An Austrian Identity Crisis: Conservative Thought, Political Posters, and Questions of National Identity during the First Republic.

Meyer Weinshel

Macalester College, meyer.weinshel@gmail.com

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Meyer Jacob Weinshel

Adviser: Dr. Rachael Huener

German and Russian Studies Department
This project is dedicated to my academic adviser, Linda Schulte Sasse, without whose guidance I would not have become the Germanist that I am today, and to Rachael Huener, my honors adviser, without whose counsel this project would have fallen significantly short. I thank both of them for instilling in me a sense of belonging, purpose, and a high level of scholarship with regard to both my academic as well as life interests.
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Abstract

Meyer Weinshel

An Austrian Identity Crisis: Conservative Thought, Political Posters, and Questions of National Identity during the First Republic.

The political writings of Karl Lueger and Georg Ritter von Schönerer, the founders of the Austrian Christian Social and German National Parties, shaped the right-wing political discourse regarding national identity after the Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich in 1867. As Habsburg hegemony in Central Europe crumbled after the First World War, this conservative political discourse concerning Austrian identity was resurrected in the political posters of the Austrian First Republic. Through an examination of Christian Social and German National constructions of national identity in both pre- and post- World War I Austria, this paper seeks to determine the role that conservative constructions of Austrian national identity played in the struggle to form a collective idea of “Austrianness” during the interwar period.

Adviser: Dr. Rachael Huener
German & Russian Studies Department
Introduction

Spanning the entirety of the interwar period, Austria was a country in the shadow of an imperial past and threatened by an uncertain future. The Austrian First Republic was a battleground for the right wing Christian Social and German National Parties, as they attempted to unite against socialist forces and simultaneously further their own politics, politics that ultimately differed greatly from one another. In a country that was not able to fulfill the right to self-determination after the First World War, where living conditions were generally poor, and a slowed economy weakened the country, these two conservative parties in their political discourse employed fiery rhetoric that centered on their party values and Austria’s identity crisis in building a modern, post-war nation state out of the ruins of World War I. These two political camps engulfed the First Austrian Republic in their struggle to ideologically align the public with their particular view of Austrian national identity by employing the social turmoil, class conflicts, religious symbolism, and anti-Semitism that was prevalent at the time in their discourse. By fueling this ever-present political struggle, a never-ending battle took place that ultimately brought the First Republic to an end, first with Austrofascism under the Christian Socials, then in 1938 with a pan-German “solution”: the Anschluss. In a general sense, the First Austrian Republic is an interesting case study of nation building as a society had to invent a version of itself to fit an externally imposed national mold, but the First Republic also demonstrates how right-wing political discourse framed the national question for Austria.

The political discourse of the First Republic had its roots in Austrian nationalism under Emperor Franz Josef in the decades preceding World War I. Karl Lueger, the mayor of fin-de-siècle Vienna and founder of the Christian Social Party, and Georg Ritter von
Schönerer, the founder of the Pan-German movement in Austria-Hungary after the 1867 Ausgleich, had a profound influence on the ideological and rhetorical paths of their respective parties long after their deaths, as their political camps attempted to retain right-wing superiority in the face of socialism after the turn of the century. As this struggle against socialism became a greater threat to conservative politics after Habsburg decline, Lueger and Schönerer’s doctrines remained relevant and powerful reminders of nationalism even though Austria’s emerged as a more ethnically homogeneous republic in the aftermath of the First World War. An Analysis of Lueger’s and Schönerer’s writings in the era before the First Republic give us a blueprint while the political posters of the interwar period provide the political propaganda that shows the continuities and changes for this Austrian national identity.

This is not to say, however, that these continuities and changes only related to party doctrine; given the new universal suffrage these parties sought to appeal to a much broader audience for an independent Austria. The Christian Socials and German Nationals understood that given the new democracy, and the role that a much broader public played in political elections, they needed to produce a more widespread political propaganda related to “Austrianness”. During the years of the First Republic, the German Nationals and Christian Socials actively employed the political posters as sites of constructing Austrian national identity. An analysis of these posters offers great insight into the political discourse of the respective parties during this era. From a cultural perspective, these political posters of these parties in the First Republic represent their target audiences, political goals, and ideologies in the interwar period as they particularly pertain to the construction of Austrian national identity. In light of interwar history, these cultural objects enable a deeper understanding of
the Austrian national question as a new republic was declared, as extremism and militarism became dominant forces in regional and national politics, and finally when fascism took hold both within Austria and elsewhere.

By looking at Lueger’s and Schönerer’s differing constructs of national identity in their speeches and writings, and the posters of their respective parties during the interwar years, I seek to determine how the Christian Social and German National fronts constructed Austrianness during the First Republic, and how these constructs coincided with changes in conservative Austrian identity as the national question continued to be redefined until the waning days of the Republic. By means of an historically contextualized critical analysis of Lueger’s and Schönerer’s language as well as the language and iconography of Christian Social and German National posters of the First Republic, I want to enrich our understanding of the construction of Austrian national identity during the interwar period.

**A Brief Historiography**

Karl Lueger remains widely discussed today due to his influence on Austrian politics, specifically his influence on conservative politics in central Europe. A notable Lueger scholar is Richard S. Geehr, who translated many of Lueger’s speeches into English in the 1970s and wrote many volumes on Lueger’s political accomplishments, personal life, and, like other scholars, his notably infamous influence on Hitler. Indeed many scholarly writings have been confined to determining direct links to Hitler that stem from Lueger’s rhetorical skills and use of anti-Semitism (Brigitte Hamann and Georg V. Strong). Other historians emphasize Lueger’s personality; he was charismatic, bold, and well liked by his party and followers, someone who embodied public notoriety and prestige, and one who brought a modernizing but conservative era to Vienna at the turn of the century through Christian
Social ideology (Hellmut Andics, Johannes Hawlik, and John W. Boyer). By engaging Lueger’s political rhetoric more closely rather than framing his ideology as proto-fascist or constructing a cult of personality, we can determine how Lueger casted a lasting influence on Christian Social politics well into the interwar period in Austria; more importantly, why Christian Social nationalism became synonymous with Austrian sovereignty.

Scholarly writing on pan-Germanism in Austria takes many forms, but in referring to Georg Ritter von Schönerer, little research has focused on his contributions as an Austrian to pan-German discourse. Works published at the turn of the century as well as during the Second World War survive as examples of propagandistic and ideological volumes written by Schönerer’s followers and admirers (F.F. Masaidek in 1898 and Viktor Bibl in 1942). Andrew Whiteside’s 1974 publication The Socialism of Fools: Georg Ritter von Schönerer and Austrian Pan-Germanism, was the first to work critically and examine Schönerer’s influence on Austrian Pan-Germanism and how within the isolated ethnically German population of Austria, his party became the most virulent and extreme pan-German nationalists after the founding of the German Empire in 1871. Since Whiteside’s publication, other historians have similarly argued that Austrian Pan-Germanism cannot be properly engaged without closely studying Georg Ritter von Schönerer, who developed the theoretical ideas of a Großdeutschland into a widespread and influential movement that inspired fascist movements among German-speaking peoples (Viktor Bibl, F.L. Carsten, and Georg V Strong). Although historians have shown how Schönerer left his mark on Hitler and großdeutsche Politik, there has been little investigation into the actual role of his German National party during the interwar period as a separate nationalist movement prior to the rise of Nazism. Although Schönerer’s pan-German goals remained unfulfilled prior to 1938,
Schönerer’s doctrine remained pertinent but has remained relatively obscure in comparison to interwar Christian Social and socialist politics.

Cultural historians past and present have viewed interwar Austria as an important tool in understanding this turbulent time period, focusing on interwar Austria through a cultural rather than political lens (F.L. Carsten, Manfred Jochum, Deborah Holmes and Lisa Silverman). It is in this cultural light that the Austrian First Republic demonstrates both experimentation in the arts and tradition in public life that became problematic for the republic as time passed. Most cultural historians have yet to investigate the importance of political propaganda, particularly political posters, in order to shed light on the social and political issues of the time that not only hindered democratic processes but also what they conveyed to the populace about patriotic, nationalistic, and ultimately state-sponsored discourse. There are two exceptions to this disinclination of cultural historians to examine posters; there have been several exhibitions administered by German and Austrian museums that demonstrate the importance of visual media during the twenties and thirties. In 1999, the *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* and the *Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek*, as well the *Museum for Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg* formed a collaboration to promote the exhibition, *Verführungen: Plakate aus Österreich und Deutschland von 1914 bis 1945*. Another notable exhibit in 2010 by the Vienna museums, *Kampf um die Stadt: Politik, Kunst und Alltag um 1930*, also used political posters to convey the rise of extremism in conservative politics. Apart from these public exhibitions, however, the coverage of political posters in recent times by academic scholars has remained scarce, with the exception of the historian Bernhard Denscher. Starting in 1984, Denscher oversaw several temporary exhibits for the *Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek* such as *Bürgerkrieg*
"der Propaganda" and "Wahljahr 1919" in 1984 and 1989 respectively to show the use of political posters and their propagandistic role in polarizing the public during the aftermath of the First World War and the Austrian Civil War. Denscher’s other works, "Österreichische Plakatkunst: 1898 -1938" and "Tagebuch der Strasse," discuss the use of political posters with the increase in consumerism and political discourse that occurred in the early twentieth century. Although Denscher is the authority on Austrian political posters, his research is focused solely on the cultural design and iconography, not the political ramifications of their usage pertaining to national identity. If we simultaneously engage both the cultural and political by showing commonalities, these posters can synthesize interwar elections and the Christian Social and German National Parties creation of a national identity by Lueger and Schönerer. A critical analysis of German National and Christian Social Posters over the course of the First Republic shows continuities in the constructions even as they take different forms with contemporary events.
Karl Lueger and Georg Ritter von Schönerer and Constructions of an Austrian National Identity

