaft*, they actively participated in its criminal practices, even though, in the notoriously euphemistic terminology of the denazification courts, they were *Mitläufer* (fellow travelers). It was this type of civil servant that accounted for the majority of former NSDAP members in the federal ministries of the 1950s and early 1960s.

The challenge for research is to consistently take into account and reflect upon this dualistic dimension of the continuity problem and to make it the starting point for new questions and inquiries. The term *Belastung*, which is difficult in itself, is thus to be differentiated and historicized. It needs to be placed within a historical context. That is, we need to ask: Who and what was seen as historically *belastet* or tainted by the Nazi period at which point in time? Up to the 1960s, mere membership of the NSDAP was no barrier to public employment. There was skepticism if job candidates had joined the NSDAP prior to 1933, if they had held official positions within the party, and especially if they had held office in the civil service in the occupied eastern territories. Even in the 1950s this could represent a certain boundary in staffing policy.

The Evolution of Democracy

But how could the stabilization of democracy during the 1950s be achieved if a large part of the elites had a National Socialist past? During the Nazi dictatorship, many people learned at the cost of great suffering and sometimes their lives what it meant to be governed by ministries and offices that made a lack of rights the norm and established an inhuman morality. The Reich ministries were at the very heart of this process. They were where the so-called will of the Führer was translated into a quasi-legal administrative language that does not differ much in formal terms from what ministries do today. For the bureaucracy, this language legitimized crime.

Against this backdrop, the early Federal Republic's establishment of an administration that, by and large, operated according to the rule of law and gave human beings back the ability to live in freedom and safety was a significant achievement. Accordingly, it seems appropriate to look not only at the unmistakable continuities in staffing and policy, but also at the fresh incentives and new beginnings in the ministries, asking what changes they were subject to, how existing administrative law was adapted to the norms of the Basic Law and simultaneously constitutionalized, to what extent the postwar ministries

and authorities contributed to the democratization of political culture, and—last but not least—how and why former National Socialists now operated in a different way than they had before. While their way of acting was once again in conformity with the system, it was compatible with the democratic context. Here, too, we can find a number of very prominent examples. One of them was the former Bavarian minister of education and cultural affairs Theodor Maunz, who wrote a law thesis that displayed great affinity for the Weimar system and subsequently enjoyed a remarkable career both in the 1930s and after 1945, becoming one of the commentators on the Basic Law. The latter point did not, however, prevent him from secretly writing for Gerhard Frey's *National-Zeitung*.³⁶

Frequently, a mechanism may have been at work that we are familiar with from the BMI files being studied at present: here, Gerhard Scheffler reflected upon the fact that he “cannot take much pleasure” in the new Bonn democracy. Even though he held an executive position, he was “always very reserved in his professional life after 1948” and tried “never to catch attention.” Furthermore, there were fears that one's personal past could become an issue. The “newly risen political forces” tried to “vilify” their opponents by trawling through their pasts and then “suspecting them without reason.”³⁷ If one “kept quiet,” there was a greater chance of not being noticed and being able to enjoy the benefits of the new democracy, such as rising salaries and the right to a pension. All of these ambivalences are typical of the time, different ways of functioning, so to speak, of one and the same person. While they are an extremely interesting field of study, they are difficult to trace in the sources.

It should have become clear by now that the ministerial *Aufarbeitung* projects are more than mere “Nazi counting.” In actual fact, commissioned research—which is sometimes regarded quite critically³⁸—is setting clear standards. Developments such as the guaranteed independence of the researcher and, above all, the opening of new sources and the making accessible of personnel files are wholly positive. Research based upon such standards clearly shows that there were strong personal continuities from the Nazi period to the early FRG. Two types of intertwined continuities can be observed. On the one hand, Nazi continuities in the narrower sense, expressed by racist and antisemitic mentalities, were noticeable in administrative actions of federal ministries. On the other hand, there was a rather extensive legacy of traditional etatist, anti-pluralist, and antidemocratic thought throughout the Adenauer era. Most of these continuities dated back to the Weimar Republic or even to the German Reich of 1871 and constituted, to some extent at least, a specific sort of traditional conservative mentality.