Karl Lueger: The Mayor of an Imperial Capital in a Catholic Reich

The founding of the Christian Social Party by Karl Lueger in 1893 resulted in a new age for bourgeois conservatives in Austria-Hungary. The founding of the Christian Social Party also coincided with anti-liberal, Catholic, and monarchist leanings in the age of declining Habsburg dominance and a liberalization of Austrian society. Not only was Lueger’s new political camp popular among Catholics and the anti-liberal elite, but it also bridged the gap between the Austrian nobility and both the wealthy Bürgerstand, who were known for their monarchist and religiously motivated policies, and the working class, that was becoming ever more influential in regional and national politics. In the final decades of Austria-Hungary, the Christian Social Party grew from a small faction based in the capital city of Vienna, to the largest party in the Austrian portion of the dual monarchy. Due to Lueger’s conservative leadership during an age of modernity and nationalist strife in the Vielvölkerstaat, his “inward looking” politics focusing on Austrian vitality set a precedent for the Christian Social image grounded in Austrian national identity. By promoting traditional values based on Catholic teaching and the strength of imperial Austrian governance, Lueger was ultimately responsible for forging a path for Vienna that would last until the end of World War I, and for Austrian Germans struggling to maintain their place in a dying empire; Lueger’s politics remained influential after the war with those who urged Austrian sovereignty and vitality.
The Writings of Karl Lueger: Politics of the Vielvölkerstaat, Tradition, and Austrian exclusivity

Although many of Lueger’s public speeches only survive in drafts and fragments, his political rhetoric and personal opinions are still well preserved. These writings show how his political ideology and policy was clearly grounded in his role as mayor in the capital city of Vienna, and organized around his anti-liberal and anti-Semitic views, which gained him support among the Viennese. Lueger was a staunchly conservative mayor who was steadfast in his beliefs regarding Austrian patriotism, anti-liberalism, and anti-Semitism; one of his most famous remarks, “If you cut me, you’ll find black and yellow,” demonstrates his loyalty to the imperial legacy of Austria.¹ As such an influential figure in the public eye in the final decades of Austria-Hungary, through his successful, powerful, and influential rule, Lueger established Christian Social hegemony in Austria through his constructs of historical and national exclusivity.

The Vielvölkerstaat

Although he employed exclusive ideologies like anti-Semitism, Lueger’s Christian Social conservative vision for Austrian identity called for unity in the midst of political uncertainty at the time of his rule among all ethnic groups within the empire. In a speech draft written for the parliamentary elections in 1885, he addresses the political disunity at a time of great unrest in Austria-Hungary. In this early speech, we can see the outline of his agenda and the values that he believes are a part of his administrative rule – namely

constitutionalism and political unity among differing ideologies. At the beginning of his speech he writes:

“The fatherland Austria, which is riven with party factions that are provincial, national, and confessional, etc., parties, some of which conceal their actual goals behind different slogans that are often changed according to the view of the electorate in one or another electoral district. If an impartial observer were to view squabbles of all these groups, if he were to see and hear how one talks of Deutschtum, the other only of the Crown of Bohemia, the third only of Galicia, then he would have to believe that he was in the Tower of Babel, and that the collapse of the empire was imminent, because the peoples don’t understand one another.”

Lueger realized that his party was at the center of this conflict for being situated in the imperial capital. The reference to the Tower of Babel underscores Lueger’s concern about different social classes, feuding ethnicities and religious denominations, and above all political strife resulting from these conflicts, bringing the empire down. Lueger looks at Deutschtum or “Germanness” as being just one of the many regional and cultural constructs in Austria-Hungary, but he urges political unity and cooperation by rejecting splinter groups only focusing on a piece of the national puzzle. This political unity is what Karl Lueger strived for as mayor of Vienna; as a Christian Social under the emperor, remaining loyal to the Habsburg crown and not ethnic nationalism. He maintains in this speech that the construction of Austrian nationalism lies with cooperation and not separation. By rejecting revolutionary forms of nationalism taking shape at the time within Habsburg lands, he uses the many ethnicities of the Vielvölkerstaat, most notably Deutschtum, to construct a cooperative Austrian identity.

Although Lueger, a patriotic monarchist and staunch Catholic, considered Austrian Deutschtum as ethnically indistinguishable to their German neighbors to the north, he emphasizes in his writings the Austrian Germans’ role in a nation separate from Germany; he

\[2 \text{Ibid, 253.}\]
clarifies that Austrian Germans are not politically tied to the German Empire, but rather, to the other ethnic groups within Austria-Hungary. Lueger’s construction of Austrian identity is an internal one, one which looks inward, rather than outward toward the Prussian Kaiserreich. In the same speech Lueger goes on to state about Austrianness:

“The German doesn’t hate the Czech, the Czech doesn’t hate the German, one confession lives peacefully with another, and all, whatever language they speak, to whatever faith they belong, are united in the thought that their elected representatives will finally provide them with the fruits of honest labor instead of the chaff of political and national strife, that they finally think about how we can all live peacefully with one another and not always fight about why we should not live with one another…with these thoughts in mind the voters of Vienna…elected the democrats [Christian Socials], although they were depicted as traitors to Deutschtum. They elected them because they knew that they did not want the rule of individual classes, but rather that of the people; they elected them because they hope they will have welfare of the whole fatherland in mind; they elected them because they knew that they are good Germans as well as good Austrians.”

Lueger synthesizes ethnicity, language, religion, political cooperation, party politics, and Austrian patriotism into one important notion of the “whole fatherland.” It is striking that in this speech, Lueger emphasizes that Christian Social politicians are “good Germans as well as good Austrians”, something he also sees in their constituents. The party vision corresponds to the Vielvölkerstaat; German Austrian politicians and voters as well as the (German-speaking) Christian Social Party considered themselves German as an ethnic makeup of the Habsburg Empire in a national sense. This understanding of the role of German Austrians was certainly not universally accepted across the broad range of imperial subjects that made up the demographic diversity of Austria-Hungary, but Lueger demonstrates that his party above all others is willing to look beyond differences to achieve political effectiveness and cooperation without looking elsewhere to other nations (implicitly Germany). Lueger’s unquestionably patriotic rhetoric on Austro-Hungarian patriotism goes

\[Ibid, 254.\]
without question in his sarcastic depiction of ethnic nationalism. At the conclusion of his speech:

“Then all the ridiculous demonstrations with black-white-red flags, with corn flowers⁴ and whatever you call it will disappear; no Czech will look toward Moscow, no Pole will think about his poor divided nation, no Slovene will think of the creation of a South Slav empire, and just as every Swiss is proud of his fatherland, whether he is German, French, or Italian, so will everyone, whether German or Slav, join us in the toast: Long Live Our Fatherland Austria!⁵

The conclusion of his speech sarcastically describes how the strong patriotic bond to Austria should be a comparison to other lands that have multiple ethnicities. On this last note, he doesn’t cite, as a positive example, the German Empire that at the time contained Poles in Posen and Frenchmen in Alsace-Lorraine, but Switzerland. Switzerland’s make-up is cited as a strong example as to how multiple ethnicities can come together under one banner, believing in similar qualities such as democracy, alpine identity, and historical cohesiveness. Lueger’s goals for something similar to Swiss Confederation in Austria was far-fetched and utopian, considering that other ethnic groups (except Hungarians, arguably) never had any political power until they formed their own nation states after World War I. Although this conclusion to his speech is undoubtedly a romanticized view of the national question in Austria at the time, Austria as its own national entity uniting every ethnicity stood at the center of Lueger’s Christian Social construction of Austrian national identity. It is a nationalism that as Lueger says doesn’t look to Moscow – that is, look to the German Empire, or upon ethnicities divided by national boundaries, but on Austria as the answer.

The German Lied as Artistic and Political Tradition

⁴ Symbols of the German National movement
⁵ Geehr, “I Decide who is a Jew!” The Papers of Karl Lueger, 254.
At the time of renowned artistic movements emerging in Austria-Hungary, Lueger’s personal writings show that Christian Social politics linked art based on German, bourgeois traditions to views on national identity. His writings illustrate that modernism was not at the center of Christian Social politics, nor did it coincide with Christian Social party goals during his mayoral rule.\(^6\) Most of these writings suggest that Lueger had a political motive in promoting art to “remedy cultural disunity”.\(^7\) The reason that Lueger’s writings on artistic expression are important, especially in relation to his own tastes in art, is that they show how the Christian Socialists’ appropriate forms of expression aligned with their party doctrine. Lueger constructed a national identity with traditional artistic forms that rejected the provocation of movements such as the Secession. By rejecting the contemporary and modern, Lueger places his party within the confines of cultural nostalgia that reject other modernizing movements such as socialism.

As an example of his (selective) promotion of German art to promote national identity, Lueger supported German singing groups as a proper mode of expression for the nation; in a speech given in Vienna in 1885 commemorating the founding of a musical Verein, Lueger’s views on art and nationalism are clearly apparent when talking about this activity.

“It is a venerable custom to pause and reflect from time to time in one’s life. On such solemn occasions, we inwardly review the past and remember all those we have met, recall the joys we have experienced, the pains we have suffered, and shed a tear for our departed loved ones. We thereby also look to the future, and, uplifted by the remembrance of things past, purified by trials we have endured and enriched by experiences along the way, we continue toward our goals…Today we are celebrating such a day…And so today, we can rightfully say: it was a happy inspiration to create this Verein and to dedicate it to the purpose that it has never lost sight of: the

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\(^7\) *Ibid*, 296.
Lieder have connotations to Biedermeier, where art was privately promoted, when Lieder were sung in the home. This art form was romantic, something traditional that did not grapple with modern tastes nor did it need to; it was an art form of a simpler, more pastoral age. Not only for Lueger is the German Lied a symbol for German culture, but he implies that this link between history and contemporary times is not the art of the present but of the past. Lueger in this speech wants to remember the past, and link this tradition to the future generations. Knowing that nationalist sentiments are pouring out throughout the entire empire, stressing the preservation of art and performance coinciding with national, German-Austrian identity is noteworthy, for politics is not confined to simple political discourse – it is also embodied in cultural institutions. Lueger addresses this issue of modernity further by promoting music and connecting it to motherhood.

“Singing gives expression to the love of mother for her child and the child for her mother; the love of a young man for a young woman; pain and sorrow; enthusiasm and love for the fatherland and for the nation are expressed in song; song accompanies the warrior in battle, greets the singer, and comforts those who have suffered misfortune. The richer the feelings of a people, the richer the treasury of songs that give it expression, the more immediate and deeper is the effect that the Lied produces in the people. The infinite richness that the German people, and especially the German-Austrians, manifest in this cultural area attests the depth of feeling that permeates the soul of our people…I greet the women who are here today; their presence attests their sincere interest in the efforts of our youth and the respect of our men, and that they are always the first ones to advance the good and the noble.”

He mentions all points of life in this speech – childrearing, familial love and also love between a man and a woman. Lueger sees this in the deeply sentimental Lied; here lies Lueger’s reasoning for this preferred artistic expression by Austrian-Germans. In a time of newly emerging art forms, and in Vienna of all places, Lueger insists on promoting this

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8 Ibid, 314.
9 Ibid, 315.
typically German art form by asserting Christian Social support for cultural events such as the opening of a Verein and politicizing traditional art in advocating cultural traditions.

**Austrian Exclusivity: Christian Social Anti-Semitism**

National unity and traditional values were simply two parts of Christian Social doctrine that Lueger advocated, and although it wasn’t confined to the idea of Christian Social Austrian identity, anti-Semitism was employed by the party to coincide with the form of anti-Semitism widespread among the Viennese elite. Lueger presented anti-Semitism in different forms, mostly due to the different types of audiences he addressed throughout his political career. Lueger’s use of anti-Semitism is seen by many historians as being deeply connected to the Holocaust and extermination of Austria’s Jews, but it should be confined to the political environment of his time based on a society that often used anti-Semitism as a tool for alienation.\(^\text{10}\) On a political level, he was also appealing to certain social classes, namely the working class through anti-Semitism that embraced his discrimination; it was not meant to be racially motivated or constructed along the lines of ethnic nationalism. It is nevertheless important to show that Christian Social politics used anti-Semitism to show a supposed hindrance to Austrian national identity.

Expressing Christian Social anti-Semitism in a speech given in Moravia in 1891, Lueger’s rhetoric against the Jewish population is clear and concrete. He begins by saying, “I want briefly to discuss two matters: not to set citizen against citizen, [and second] ‘Press’ “.\(^\text{11}\) On the first matter, he reiterates as in the speech discussed earlier that he doesn’t want to “incite”, but rather to “reconcile” differences, and he promotes “a harmonious formation of

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\(^{10}\) *Ibid*, 320.

\(^{11}\) *Ibid*, 325.
different interest groups against the stratification of human society by professions and occupations.”\textsuperscript{12} But his attack on the press refers to his constant struggle against liberal newspapers that he calls “the Jewish Press” which affirms what cannot be reconciled in the eyes of the Christian Socials.

“Press: here, too, as always in the liberal press, abuses, invectives and the most insolent lies. After 15 years of fighting with the liberal press, I have developed a rather thick skin, thank goodness. Therefore I shall limit my comments and simply say that the liberal press, sometimes also classed Jewish liberal, or Jewish Press, is the most impudent press on the earth…In Vienna, only fools and those on the same moral level support it; all decent and intelligent people reject it with disdain…[Jewish press against clergy and religion, therefore], we believe: the Jews have no right to become judges, political officials and officers, and must be pushed back.”\textsuperscript{13}

The characterization of the liberal press as a fabricating racket with ties to Judaism has many implications; it shows not only Lueger’s rejection of liberal thought, but also that liberalism in Austrian society is a foreign entity, as something outside the norm – like the Jews. In addition to the press, he also calls for a \textit{Berufsverbote} against Jews who wish to have administrative positions. He emphasizes his connection to cosmopolitan Vienna by stating that only the unintelligent and indecent demographics support such a press. His staunch Catholicism also employs anti-Semitism in later speeches, when he is campaigning for mayor of Vienna. He states, “[the goal of the Christian Social Party and its coalition partners] is liberation of the Christian People and states from the discreditable rule of the power that we Democrats call big business and the anti-Semites call Jewry.”\textsuperscript{14} This also shows us, however, that Lueger used anti-Semitism in very particular ways that managed to catch on with the populace. It is notable in his quotation that although Lueger employs an anti-Semitic stereotype familiar to and popular with the audience, he also is at pains to distance himself.

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid}, 325.
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid}, 328.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid}, 331.
Anti-Semitism was nearly universal among conservatives, but Lueger’s Christian Social form of Austrian national identity was not based on racial qualifications but rather on a provocatively ambivalent cultural exclusivity that remained part of Austrian society for some time.

In a similar speech using anti-Semitism, Lueger promotes this exclusivity by criticizing the journalism that has been written about him and the Christian Social political environment of Vienna at the time. More importantly however, Lueger also stresses in this speech that Jews are against the Christian Social’s answer to the national question, making Christian Social anti-Semitism indistinguishable from other conservative parties in this respect. He states:

“That is how it is with the ‘Presse’. In addition, it mostly belongs to Jews, and all events, therefore, are treated solely on the basis of whether they are useful or damaging to the Jew…It feigns love for Vienna, lauds the golden Viennese heart, the good nature of the Viennese, and their cheerfulness, but it is the liberal press that drove us Viennese out of the theaters, that made us suspicious and robbed us of our cheerfulness. It feigns love for the German nation; but not the true national sentiment, rather only agitation against other nations. Any attempt to solve the national question is cunningly defeated; anybody who views a Czech or Slav as a human being is branded a traitor and encouraged to keep fighting; all that just so the sharks among the people can complete their destruction undisturbed…The Viennese liberal press is the most corrupt and disgraceful press in the whole world…Religion and fatherland cry out for liberation, and the day will come when these cries will be heard by the proper authority. The day of liberation for languish will come and the day of vengeance for the disgrace tolerated and suffered.”

His attacks focus mainly on the press that doesn’t support him (he being one who views a Czech or a Slav as a human being), but his strong opposition to liberal newspapers brings out Catholic teachings (religion), party doctrine (relating to the national question), and anti-Semitism in a way that makes all of these topics connected. The most striking element of this excerpt is how Jewry simply doesn’t fit with Viennese society in Lueger’s hometown and the

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15 Ibid, 335.
capital of the empire. He also tries to convey that these liberal newspapers are not interested in this Vielvölkerstaat as discussed earlier, but instead advocate a narrow national pride that undermines the Austrian-Hungarian crown and Lueger’s multi-pillared construction of national identity. The rhetoric is bold and controversial, not only in its virulence, but how Lueger uses the liberal (Jewish) press as a scapegoat for the problems that are plaguing his political agenda – which is classic anti-Semitism. In connection to the Christian Social nationalism, this anti-Semitism instrumented by Lueger in this speech shows the selective nature and ambivalence that anti-Semitism played in the party. This anti-Semitism also shows that although it does not have to be defined racially it can instead be defined in societal terms as they appeal to social stereotypes and fears among the conservative parties.

**In the Shadow of an Empire: Lueger’s Legacy**

With Karl Lueger’s death in 1910, Christian Social hegemony in Vienna came to an end, and Habsburg rule shortly after. Lueger would not have been unable to establish his political party within Austria-Hungary without the tradition and stability that the imperial image brought with it. Lueger’s ideology promoted unity among his followers by demonstrating that national unity was possible under Franz Josef, and that conservatism, particularly among German Austrians, remained set in the past and not with the modernizing elements occurring at the time. Another central aspect to his ideology was anti-Semitism; as we have just seen, Christian Social anti-Semitism is clear, but particularly problematic and provocative is the selectiveness and rhetorical ambivalence form that it took. It was not about ethnic divisions as we saw in his earlier speech, or about traditional artistic expression – anti-Semitism was another way to reject the liberalizing age that was gripping the empire. Karl Lueger constructed an Austrian national identity that was based on national allegiance to the
idea of an Austria unobstructed by the disabling forces at work, namely ethnic nationalism what would later be coined self-determination. Lueger’s construct of a Christian Social national identity combated socialism and pan-Germanism prior to the collapse of Austria-Hungary, and was powerful enough to reemerge after the empire’s fracture as the major ideology that promoted Austrian patriotism during the interwar period.

**A Großdeutscher outside of Kleindeutschland: Georg Ritter von Schönerer and pan-German Nationalism**

Pan-Germanism had multiple origins in predominantly German regions throughout Europe. Yet in the more modern sense as it relates to Austrian history, pan-German nationalism called for an Austria that was free of Slavs, Jews, as well as the other “non-German” ethnic groups that made up Austria-Hungary and one that could merge with Germany. Georg Ritter von Schönerer, the founder of the modern German National movement in Austria, was an enthusiastic pan-Germanist, a virulent anti-Semite, and was also extremely influential in shaping the far-right political leanings that would later become German National Socialism. Schönerer’s understanding of national identity despite lack of personal popularity in Austria-Hungary, took hold in the early and again in the later years of the interwar period, when Austria was at its weakest politically, and when the country was facing plebiscites to merge with Germany. The party’s ideological differences compared to the Christian Socials made them a formidable foe to Austrian sovereignty in creating a new Austria after the fall of the Habsburgs. Schönerer’s vision for Austria offered an alternative to Lueger’s by constructing a national identity that excluded non-Germans, reinforced anti-Semitism, and ushered in the idea that a *Volksgemeinschaft* was at the center of Austrian identity.
The Road to Pan-German Nationalism in Austria after 1866

The German National Party had its origins in Pan-German nationalism, but after Austria lost the Austro-Prussian War in 1866 and was forced out of the German Confederation, Austria was also forced to come to terms with its own internal affairs regarding national identity not just among former Austrians, but among the other ethnic groups that made up the newly formed dual monarchy. This *Vielvölkerstaat* caused German National politics to become much more ideologically powerful in their cause to create a *Großdeutschland*, stressing ethnic tensions and a racial German identity. While the Christian Socials were more interested in maintaining a German-dominated, Habsburg and Catholic-run Empire, the German Nationals were focused on creating a new Austrian identity not through the formation of a state of their own, but rather in uniting themselves with the German Reich.

The ideological conflict between the Christian Socials and the German Nationals by the turn of the century rested mainly on religious issues due to Austria’s strong catholic identity; the German nationals advocated a strictly secular Austria. Under the monarchy of Emperor Franz Josef, Schönerer was actually a strong supporter and admirer of Otto von Bismarck and the *Kulturkampf*\(^{16}\), as he shared Bismarck’s views on Catholicism hurting national politics.\(^{17}\) One of Schönerer’s followers by the name of Franz Stein began the “Away from Rome” movement, which urged Austrians to reject Catholicism, making them more like their

\(^{16}\) The repressive programs against Catholics instituted by Bismarck in the 1870s that opposed the powerful role of the Catholic church in daily life and supported much of this power to be transferred to the German state.