At the same time, and this needs to be stressed, West Germany was changing rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, the early FRG is a good example of the evolutionary character of any democracy. This was expressed in the many learning processes West Germans had to undergo in the teeth of the many personal and mental continuities that existed at the beginning. This was especially true for ministerial bureaucracies. Civil servants had to learn that their traditional etatism increasingly ran counter to the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* (Federal Constitutional Court), the parliamentary opposition, the critical public, or simply the zeitgeist. The public authorities began to recognize that traditional moral concepts had to give way to a new, more pluralistic understanding of freedom of the press and artistic freedom. Members of parliament and political parties learned how to organize themselves in order to ensure the efficient work of government and opposition. But it was by no means only the civil servants and politicians who went through a learning process. Society, in its entirety, was fundamentally affected. Journalists learned to emancipate themselves from the patronizing media policy and the “consensus journalism” of the Adenauer government.³⁹ Men began to accept that the constitutionally guaranteed equal rights of women could also be realized institutionally.⁴⁰ Fathers became acquainted with new, “softer” forms of authority that corresponded better to the democratic “way of life” than traditional “hard” ideas of masculinity.⁴¹ Society as a whole gradually learned to accept and deal with the pluralism and individualism of modernity.

Notes

1. Projects that seek to work through and evaluate the Nazi past. *Aufarbeitung* is a widely used German term referring to the ongoing assessment of the Nazi past and its lessons and consequences.

2. See *Gestern Hitlers Blutrichter—heute Bonner Justiz-Elite: Übergeben auf der internationalen Pressekonferenz am 23. Mai 1957 in Berlin*, ed. Ausschluß für die Deutsche Einheit (Berlin/East, 1957); *Braunbuch: Kriegs- und Naziverbrecher in der Bundesrepublik*, ed. Nationalrat der Nationalen Front des Demokratischen Deutschland (Berlin/East: Staatsverlag der DDR, 1965).

3. See Lothar Gall et al., *Die Deutsche Bank 1870–1995* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 1995); Harold James, *Die Deutsche Bank und die “Arisierung”* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2001); *Die Dresdner Bank im Dritten Reich*, ed. Klaus-Dietmar Henke, 4 vols. (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006)—vol. 1: Johannes Bähr, *Die Dresdner Bank in der Wirtschaft des Dritten Reichs*, vol. 2: Dieter Ziegler, *Die Dresdner Bank und die deutschen Juden*, vol. 3: Harald Wixforth, *Die Expansion der Dresdner Bank in Europa*, vol. 4: Klaus-Dietmar Henke, *Die Dresdner Bank 1933–1945: Ökonomische Rationalität, Regimenähe, Mittäterschaft*.

4. See Johannes Bähr et al., *Der Flick-Konzern im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2008); Norbert Frei et al., *Flick: Der Konzern, die Familie, die Macht* (Munich: Blessing, 2009); Joachim Scholtyseck, *Der Aufstieg der Quandts: Eine deutsche Unternehmerdynastie* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2011).

5. See Jürgen Finger, Sven Keller, and Andreas Wirsching, *Dr. Oetker und der Nationalsozialismus: Geschichte eines Familienunternehmens 1933–1945* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2013).

6. See Martin Kröger and Roland Thimme, *Die Geschichtsbilder des Historikers Karl Dietrich Erdmann: Vom Dritten Reich zur Bundesrepublik* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996); Christoph Cornelißen, “Karl Dietrich Erdmann: Fortsetzung einer Debatte und offene Fragen,” *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 61, no. 12 (2010): 692–99; Angelika Ebbinghaus and Karl Heinz Roth, “Vorläufer des ‘Generalplan Ost’: Eine Dokumentation über Theodor Schieders Polendenkschrift vom 7. Oktober 1939,” *1999: Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts* 7, no. 1 (1992): 62–94; Ingo Haar, *Historiker im Nationalsozialismus: Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft und der ‘Volkstumskampf’ im Osten*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002); Christoph Nonn, *Theodor Schieder: Ein bürgerlicher Historiker im 20. Jahrhundert* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2013); Wolfgang J. Mommsen, “‘Gestürzte Denkmäler?’ Die ‘Fälle’ Aubin, Conze, Erdmann und Schieder,” in Jürgen Elvert and Susanne Krauß, eds., *Historische Debatten und Kontroversen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003), 96–109.