(Protestant) German neighbors. This secularization called for by Schönerer did not go over well with either religious Catholics or Protestants. These ideas never caught on in the devoutly catholic country, but Schönerer gained a small but devoted following that supported secularization. During the interwar period, the German National camp rejected the newly founded nation and its Catholic and clerical politics, and based their concept of national identity off of Schönerer’s ideas of secularization along the lines of Bismarck’s administrative programs.

The concrete origins of the German National Party began in 1882, when the Linz Program, headed by several prominent Austrian political theorists including Schönerer, set forth the plan to Germanize Austria-Hungary. This was the first (and only) time where politicians across the entire political spectrum became involved and supported politically Germanizing Austria-Hungary, at least the Austrian portion of the empire. Ironically, Viktor Adler, who became the founder of the socialist party in Austria, along with a Jewish historian named Heinrich Friedjung, worked with Schönerer in creating an outline to accomplish their goals and create a German nation state out of the Austrian Reichsländer. The Linz Program was a watershed moment for Schönerer, who realized that his vision of a pan-German state was not simply a German state united by common language, but of racial standards. He would quickly become the most prominent supporter of a pan-Germany in Habsburg Austria organized around the racial category of the Volk.

What is important about Schönerer, and also his party, is that even with limited political power pan-Germanism and radical racialism offered by the German Nationals struck

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19 Ibid, 91.
a chord with many and had political resonance. His impact on the Nazi Party of Austria made Schönerer and his writings very influential. One of Schönerer’s most important legacies is his use of greetings, slogans, and political rhetoric that made its way into Nazi usage. Not only were more generic terms like *Anschluss* and “Greater Germany” used, but also the slogan *Durch Reinheit zur Freiheit*, the “Heil” greeting and even the term *Führer* to characterize the head of a German-National organization, as well as for Schönerer himself. Moreover, the German Nationals during the time of Schönerer called Austria what it would be later called under Hitler: the *Ostmark*. With these, Schönerer established many cultural and political phrases for Hitler’s fascism and fascist movements throughout Europe. Some of these parallels between Schönerer and the German Nationals on one side, and Hitler and the Nazi Party on the other are too striking to disagree with. Georg Ritter von Schönerer, who even lived to see the founding of the First Austrian Republic, believed that with the newly founded nation came the opportunity for Austria to finally merge with Germany through racial self-determination. Although not overly represented in parliament, pan-Germanism was a political movement that had many repercussions.

**Georg Ritter von Schönerer’s writings**

Though Schönerer’s writings are not as extensively preserved as Lueger’s for many reasons, the works that have been recorded show clearly Schönerer’s goals of creating a pan-German state as well as his anti-Semitism. For this reason, his anti-Semitism manifests itself in many of his publicized speeches, whether they concern cultural, political, social, or

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21 As stated in the historiography, contemporaries of Schönerer’s as well as later admirers in Nazi Germany preserved the works that emphasized his pan-German nationalism and racial politics.
economic issues. Schönerer’s ideology also shows how the German National front was influential in maintaining pan-Germanism after the Ausgleich between Austria and Hungary. They instrumented racially motivated politics and societal divisions through social reform and ideological barriers between Germans and non-Germans. Through these barriers, urging national unity with Germany, traditional values, and racial politics, the pan-German discourse transcended the historical changes occurring in Austria after the First World War just as it did after 1867.

The Volksgemeinschaft

The German National politics radically contrasted Christian Social ideology relating to Austrian allegiance. The national identity that Schönerer radically promoted aimed to sever the ties to Habsburg allegiance and to a stronger Volksgemeinschaft. Schönerer never ceases to emphasize that the Germans in Austria are also a part of a greater Deutschum, not its role in a Vielvölkerstaat; he creates national unity under Germany by stressing the strength and vitality of German culture. Schönerer’s efforts to assimilate the “Deutsche in Österreich” under one common entity with their northerly German neighbors are expressed in his speech in the Sofiensaal zu Wien in February 1885 with language of strong emotional connotations to “Germanness”.

“Vor allem aber muss ich namens der Deutschnationalen es betonen, dass wir stets mit Stolz dessen eingedenk sind, Glieder eines großen Volkes zu sein, und dass wir als solche die heilige Pflicht in uns fühlen, für die Wohlfahrt und Macht, für die Sicherung der nationalen Eigenart und für den Schutz des nationalen Lebens des deutschen Stammes [in Österreich] jederzeit und unentwegt einzustehen. Wir Deutsche [in Österreich] sind

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22 After Austria lost the Austro-Prussian War, the Austrian Empire needed to heed the demands for political reform and the nationalist tensions among the ethnically Hungarian population, and Franz Josef attempted to solve these conflicts by creating a dual monarchy with Hungary.
gewiß verpflichtet...daß die deutschen Brüder im Reiche für unsere Nation gegen den Feind im Westen wiederholt gekämpft und geblutet haben. Gewiß wird man aber auch im Reiche, wir hoffen es, sich stets dieses unseres verantwortungsvollen Postens erinnern und die schwierige Stellung begreifen, die wir in der Ostmark einnehmen. Übrigens hegen wir die Überzeugung, dass die Mutter Germania eine an die Deutschen in Österreich herantretende Bedrängnis gewiß beachten werde, denn zu den Früchten des unsterblichen Erntetages, der zu Sedan statt hatte, kann es doch nimmermehr gehören, der acht Millionen deutscher Stammesbrüder im Falle etwaiger Drangsale zu vergessen. Wir werden aber auch insbesondere angesichts des ungestümen Vordringens des Slaventums auf altem deutschen Sprachboden es nie vergessen, dass die deutschen Länder Österreichs lange Zeit einen Bestandtheil Deutschlands gebildet haben, und betrachten wir es daher als unsere nationale Pflicht, die bestehende Bundesgenossenschaft zwischen Deutschland und Österreich staatsrechtlich und auch durch wirtschaftliche Gesetze dauernd zu befestigen, damit der bestehende Bund organisch fest zusammenwachse.“

Unlike Lueger, who expressed Austrian Germans having a distinct role under Kaiser Franz Josef and Catholic Austria, Schönerer expresses and promotes a strong union with the Germans now under the Prussian king and German emperor. The symbolic reference to Mutter Germania is at the core of Schönerer’s doctrine along with the deutscher Stamm in Austria. His reference to the Battle of Sedan, where the Prussian army and its allies defeated the French and formed the German Empire, emphasizes the goal of the German Nationals after Austria’s expulsion from the German Confederation, namely to unite Austrian Germans under Prussian military and political strength. “Für die Sicherung der nationalen Eigenart und für den Schutz des nationalen Lebens des deutschen Stammes in Österreich” is typical of the pan-German language that Schönerer implemented to create commonalities between all German peoples. His use of the term Ostmark, referencing the German Austrians situated in (roughly) the medieval realm of modern Austria, indicates not only Austria’s place as a mere portion of a pan-German nation in relation to Prussian dominated Germany, but also how the

23 Schönerer, Georg. Fünf Reden von Georg Ritter von Schönerer (Horn, Ferdinand Berger, 1898), 44.

24 After Hitler annexed Austria in 1938, Ostmark was the name given to the former Austrian Republic, and thereafter all uses of the word “Austria” were outlawed.
Germans in Austria are strategically important to the German nation-state. This reiterates Schönerer’s conception of not only Austria but also all of Deutschum as a cultural, linguistic, and militaristic power in Central Europe. According to this model it is the national duty of Germans to create a new federation of German peoples to create a solid German state. This German National model of Austrian German identity had an influential role in interwar politics; national unity did not come from allegiance to the former Habsburg monarchy, nor religious and regional identity, but through German blood and trans-national politics.

In addition to stressing that Austrians are Kulturdeutsche in the historical and cultural sense, Schönerer in this same speech also values the political union of all Germans, and the national identity that was created (or at least attempted) by the “Kaiser der Deutschen und sein großer Kanzler”. While comparing the social programs and reforms of the German Kaiserreich to Austria in this same speech, Schönerer hoped that Austria followed this path not only for political reasons, but for “Christian” reasons as well. Schönerer stresses a set of Christian values in his political ideology, but not in the clerical way that Lueger does. In May of 1887, Georg von Schönerer stood before the Parliament, lobbying for a law prohibiting the emigration and settlement of Jews in Cisleithania from eastern regions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire because they would contaminate Christian German culture. Vienna at the time was experiencing a sharp increase in the Jewish population from Eastern Europe that was unlike the assimilated Jewish community in Vienna, provoking a strong anti-Semitic

response from Schönerer.\textsuperscript{27} Traditional and Christian values according to Schönerer were deeply connected to anti-Semitism. In this same speech as above it is stated:

“...auf dem Wege zu diesem gerechten Ziele das in unserem Vaterlande bereits übermächtig werdende Judenthum als wesentliches Hindernis zu betrachten ist...dass die Lebensanschauungen und Gebräuche des uns fremden Volkes, der Juden, der christlichen Kultur und arischen Abstammung, sowohl der deutschen Nation, als auch anderen Nationalitäten in [Österreich] feindlich gegenüberstehen...dass durch die stetige Vermehrung jüdischen Elementes die [Monopolisierung] wichtiger Geschäftswege durch Juden fortwähren zunimmt, und dass besonders auch die den Händen der Juden befindliche Presse in einer die öffentliche Ordnung gefährdenden Weise die Corruption fördert...dass es nach unserer Meinung nur eine Frage kurzer Zeit sein kann, bis die im Inlande befindlichen Juden unter eine besondere Gesetzgebung gestellt sein werden.”\textsuperscript{28}

Schönerer speaks on behalf of the German people to observe that Judaism impedes on the Christian and Aryan culture. The German Nationals explicitly reference the increasing significance of the Jewish population as a threat to the German National party and the \textit{arische Abstammung}. In Schönerer’s emphasis on Jewish influence corrupting German society, he also publicly clarifies the anti-Semitism in his party with their fear of Jewish corruption of the press and businesses. Most importantly, to prevent this decay, he recommends legal action to curb the Jewish influence at the time. By constructing a national identity that excluded Jews while promoting the secularized “Christian and Aryan” traditions, he instituted a racial standard for the national question on the far right; the national question, regarding the Germans in Austria, supported cooperation with the German Empire as well as their own fulfillment in joining a pan-German state.

\textbf{German National Anti-Semitism}

\textsuperscript{27} Beller, \textit{A Concise History of Austria} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 155.
When looking at how anti-Semitic Schönerer became in his quest to purify German culture, he also took anti-Semitism to a much further point than Lueger did; Anti-Semitism for Schönerer is the linchpin to the entire German National platform, as it defines not only the character of Austria but every individual Austrian. In another Schönerer speech in 1892, Schönerer speaks of “soziale Reform…in [diesen] ernsten Zeiten und große Aufgaben harren ihrer Lösung.”29 The solution to große Aufgaben is anti-Semitism. He goes on to say that “die nationale Frage und die soziale Frage gehen heutzutage engverbunden…in der sozialen Frage aber spielt die Judenfrage die Hauptrolle.” It isn’t that the Jewish question is a factor in this relationship between the national and social question30; the Jewish question is the main concern. Schönerer reiterates this central point of his ideology that the Germans’ enemy is the Jew, and that every German needs to “stand by their own” and stay on the German side for the sake of the social question.31 He targets both the Jewish press and the Social Democrats as being of another Weltanschauung apart from Germans, and demonstrates the difference even further by using a horrific biological and racist analogy.


29 Ibid, 65.
30 Schönerer took the social question, which mainly concerned solving class conflicts in a broader sense, by changing it from class oppositions and replacing it with national identity.
32 Ibid, 67.
These distinguishable attributes that Schönerer uses to describe the differences between Jews and Germans are constructed as biological differences that cannot be changed any more than the German superiority in society; according to his ideology it is simply a fact of nature. The difference between the *Schäferhund* and the *Wolf* is typical of anti-Semitic propaganda in its characteristic distinction between the German and the other and its assertion that Jews cannot be trusted. In order to reiterate Schönerer’s idea that Germans need to unite to solve the social (Jewish question), he reaffirms what the Germans *grundsätzliche* need to remember when it comes to the national question also being the social question:


“Jedem das Seine” was a common slogan in the Third Reich; this shows in a similar light the German National Party’s extreme and idealized view of nation building, namely that there is a collective national identity based on ethnic means, not societal means. A nation without minorities, a nation without Jews, a nation with only Germans, one that would only be attainable by racial exclusion and not based on geographical borders is at the forefront of Schönerer’s ideology. These ideas of separation through racial standards and the uniting between all Germans to reject “Judenliberalismus” remained as long as the German people were separated politically, racially, or nationally according to Schönerer.

**Conclusions on Schönerer’s Nationalism**

33 *Ibid*, 68.
What conclusions can be made about Schönerer and his writings in relation to Austria after World War I? Does his ideology take on any new meaning if we consider these speeches were made while Austria was a Vielvölkerstaat versus a republic that was mostly German speaking? In this same 1892 speech just quoted, Schönerer defines “national”.

‘Was heißt also national sein in unserem Sinne? National sein in unserem Sinne heißt: sein eigen Stammesvolk zu lieben über alles in der Welt! Und National sein heißt: nur für jene Gleichberechtigung eintreten, die der eigenen, der deutschen Nation seinen Schaden zu bringen vermag…”

The new configuration of Austria after World War I as an ethnically German nation state did not solve the national problem as Schönerer had hoped, but Schönerer’s pan-Germanism and anti-Semitism still resonated strongly during the interwar period. After World War I, with Austria’s reconfiguration as a republic every Austrian Jew, Protestant, or Catholic was equal under the new system of government; during the time of the Republic there was no such thing as a “purely German nation” in Schönerer’s terms. Schönerer’s pan-national and racial politics remained yet to be realized (but still desirable to some) in Austria. In 1892, Schönerer wrote that, “Der Sieg der ehrlichen nationalen Arbeit muss das Endziel unserer Bestrebungen sein.” For many in the First Republic, this “nationale Arbeit” continued.

Did Schönerer’s view on nationalism change with the fall of the monarchy, even with the homogeneity of Austria’s postwar population? Evidently not, for it was purely a model of the nation based on racial and societal differences of Germans against others who were excluded from the Aryan population. Schönerer’s political power never matched Lueger’s, but he was influential in instituting many reforms in his native Waldviertel, and

35 Ibid, 68.
36 Ibid, 69.
37 Schönerer also spoke out publicly in favor of reform for German farmers and their role in the economy as well for their role (in his view) for upholding German societal values.
orchestrating strong support for pan-Germanism that lasted until the Anschluss. Lueger demonstrated that Austrian Germans were able to support a transnational political figure such as Bismarck, who fought against Catholicism and religious control; the idea of a political leader uniting all German peoples, would hauntingly resonate within Austria during the interwar period. The German Nationals under Schönerer’s leadership established themselves as the leading ideological force in the struggle for an Austrian union with Germany, and in light of the course that Austrian history took, he remains an important political figure for his pan-German and anti-Semitic views on German society prior to the rise of German fascism. In addition, he along with Lueger provided the foundation for German National and Christian Social constructs of national identity that developed after World War I.

**Christian Social and German National Posters – Political Turmoil and Contested Identity in the First Republic.**

The First Austrian Republic was a nation-state with a rough beginning and undeniably rocky downfall. Plagued by the aftermath of the First World War and the disastrous effects of the Treaty of St. Germain, Austria’s first attempt at democracy was in many ways doomed from the beginning. The republic’s dire economic and social problems combined with an unfamiliar system of government disabled proper nation building, self-determination, and renewal. By allied decree a union between Germany and Austria was out of the question, and with territorial losses such as South Tyrol and portions of the former Bohemian and Moravian Kronländer, four million of the former “Austrians” remained
outside of the republic’s contemporary borders.\textsuperscript{38} The governing and political affiliations in Austria remained divided during the interwar period, both regionally and administratively. Vienna remained a socialist stronghold, one of only nine provinces that arguably remained politically consistent during the interwar period. In Austria’s westernmost provinces of Tyrol and Vorarlberg, along with the southern states of Carinthia and Styria, social and political tensions remained high and plagued regional stability throughout the interwar years, giving rise to paramilitary units and right-wing extremism. Due to regional differences and the consequences of losing the First World War, republican and democratic virtues were often viewed with ambivalence (or outright hostility). For this reason, strongly differing ideological models of Austrian identity were politically contested, as political discourse in the public sphere represented Austria’s internal struggle to define and accept itself. It is important to look at the self-definition of Austria posited by the right, for their political ideologies represent the reasons for and against Austrian sovereignty. Posters show these models and constructions for Austrian nation building in powerful ways that represent the desperation for acceptance or denial of Austria’s new republican image after World War I.

An analysis of Christian Social and German National posters mounted in Vienna for national elections over the years of the First Republic offers insight into these concerns, but also due to Vienna’s continued role as the Austrian capitol, it also offers an insight into the nationwide struggle to achieve a truly democratic society. By confining this study to national elections during the interwar period and posters from the capital city of Vienna, we can focus on the discourse of right-wing politics as it shaped the new Austrian identity question during the interwar period. As Austria’s national democratic elections began in 1919 and stopped by

\textsuperscript{38} Beller, \textit{A Concise History of Austria}, 200.
1934 with Dollfuss’s dictatorship, I have split up the historical timeline and their respective posters into six periods as they relate to Austria’s position as an independent nation state, and one concluding section devoted to Austria’s final year of sovereignty in 1938. These divisions will enable both a closer look at the posters’ historical relevance but also determine the continuities and changes in ideology occurring among the conservative party discourse as time progressed.

Political Conviction in an Uncertain Republic: The Early Years

The beginning of Austria as a republic was a make-or-break moment for future stability in the newly formed nation that was a mere fraction of its former size. On November 12, 1918 the state of German-Austria was declared, bringing an end to Habsburg hegemony not only in Austria but also in all of Central Europe. The first national election was held in 1919, the same year that universal suffrage was enacted and Austria’s goal of self-determination became a possibility. During these early years of the Austrian First Republic, right-wing nationalism for many was the answer to an uncertain future after the First World War and the economic disaster that ensued its end. The Christian Social and German National parties both offered models of Austria that they believed provided a healthy start to this new post war era. In the early national elections, visual iconography and linguistic messages comprised a political discourse to show that these camps could provide hope for an uncertain republic: the Christian Social posters offered a vision of a new Austrian nation and the German National posters pictured a political union with Germany.

German National politics, just as before the First World War, offered little in political power but much more in trans-national politics, something that gained more support with the founding of the Republic. German-Austria was isolated from its former constituent lands that
made up Austria-Hungary, and after the First World War, the German National Party saw this time as their opportunity to forge a union with Germany, thereby finally uniting the “two Germanys” into a single viable state. The posters from the February 16th 1919 elections broadly define what their message of Germany unification is. They remain very ideological both in their rhetoric and artistic representations, and they demonstrate that the time for union with Germany is now or never; had they known in February of that year that that would be the case with the Treaty of St. Germain prohibiting a German union, maybe the population would have received their stance more warmly. These election posters that were created only three months after the Republic’s declaration demonstrate that the convictions of the German Nationals still existed past the lifespan of Austria-Hungary: German culture, rejection of the Habsburg past, and a trans-national cooperation with Germany.

In the metropolis of Vienna, also the former imperial capital, the posters from this February election have both national and regional depictions due to their position in the historically significant capital of republican Austria. In Figure 1 the German National Party employed the colors of the 1848 revolutions – black-red-gold – which harkens back to the (albeit failed) revolution evocating German unity. The German Nationals also used the state seal of Vienna that originally came from the Babenberg\textsuperscript{39} coat of arms (Figure 2), but their message remained the same: political union with its northern German neighbor. The core of Schönerer’s constructions of national identity remains into the First Republic, urging a nation of Germans to reject Judaism and the former monarchy that hindered their earlier goals. In these two German National posters, we see this party is addressing a particular call to Viennese voters, and it is rejecting those living in the capital city that are not part of this

\textsuperscript{39} The Babenbergs ruled Austria prior to Habsburg dominion, and their coat of arms became the national colors after 1918.
German milieu; the German Nationals’ continued rejection of the undesirables in the Austrian Republic set a precedent for further rejection of “foreign” influences that remained a crucial part to the demographic and attitude of many in this democracy. “Wiener, Ihr seid Deutsche” and “Judentum und Kommunismus, gegen Monarchie und Donaubund” constructs a future Austria that does not resemble its former face, but is rather a purely German state within a larger Germany free of “foreign” influences. This personal address to the ethnically German Viennese public, both to uphold and reject certain elements of society, establishes the German National idea for Austria’s future, one that is ethnically and politically homogeneous.