7. The debate the *Deutsche Vereinigung für Politische Wissenschaft* (German Political Science Association) started in 2011 on Eschenburg’s role in the Third Reich and on his postwar perspective on that role has been extremely controversial. See “Theodor-Eschenburg-Preis der DVPW,” <https://www.dvpw.de/informationen/eschenburg-debatte/>, accessed April 6, 2020; Anne Rohstock, “Kein Vollzeitrepublikaner: Die Findung des Demokraten Theodor Eschenburg (1904–1999),” in Bastian Hein, Manfred Kittel and Horst Möller, eds., *Gesichter der Demokratie: Porträts zur deutschen Zeitgeschichte* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2012), 193–210; Hannah Bethke, “Theodor Eschenburg in der NS-Zeit: Gutachten im Auftrag von Vorstand und Beirat der DVPW (3. September 2012),” in Hubertus Buchstein, ed., *Die Versprechen der Demokratie* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2013), 527–67; Rainer Eisfeld, “Theodor Eschenburg (II), ‘Der innere Widerstand gegen ein totalitäres Regime verlangte eben besondere Verhaltensweisen,’” *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 61 (2013): 522–42; Udo Wengst, “Der ‘Fall Theodor Eschenburg’: Zum Problem der historischen Urteilsbildung,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 61, no. 3 (July 2013): 411–40; Hans Woller and Jürgen Zarusky, “Der ‘Fall Theodor Eschenburg’ und das Institut für Zeitgeschichte: Offene Fragen und neue Perspektiven,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 61, no. 4 (October 2013): 551–65.

8. See Finger, Keller and Wirsching, *Dr. Oetker*, 339–70.

9. See Eckart Conze et al., *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* (Berlin: Blessing, 2010).

10. See Frank Bajohr, “Täterforschung: Ertrag, Probleme und Perspektiven eines Forschungsansatzes,” in idem and Andrea Löw, eds., *Der Holocaust: Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2015), 167–85.

11. See Michael Wildt, *Hitler's Volksgemeinschaft and the Dynamics of Racial Exclusion: Violence against Jews in Provincial Germany, 1919–1939* (New York: Berghahn, 2014); Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt, eds., *Volksgemeinschaft: Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2009). The concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft* and its significance for the social dynamics of the Nazi dictatorship is discussed in detail in Bernhard Gotto and Martina Steber, eds., *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

12. See Michael J. Neufeld, “Wernher von Braun, the SS, and Concentration Camp Labor: Questions of Moral, Political, and Criminal Responsibility,” *German Studies Review* 25, no. 1 (February 2002): 57–78.

13. See Christian Mentel and Niels Weise, *Die zentralen deutschen Behörden und der Nationalsozialismus: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung* (Munich: 2016), https://www.ifz-muenchen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Neuigkeiten%202016/2016_02_13_ZZF_IfZ_PM_BKM-Studie_FINAL_Neu.pdf, accessed April 6, 2020.

14. See Christiane Kuller, *Bürokratie und Verbrechen: Antisemitische Finanzpolitik und Verwaltungspraxis im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2013); Jürgen Kilian, *Krieg auf Kosten anderer: Das Reichsministerium der Finanzen und die wirtschaftliche Mobilisierung Europas für Hitlers Krieg* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017); Ralf Banken, *Hitlers Steuerstaat: Die Steuerpolitik im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2018); Alexander Nützenadel, ed., *Das Reichsarbeitsministerium im Nationalsozialismus: Verwaltung—Politik—Verbrechen* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017).