The Christian Social Party was not immune to the call for Austrian rejection and for German unity, but they nevertheless remained firm on promoting social welfare and establishing a sense of unity through helping the disadvantaged and in demonizing a political left that threatened further violence and destruction. In these first few months of the republic, many Austrian-Germans faced much uncertainty, especially those who became disenchanted by their country after four years of war and the horrible conditions both on the battlefield and on the home front. The earliest election posters of the Christian Socialists also employ a discourse of inclusivity and exclusivity, but they establish themselves as the party for social change through Austrian solidarity. These early months forced the Christian Social Party to rebrand itself as a people’s party in the absence of the monarchy, and to also reinforce their earlier, pre-war power that embodied Austrianness. In 1919 the Christian Social Party was able to show the republic through their political posters that they were here to stay in this newly formed nation that had an influential past but an unclear future.
In this black and white poster (Figure 3) from February of 1919, three figures that represent both security and future development – soldiers and children – stand at the center of Austria’s fight for viability in the aftermath of World War I. “Die Heimkehrer rufen: Gebt uns Arbeit. Gebt uns Brot. Wir wollen Deutsch-Österreich aufbauen. Wer mithelfen will, wählt die Christlichsoziale Partei.” This political message demonstrates the problems that Austrians are facing, such as unemployment and food shortages, and the Christian Socials claim to be the only leaders able to accomplish this. This poster’s romanticized image of a physically fit soldier and healthy young children is not depicting these troubles truthfully; it is emphasizing the ideal values of Austrian society through those that matter: the defenders of the nation and family. This poster is historically significant in that it is one of the first to address both men and women and their equal right to vote it appeals to “Männer und Frauen”; from the votes casted that year, almost 54 percent of them were from female voters.\(^{40}\) The voting demographic change in this first election was seen as a vital change to accept but as an opportunity to win over women, although who were unable to vote prior to 1918, had been actively involved in social and cultural organizations that were highly political. In this romanticized representation of Austria’s protectors and future generations, national identity through the Christian Social Party promised Austrian sovereignty and prosperity through relief efforts. By appealing to the female demographic, we see that with universal suffrage and constructing a new German-Austria the Christian Socials were also inclusive in their image for a new Austria that was emerging at this time.

1919, however was not a prosperous year for anyone, much less the former Central Powers. An important element to conservative politics at this time was the fear of revolution

\(^{40}\) Denscher, Bernhard. *Österreichische Plakatkunst.* (Vienna: Brandstätter Verlag, 1992), 178.
that had not only occurred in Russia, but also closer to home in Hungary and Germany. Although the German Nationals remained strongly opposed to the revolutionaries from the left, the Christian Socials were also poised to co-opt revolutionary ideas and curb the growth of the socialist movement. In another Christian Social Poster from 1919 (Figure 4), we see their opposition against revolutionary actions with their violent connotations. “Wenn ihr den nicht wollt, so wählet Christlichsozial” is a personal (using the informal ihr) message to constituents to reject these actions. This informal use of the German language became the prominent form of address in interwar political posters. The revolutionary’s aggressive and foreign stance outside Vienna also underscores the Christian Social emphasis on stability: stability coming from within and not from the outside through the socialist power – or the German Nationals. A poster such as this emphasizes the interior source of change that ultimately rejects socialism but also triumphantly protects Austria from this political camp for generations to come. In this poster the Christian Socials are shaping a constituency that do not want socialism and will protect the future of post-war Austria. The demonization of the left as seen in this poster remained for the First Republic’s entirety.\(^\text{41}\)

After Austria’s final borders came into effect in 1920, borders which excluded South Tyrol and the Sudetenland, the political right became more concerned with establishing their political power within the new regional and national government through new national symbolism. In Figure 5 a German National poster from this year emblazoned with their new name, \textit{Großdeutsche Volkspartei}, depicts this finalization of Austria’s new borders by signifying not only Austria’s protection from the former eastern imperial territories but also showing the Austrian borders adjacent to the Weimar Republic and a greater German

\[^{41}\text{Denscher, Bernhard, and Herwig Würtz. Wahljahr 1919. (Wien: Die Bibliothek, 1989), 30.}\]
identity. The color scheme of the poster still harkens back to the revolutionary colors of 1848, but now the revolutionary ideals are setting aside conflicts from 1919, namely the uncertainties of Austrian-Germans in the immediate aftermath of the war. Instead the German Nationals demonstrate their task at hand: this new Austria must seek union with Germany now that official borders have been declared and the monarchy and former imperial ties have been severed. By both excluding the former ethnic heterogeneity of Austria under the emperor, and rejecting the formation of new nation-states in the aftermath of World War I, they are now including the new Republic of Austria’s role, post St. Germain Treaty, and the new (ethnically German) Austrians in creating a pan-German state. Just over a year after the end of the First World War, Austria’s borders were established along with the prohibition against union with Germany – However, pan-Germanism, expressed even through their new name, shows both conviction and strength for a new *Kulturnation* that explicitly opposed the conditions of the St. Germain Treaty and politically supported the idea of the pan-German nation.

In a similar light, the Christian Socials also emerged after the Treaty of St. Germain poised to construct their own brand of Austrian national identity but in contrast to the German Nationals they emphasized threats that still existed to their party after Austria’s border conflicts ceased. Arguably the most famous Christian Social poster from the interwar period (Figure 6) includes both national symbols and established stereotypes that plagued Austrian society during the First Republic. The new Austrian coat of arms, departing from the double-headed *Reichsadler*, was an eagle holding a hammer and sickle, and on its breast is the new national shield that originated with the Babenbergs. These symbols in themselves are important, not only in their new usage in the Austrian Republic, but this poster is one of
the earliest examples of the new national symbols used in interwar Austrian political discourse. The Christian Social party was well aware of the connotations that hammers and sickles brought forth into the political discourse, and their acceptance of these new republican symbols as opposed to the older imperial symbols was ambivalent to say the least. They did however incorporate this new coat of arms not to reject their formerly monarchist leanings, but to establish Austria’s new national form that was explicitly not linked to a greater Germany. We see that a serpent that is also an anti-Semitic caricature of socialism is strangling this new coat of arms, thereby underscoring that the threat to socialism comes from outside Austria and what is at stake for a newly formed republic; by voting for the left Austrians will undermine the republican values and bring disastrous consequences. As the standard of living decreases along with the loss of jobs and agriculture (the hammer and sickle that were being held), socialism will also extinguish Austria’s viability as a sovereign state with the strangulation of the national eagle.  

The Christian Social Party does not depict the Austrian union with Germany as favored by the German Nationals as a possible solution; they saw socialism as the main enemy for an independent Austria, one that also had transnational influence that needed to be rejected.

During these two early elections of 1919 and 1920, the Christian Socials and German Nationals produced political posters that depicted their conservative models of the new Austrian nation. Certainly both parties rejected the leftist parties, and their rejection manifests itself in political posters throughout the First Republic, but in doing so they remained divided on how the unifying force of crushing socialism would take shape; they indeed formed alliances politically, but ideologically they simultaneously disputed Austria’s

new republican character in their definitions of Austrianness. Was Austria going to be a small republic ruled from the socialist stronghold of Vienna? Or was it going to merge into a new Germany? This became the defining point; inclusion and exclusion remain important themes throughout the interwar period, as these political parties continued to persuade the populace as to what was Austrian and what wasn’t, and what sacrifices and leadership were needed to thwart socialism and the Jews. Did the new national borders define the conservative configuration of Austria? Or was Austria a nation without its proper place in German-speaking Europe? Either way, the borders with the east were established, and by 1920, Austria left the former *Kronländer* behind. These two parties of exclusivity, the Christian Socials and German Nationals, were now concerned with solving the national identity crisis within the boundaries of 1919.

**1923: The Beginning of Christian Social Hegemony among the Conflicted Right**

Four years into the republic, the Christian Socials and German Nationals remained steadfast in their goal to reshape a new Austria, but at a paralyzing price. Both had established what they were not, and by forging a national coalition in 1923 with the Christian Socials as the leading partner, they began a struggle between them and the socialist party that would last until the Austrofascist government in the mid thirties. As we have seen previously, the Christian Social political posters deployed newly founded national symbols of the republic, while the German National posters implemented the revolutionary colors of the 1848 revolutions to remind their constituents that their duties were to vote for a pan-German solution. The posters of the Christian Social and German National Parties in the 1923 election continue the politics of exclusion with respect to socialism, but their symbolism begins to diverge more strongly than in their earlier posters. Even though they were coalition
partners, this identity conflict shows how the elections of 1923 developed a further conservative political discourse in the Austrian First Republic, and their models of Austrian national identity became clearly incompatible in their inability to properly forge a path for Austria’s future together.

For these elections, the German Nationals strengthened their stance against the established left in Vienna, where the socialists ruled on a regional level, and we also see in these posters depictions of their idealized supporters for their idealized Austria. In one poster, they are clearly addressing the male population who fits their ideal German. Figure 7 asks, “Bist du ein Deutscher? Dann kannst du nicht für rot oder schwarz stimmen. Wähle großdeutsch!” The poster constructs the Aryan male and it addresses the ethnic German, but by using the male adjectival noun this poster appeals to and constructs their idealized constituent. In this idealized image, the poster also creates a national image by implying the Volksgemeinschaft’s existence that Schönerer strongly emphasized in his ideology; the German is above all the embodiment of genetic and aesthetic superiority.\(^{43}\) In other posters for this election the German Nationals are rejecting internationalism, as this male figure, recognizable from Figure 7 breaks free from the bondage of socialism and Judaism to rise above these inferior populations that could ruin the German people (Figure 8). The poster is also religious with its use of the “Teufel” in society, and has associations with Schönerer’s ideology of German national identity in connection with “Christian virtues”. On the topic of anti-Semitism, the German Nationals demonized Vienna’s rising Jewish population that was

emigrating from the east and living in Vienna’s municipal housing (Figure 9). In this poster the new immigrants are depicted as degenerate, not only among the Viennese population, but also in their embrace of socialism with the perceived dirtiness of Vienna’s living conditions. By criticizing the housing problems in Vienna under the socialists and reaffirming their anti-Semitism by criticizing Jewish immigrants, the reaffirmation of the ethnicity in German National ideology becomes more apparent after Austria’s second major national election and the establishment of political voting patterns in the First Republic.

The Christian Social posters take on a different form than their coalition partner’s. Unlike the German Nationals they conveyed a nostalgic and religious image of Austrian identity as opposed to creating a racial image. The target audience of these posters makes for an interesting contrast between the Christian Social and German National camps. Although these examples definitely refer to Vienna’s socialist stronghold, they aren’t imposing a demographic ideal of the German race or a specific group within that demographic; they are harkening back to a calmer and more stable period of history than the present day during the interwar years. Karl Lueger had been dead for thirteen years by the time this poster (Figure 10) was made public, but by alluding to his leadership in Vienna, it is not only rejecting socialism but also reverting back to historical constructs of his political leadership as a Catholic and revitalizing mayor of Vienna. Lueger as a messianic figure, saving both his former Rathaus, where he ruled as mayor, and the parliament building, where the Christian Social hegemony lies during this period, is clear example of shaping a Christian Social demographic that didn’t want a union with Germany, but the further establishment of Lueger’s Christian ideals for the young republic. 44 The verb “retten” has many religious

44 Denscher, Tagebuch der Strasse, 158.
connotations that reference biblical texts and the central role of Catholicism among Christian Socials. In the way that the image is constructed using “rettet”, the poster is also addressing the voter by calling on a spiritual form of Lueger to save the city from socialist destruction. In another poster (Figure 11), the Christian Socials strive to reverse socialist control while uniting Austria under their historical stability in politics through messianic symbolism. This use of religious symbolism in this poster, depicting Ignaz Seipel, a priest by profession who was elected chancellor of the republic, shows him steering Austria, wearing his religious garments, through calm waters in the right direction as the captain of the government as opposed to the demonized Bolshevik crashing the ship of state. These religious and messianic portrayals of Christian Social leaders from the past and the present depict Christian Social leadership as the Austrian national ideal in opposition against the devastating future of the socialist rule of the regional government.

The coalition governments during this period further discredit socialism’s power in Vienna, but as we have seen in these examples from the 1923 elections, the Christian Social and German National parties constructed their own versions of an affirmative Austrian national identity at the same time that they set themselves off from their enemies. This election campaign and these parties’ political posters in retrospect show the commonalities in the two parties’ constructions of Austrian identity being stronger than their differences, but by unifying against a single cause doesn’t solve the underlying issue of a national identity crisis that was plaguing Austria. Housing shortages existed and economic despair continued, but by belittling the true issues at hand and remaining focused on the strong ideological platform of each camp against the left, they kept the ideological struggle at the forefront.

45 Denscher, Österreichische Plakatkunst, 191.
The Year of Uncertainty: The 1927 Election Year

In this struggle to unite against the socialists something very peculiar occurred in the following national elections in 1927. The socialist threat was becoming much more realistic, as the economic and housing situation was not improving throughout Austria, and the right found that their only chance for staying afloat was doing something rash and telling about not only the contemporary political situation but their implicit waning self confidence against the left in their propaganda strategy. Several right wing groups both on a regional and national level, which included Christian Socials, German Nationals, and even some emerging National Socialist groups, came together under one banner—Einheitsliste. This was meant to further strengthen these parties against the socialists, as they feared their only viable means to win was to support Ignaz Seipel as the sole right-wing candidate. Two posters that demonstrate the continuities in imagery but differences in ideology between 1923 and 1927 represent the strategic shift in the right. A Christian Social poster from 1923 (Figure 12), “Fort mit dem Terror! Gebet euch zur Wehr! Wählet Christlichsozial” incorporates the “red terror” into their political discourse, and also a call to arms. The Einheitsliste uses the exact same image four years later. The language on the 1927 (Figure 13) poster is slightly different: “Bekämpft den sozialdemokratischen Terror! Wählet Einheitsliste”. Was this a clear statement that the Christian Socials were still the strongest party on the right with the use of identical imagery even under this new platform? Or was the Austrian right facing a greater identity crisis, most notably the Christian Socials? Even though this political strategy only remained for one election, Vienna remained socialist, and Seipel remained chancellor, this united front against socialist ideals paradoxically shows the weaknesses and desperation from the right to maintain their holding in the republic through democratic means. Socialism
is no longer depicted as a serpent strangling the national eagle, but now a giant red fist overtaking a quintessential Austrian town. It juxtaposes the Austrian against the “other” much more violently and directly. The end of democratic elections arguably began in 1927, as the right-wing parties depict a national identity that attempted to overtake the socialists and created a super-national party platform.

The “red terror” became increasingly powerful in its connotations with instability and revolution in 1927, but in many ways the threat can equally be seen as a rightist revolution that was about to occur under the Einheitsliste. Posters depicting workers wanting better housing (Figure 15), and depicting Karl Renner (who was at the time the head of the socialist party, and from 1918-1920 the chancellor of Austria) as a villainous figure (figure 16), criticize his politics and demonize the leaders of the governing socialists. The ominous depictions of socialist housing projects and Renner’s destruction of Vienna certainly attempt to alienate voters as attack ads. A more striking poster, however, incorporates the colors of the Austrian flag, and shows the Einheitsliste as the sole surviving party after the presumed socialist takeover of government and the country’s destruction (Figure 14). Bolschewismus, Terror, soziales Elend, Klassenhaß, and breitnere Steuern all cast socialism in a negative light having flooded and destroyed the country, but the imagery and language is becoming apocalyptic in nature. Conservatives see both a unifying force among the political discourse at the time against socialism and simultaneously they saw a right, whose differing national goals were being united under a single banner to dominate over socialism. Most notably, 1927 was a foreshadowing of conservative domination in the years to come.

In July of 1927, the socialist terror that the right feared became reality on July 15th. In protest against labor disputes in Burgenland, the paramilitary units of the Socialist Party and the Christian Social party attacked each other in a violent clash that killed a disabled veteran and a child. These deaths resulted in the trial and acquittal of the right-wing members responsible, which provoked massive protest from socialists in Vienna. These protests resulted in the burning of the Justizpalast, an obvious target for the wrongdoing that was committed against the socialists. The fighting did not stop until military action intervened, crushing the rebellion, greatly weakening the morale of the socialists, who had believed that their time had finally come to rule from Vienna as a leading member in a national coalition. The effects of this revolt were disastrous for the socialists, and we see the consequences of this revolt in the next national elections of 1930, when the respective political camps began clinging to their paramilitary street fighters to maintain their political status quo. We also see with these elections a weakening German National front due to continued Christian Social victories and the rise of another movement that in Austria became known as the Hitlerbewegung. The election posters of 1930 represent the end of democratic discourse as political militias and the increasingly polarized government moved toward Christian Social dictatorship. Even with the socialist party strengths, the right-wing nationalism takes on a Christian Social agenda, as pan-Germanism is absorbed into Nazism thereby becoming more radical in return with Nazism’s rise in Germany.

As the Christian Social Party become more powerful than ever before, the political posters convey the party’s size and overall strength in portraying the recent events while maintaining religious symbolism as Christian Social politics emphasize Catholicism to

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contrast the left and become more authoritarian. In Figure 17, a socialist figure with petroleum in hand is literally dwarfing the Justizpalast, a symbol of order and institutional government, and the Christian Socials are taking advantage of the socialist violence that occurred on the 15th of July by not only urging the public to vote for them but also for their support in the Heimwehr (in these posters the term Heimatwehr is used), their military faction. These giant socialists figures, which we also saw in the Einheitsliste posters of 1927, alienate the public from socialism by depicting monstrous, overbearing, and violent imagery. In this poster the Christian Socials employ the imagery and language of violence and militarism; the poster states clearly that order will only remain through a crackdown on violence, which ironically puts them on a similar level of the socialist violence being depicted. National identity becomes a means by which paramilitary strength and repression, not democratic processes is used. The Justizpalast fire becomes a victimized symbol of socialist aggression, and that only through Christian Social militarism can stability be obtained. Another Christian Social poster demonstrates this as well; conservative politics will do away with leftist revolution but bring forth a new type of revolution from the right through the “order” of the Heimwehr (Figure 18). The Germanic male with a pitchfork brushing away all traces of socialism is ironic based on the more violent propaganda that the Christian Socials were simultaneously using. By ridding the country of socialism, the country can move forward, but at the price of paramilitary extremism. Other posters institute older forms of anti-Socialist rhetoric that aligns the Christian Socials with their religious politics (Figure 19), in which socialist youths are throwing stones at Christ being crucified. Although socialism had been depicted in the past as the path to Austria’s destruction, the Christian Socials are taking this perception to extremes. “Rote Erziehungsfrüchte” are bringing the
republic down with them as products of a failed value system that undermines Austria’s
Catholicism. At this time the Christian Social construction of national identity is still invested
in clerical politics and social reform as we will see in other posters from this year, but with
the emergence of the *Heimwehr* their national imagery reflects proto-fascist elements of
repression and violence that were increasing across Europe.

Other Christian Social posters at this time did, however, in addressing the social
concerns of the time such as high unemployment, food shortages after the economic crises of
1929 (Figure 20), and the ever-present concern over housing shortages in urban areas (Figure
21) incorporate the Heimwehr into these images as well. In Figure 22, by stressing high taxes
among socialist governments and emphasizing the worker’s repression through financial
difficulty, the Christian Socials were addressing the contemporary issues that were affecting
voter turnout in their favor. We see that revolutionary rhetoric is becoming the norm and the
important tool for gaining support instead of emphasizing their traditional values and
Austrianness. One poster that is however striking is addressing the “Christian-German”
people and their emphasis that Bolshevism and Social Democrats are not Christian or
German (Figure 23); A *Volkspartei* as well as the idea of *Heimat* is stressing the familiar in
opposition to the foreign. This tradition juxtaposing the other Christian Social posters that
addressed societal problems and street violence are meant to harmoniously create a larger
picture of Christian Socialism that began to emphasize tradition, religion, and reform with
the Heimwehr.