15. Conze et al., *Das Amt*.

16. See *Wirtschaftspolitik in Deutschland 1917–1990*, ed. Werner Abelshausen et al., 4 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016).

17. See Manfred Görtemaker and Christoph Safferling, *Die Akte Rosenberg: Das Bundesministerium der Justiz und die NS-Zeit* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2016); Frank Bösch and Andreas Wirsching, eds., *Hüter der Ordnung: Die Innenministerien in Bonn und Ost-Berlin nach dem Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018).

18. See Constantin Goschler and Michael Wala, “Keine neue Gestapo”: *Das Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz und die NS-Vergangenheit* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2015); Imanuel Baumann et al., *Schatten der Vergangenheit: Das BKA und seine Gründungsgeneration in der frühen Bundesrepublik* (Cologne: Luchterhand, 2011); *Unabhängige Historikerkommission zur Erforschung der Geschichte des Bundesnachrichtendienstes 1945–1968*, ed. Jost Dülffer et al., 11 vols. (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2013–19).

19. See Bösch and Wirsching, eds., *Hüter der Ordnung*.

20. See Stefanie Palm and Irina Stange, “Vergangenheiten und Prägungen des Personals des Bundesinnenministeriums,” in *ibid.*, 122–81, here 125; Stefanie Palm, “Auf der Suche nach dem starken Staat: Die Kultur-, Medien- und Wissenschaftspolitik,” in *ibid.*, 594–634, here 601.

21. See Irina Stange, “Das Bundesministerium des Innern und seine leitenden Beamten,” in *ibid.*, 55–122, here 56–58.

22. See Frieder Günther, “Rechtsstaat, Justizstaat oder Verwaltungsstaat? Die Verfassungs- und Verwaltungspolitik,” in *ibid.*, 381–412, here 381.

23. See Michael Wildt, *An Uncompromising Generation: The Nazi Leadership of the Reich Security Main Office* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).
24. See Palm and Stange, "Vergangenheiten," in Bösch and Wirsching, eds., *Hüter der Ordnung*, 147.
25. See *ibid.*, 156–60; Maren Richter, "'Stillhalten' der Sozialabteilung: Das Bundessozialhilfegesetz," in *ibid.*, 580–93, here 592.
26. See Palm and Stange, "Vergangenheiten," in *ibid.*, 156–61.
27. See *ibid.*, 145–48.
28. See Richter, "Stillhalten," in *ibid.*, 581–91. On the legislation process, see Matthias Willing, *Das Bewahrungsgesetz (1918–1967): Eine rechtshistorische Studie zur Geschichte der deutschen Fürsorge* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).
29. Stange, "Bundesministerium des Innern," in Bösch and Wirsching, eds., *Hüter der Ordnung*, 81.
30. Quoted in Michael Ruck, "Kollaboration—Loyalität—Resistenz: Administrative Eliten und NS-Regime am Beispiel der südwestdeutschen Innenverwaltung," in Thomas Schnabel and Angelika Hauser-Hauswirth, eds., *Formen des Widerstandes im Südwesten 1933–1945: Scheitern und Nachwirken* (Ulm: Süddeutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1994), 124–51, here 124.
31. See Andreas Wirsching, "Antikommunismus als Querschnittsphänomen politischer Kultur 1917–1945," in Stefan Kreuzberger and Dierk Hoffmann, eds., "*Geistige Gefahr*" und "*Immunisierung der Gesellschaft*": *Antikommunismus und politische Kultur in der frühen Bundesrepublik* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2014), 15–28.
32. Wolfgang Dierker, "Ich will keine Nullen, sondern Bullen': Hitlers Koalitionsverhandlungen mit der Bayerischen Volkspartei im März 1933," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 50, no. 1 (January 2002): 111–48, here 139.
33. Hans Ritter von Lex, *Eingangsplädoyer des Prozessvertreters der Bundesregierung Staatssekretär Ritter von Lex in dem Verfahren auf Feststellung der Verfassungswidrigkeit der KPD vor dem Bundesverfassungsgericht am 26. November 1954* (n.p., 1954).
34. See Rainer Hehemann, *Die "Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens" im Wilhelminischen Deutschland und in der Weimarer Republik, 1871–1933* (Frankfurt a. M.: Haag + Herchen, 1987).
35. See Palm, "Suche," in Bösch and Wirsching, eds., *Hüter der Ordnung*, 600–7.
36. Gerhard Frey (1933–2013) was a key representative of right-wing extremism in the FRG. His influence was based in particular on the *National-Zeitung*, which he published and which was one of the most important organs of the extreme right in Germany until it ceased publication at the end of 2019.
37. Richter, "Stillhalten," in Bösch and Wirsching, eds., *Hüter der Ordnung*, 592.
38. See Frank Bajohr and Johannes Hürter, "Auftragsforschung 'NS-Belastung': Bemerkungen zu einer Konjunktur," in Frank Bajohr et al., eds., *Mebr als eine Erzählung: Zeitgeschichtliche Perspektiven auf die Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016), 221–33.
39. Christina von Hodenberg, "Die Journalisten und der Aufbruch zur kritischen Öffentlichkeit," in Ulrich Herbert, ed., *Wandlungsprozesse in Westdeutschland: Belastung, Integration, Liberalisierung, 1945–1980* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002), 278–311, here 297.