By 1930, the political tide in Austria was changing; the Christian Social Party
remained the ruling party in most regions, but the Socialist Party that had had a stronghold in
Vienna was soon to be overtaken by the Heimwehr and the ever-growing *Hitlerbewegung*
that by this time had mostly absorbed the German National camp (Figure 24). As the NSDAP was known in Austria through political posters as the *Hitlerbewegung*, this idea of a *Bewegung* was becoming more important as political parties were ever-increasingly static symbols of inefficiency. The upper half of the poster is boldly modern with the domineering row of Nazi flags, but also traditionally grounded with the *Altschrift* rendition of the party’s name on the lower half. It was becoming more apparent with the growing Nazi Party and the lack of a strong Christian Social leader that Hitler’s party was able to pick up the German National cause where it left off. After Seipel’s departure and a line of failed chancellorships, the Christian Socials chose Engelbert Dollfuss, who would create an Austria that ultimately became the true realization of Christian Social ideology. By the early thirties, it seemed the Austrians were increasingly supportive of the right in their political leanings, but which version of right-wing politics was still unclear given the choice between the insurgent paramilitary factions and the resurrection of pan-Germanism under Nazism.

“Positive” Change through Clerical Politics: The 1933 Elections and the Rise of Austrofascism

By 1933, in the wake of National Socialist takeover in Germany, a new form of fascism was in power just over the border in Austria. This time period is important as it shows the rise of fascism in Austria was a separate but coinciding movement as Austrians and Germans alike were looking for a solution that involved a break from democracy; Austrofascism however corresponded with fascism’s popularity throughout Europe and centered on the idealization of Christian Social ideology. In an effort to curb violence and solidify power, the socialist military group, the *Republikanischer Schutzbund*, was being

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brought down legally and physically on a regional level by the *Heimwehr*, leaving the Christian Social *Heimwehr* as the victorious “keepers of the peace” and dictatorial force.\(^{48}\) Dollfuss, who instituted a fascist takeover of government starting in 1933, enacted the May constitution a year later banning all other political parties and organizations, bringing Austrofascism to the forefront of Austrian politics. The posters of this period attempt to create a cult of personality for Dollfuss through the incorporation of the political symbols that were deeply associated with his fascist government and its religious undertones. These posters also convey the role of the Christian Social party, renamed by Dollfuss as the *Vaterländische Front*, in creating a “better Austria” that was exclusively Austrian, not German. With the now forbidden Nazi Party disappearing from the public eye, Dollfuss attempted to convey to the Austrians that an Austrian nation was possible under his dictatorship. The broader national construction of Austrian identity now excluded socialism, but continued the struggle between the newly coined *Vaterländische Front* and the pan-German question re-emerging with the National Socialists in Germany at that time.

Two elections posters from 1933 have Dollfuss squarely centered, in a carefully neutral stance. There is nothing overtly political about what he is wearing or what he is demonstrating to voters, but the language and visual symbolism make a stronger statement. The *Krukenkreuz* and the *Altschrift* are traditional, and evoke religious and cultural tradition. “Hinein in die Vaterländische Front” (Figure 25) celebrated the ban on the socialist party with the new constitution with a call to arms, and “Wer Österreich liebt und schützen will/hinein in die Vaterländische Front!” (Figure 26) are rhetorical ploys to form a

\(^{48}\) Beller, *A Concise History of Austria*, 212.
Gemeinschaft under the Vaterländische Front. The poster demonstrates that Dollfuss and the Vaterländische Front embody openness to inclusiveness and create the individuals that are willing to support their role in protecting and loving their Ständestaat. The Christian Social Party now offered an Austrian national identity that was religiously grounded as seen with their usage of the Krukenkreuz but authoritarian in an age where fascism was extremely popular in surrounding countries. The Dollfuss dictatorship created a new government in Austria that was purely conservative based on catholic social teachings and clericalism. In reality, however, they were creating and establishing a forced system of government based on the Christian Social notion of Austrianness. It soon became apparent however, that Christian Social Austrianness was still vulnerable as time went on.

Even with the banning of the Nazi Party, there was still political discourse coming from their camp with political posters (Figure 27). The German Nationals, who had more or less been absorbed by the Nazi movement signals that by 1933, the party supporters in Austria were in favor of a pan-German leader, just as Schönerer had urged with Bismarck and the Prussian Kaiser. The labels that walled the Nazis in –Lügen, Terror, and Pressezensur all hurt their reputation while simultaneously gave them even more initiative to further their cause as an underground movement. By 1934 it was clear that the Vaterländische Front had to be overthrown for a Nazi victory to occur. The national question was over for the First Republic in the eyes of the Vaterländische Front, but with the prospect of reinvention through Putschversuche, the Nazis were willing to accomplish their own version of the national question as it related to Austrian identity.

A Year of Reckoning: The Death of Dollfuss and the Resurgence of pan-Germanism

Political posters continued to be produced as forms of propaganda for the Dollfuss dictatorship, and the symbolism depicted remained in portraying militarism and the prospects of a “neues Österreich” (Figure 28). They also represented nationalism not centered on the people, but through the military and its “rebuilding of a new Austria”. Dollfuss used the Heimwehr to enforce his ideology, but the Heimwehr failed to protect him indefinitely. The Nazi Sturmabteilung was the threat that would bring Dollfuss to his death. On July 25, 1934 members of the illegal Nazi Party rushed into the chancellery and assassinated Dollfuss. Posters that illustrate his cult of personality and the Vaterländische Front’s attempt to create his martyrdom as a lasting representative of the vitality of Austria51 ironically portray the weak national identity that came with their ideology. With the death of their leader, the recent work that the Vaterländische Front did for the renewal of Austria made Austria vulnerable to German fascism. Their quest to make him a spiritual leader of the party after his death is very dictatorial in nature in showing his death mask and death date as an end to a supreme ruler’s role in Austrian politics. The posters from this year show that much had been done in the name of the Vaterländische Front, but with Dollfuss’s death the solutions to the national question that the Christian Socials orchestrated by creating a fascist dictatorship were severely threatened, and religious symbolism was not going to save the Vaterländische Front from further threats. Although the attempted coup was ultimately squashed by Dollfuss’s successor, Kurt Schuschnigg, Dollfuss’s assassination brought forth the national question once more that in four short years was answered with the loss of Austrian sovereignty and the victory of a pan-German solution under National Socialism. Socialism in

51 Denscher, Bürgerkrieg der Propaganda, 13.
Austria failed with paramilitary defeat and the Christian Social dictatorship didn’t effectively lead Austria on a national level due to Dollfuss’s short rule, and so the Pan-German front by the mid thirties answered the call to national unity through union with Germany once and for all.

**Ja! Anschluss, the Downfall of Christian Social Politics, and the Fatality of Austrian Nationalism**

With the Austrofascist dictatorship greatly weakened, so too was the propaganda of the *Vaterländische Front*. By 1938, we see how unclear the authoritarian regime was becoming in their goal to remain independent from Germany. Simply put, “Ja! Mit Schuschnigg für ein freies Österreich” ultimately was not enough to convince the populace to remain supportive, even with a patriotic flag waving and the *Krukenkreuz* that became synonymous with the ineffective *Vaterländische Front*. By 1938, the *Krukenkreuz* became an ambivalent symbol of weak Christian Social politics and this poster (Figure 31) offered no convincing solutions to the national question. “Ja! Mit Schuschnigg für ein freies Österreich” says nothing about Austria’s continued renewal – It seems that the only vision of Austria that the party has is as an independent nation. In many ways, this poster also demonstrates the desperation of keeping Austria independent from Germany; this poster’s publication during the first week of March, 1938 is not a coincidence, as plebiscites to join Germany were planned for that month.\(^{52}\) After the Anschluss on March 12, 1938, we have another “Ja!” poster that is much more affirming of a brighter future after such a rocky past that began after the First World War (Figure 32). This National Socialist poster that commemorates Hitler’s heroic actions in the name of the Nazi party to resurrect Germany’s glory after the war, was

\(^{52}\) Denscher, *Tagebuch der Strasse*, 218.
printed in Vienna, which depicts German-Austria finally playing a role in creating a Greater Germany, a Germany that all Germans could believe in; the national question that bogged down the politics of the Austrian First Republic since its inception became a thing of the past. In this poster, however, we see that the national question for a Großdeutschland was not yet solved; the shadows surrounding Germany denote other regions with German populations that only with the Second World War became symbols of national unity, but also aggression. Austrian nationalism was incorporated into Hitler’s plans for restructuring Europe under Nazi ideology.

Conclusion

From the early years of Austria’s republican identity, the right wing parties fought ideologically against each other, albeit with brief unions to combat socialism, but ultimately took different paths as fascist politics rose to prominence in Europe by the end of the twenties. Austria was not immune to fascism, and they never became immune to pan-German politics that were prevalent since the 19th century that eventually took hold with German fascism under Adolf Hitler. As Austria was annexed and incorporated into Nazi Germany, the national question was solved with a form of national identity that ultimately brought Austria into another devastating war with tragic losses. Was the pan-German victory under the Nazis a coincidence? Even though the German Nationals were never victorious in national elections, their ideological strength never disappeared. Politically, the Anschluss

53 Ibid, 224.
might have been a surprising shift for Austrian identity, but theoretically pan-Germanism was a neat fit due to the Austrian national identity crisis that began with Schönerer and Lueger. Austria might have been at the right place at the right time for Hitler to expand Germany’s borders, but an analysis of the political posters of the Christian Social and German National parties reveals that the construction of interwar national identity grounded in exclusivity, extremism, and militarism eventually engulfed Austria’s right-wing parties.
Wiener, Ihr seid Deutsche!

wählt Deutschnational!

Figure 1

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Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

57 Fritz Schönplug, Wenn ihr den nicht wollt, in Tagebuch der Strasse: Geschichte in Plakaten by Bernhard Denschler (Vienna, Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1981), 137.
Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 8


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**Figure 9**
Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 13

Figure 14

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Figure 15

Figure 16

Figure 17

Figure 18

Figure 19

Wer für Arbeit, Ruhe, Brot, Familie, Aufbau, der wähle Christlichsozial!

Figure 20

Figure 21

Figure 23

Figure 24

Figure 25

August Schmid, Österreich über alles!Wer Österreich liebt und schützen will, hinein in die Vaterländische Front! Poster, 1933, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung, Vienna, Austria, http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/flu1203769.
Figure 27

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Figure 28

Figure 29

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Figure 30

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Figure 31

Figure 32

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