40. See Carmen Leicht-Scholten, *Das Recht auf Gleichberechtigung im Grundgesetz: Die Entscheidungen des Bundesverfassungsgerichts von 1949 bis heute* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2000).

41. See Till van Rahden, “Wie Vati die Demokratie lernte: Religion, Familie und die Frage der Autorität in der frühen Bundesrepublik,” in Daniel Fulda et al., eds., *Demokratie im Schatten der Gewalt: Geschichten des Privaten im deutschen Nachkrieg* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010), 122–51.

About the Contributions to this Yearbook

The articles by Mary Fulbrook, Gerald Steinacher and Andreas Wirsching were written specifically for this volume and have not appeared previously.

Hans-Henning Kortüm's article was published originally as "Gut durch die Zeiten gekommen': Otto Brunner und der Nationalsozialismus," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 66, no. 1 (January 2018): 117–60.

Margit Reiter's article was published originally as "Anton Reinthaller und die Anfänge der Freiheitlichen Partei Österreichs: Der politische Werdegang eines Nationalsozialisten und die 'Ehemaligen' in der Zweiten Republik," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 66, no. 4 (October 2018): 539–75.

Axel Schildt's article was published originally as "Im Visier: Die NS-Vergangenheit westdeutscher Intellektueller: Die Enthüllungskampagne von Kurt Ziesel in der Ära Adenauer," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 64, no. 1 (January 2016): 37–68.

Thomas Schlemmer's article was first published originally as "Grenzen der Integration: Die CSU und der Umgang mit der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit—der Fall Dr. Max Frauendorfer," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 48, no. 4 (October 2000): 675–742.

A shortened version was published as "Löcher im Mantel des Vergessens: Die gebrochene Karriere des Dr. Max Frauendorfer zwischen NSDAP und CSU," in Stefanie Hajak and Jürgen Zarusky, eds., *München und der Nationalsozialismus: Menschen, Orte, Strukturen* (Berlin: Metropol, 2008), 335–67.

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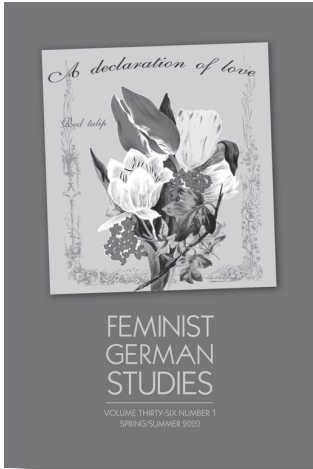
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