

12-1975

# Hermann Neubacher and Austrian Anschluss Movement, 1918-40

Harry Ritter

Western Washington University, [harry.ritter@wwu.edu](mailto:harry.ritter@wwu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://cedar.wwu.edu/history\\_facpubs](https://cedar.wwu.edu/history_facpubs)

Part of the [European History Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Ritter, Harry, "Hermann Neubacher and Austrian Anschluss Movement, 1918-40" (1975). *History Faculty and Staff Publications*. 33.  
[https://cedar.wwu.edu/history\\_facpubs/33](https://cedar.wwu.edu/history_facpubs/33)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the History at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty and Staff Publications by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact [westerncedar@wwu.edu](mailto:westerncedar@wwu.edu).

**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

**Conference Group for Central European History of the American Historical Association**

---

Hermann Neubacher and the Austrian Anschluss Movement, 1918-40

Author(s): Harry R. Ritter

Source: *Central European History*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Dec., 1975), pp. 348-369

Published by: [Cambridge University Press](#) on behalf of [Conference Group for Central European History of the American Historical Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4545754>

Accessed: 29/10/2014 13:36

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Cambridge University Press and Conference Group for Central European History of the American Historical Association are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Central European History*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

# Hermann Neubacher and the Austrian *Anschluss* Movement, 1918–40

HARRY R. RITTER

THE *Anschluss* problem was one of the most vexing legacies of nineteenth-century nationalism and the peace settlement of 1919. Seen in broad perspective, the *Anschluss* movement belongs to the final chapter in the history of the idea of *Grossdeutschland*, a dream born in 1848 and shared after 1867 by German-Austrians of the most varied cultural backgrounds and political opinions. Support for German union intensified following the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1918, but was frustrated by the restrictions placed upon union by the treaties of Versailles and Saint-Germain.<sup>1</sup> After 1919 sympathy for *Anschluss* transcended party lines in the infant Austrian republic, and grew more rapidly than within Germany itself. For many members of the “front generation,” young men who had served in the Habsburg army and who felt the humiliation of defeat with special intensity, the cause of *Anschluss* became a life-shaping force. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the career of Hermann Neubacher.

Neubacher is best known as a diplomat who served the Third Reich in the Balkans during World War II,<sup>2</sup> but he was also an important participant in interwar Austrian affairs. Energetic, resourceful, and a skillful public speaker, Neubacher was an ambitious provincial who fashioned a successful career in Vienna during the 1920s. His outstanding characteristic was the ability to cultivate and maintain connections with most of the groups competing for power in the first republic. Underlying all his actions was a resolute dedication to German unity which led him into activity as a political organizer and propagandist, and eventually drew him into the Nazi movement: following the *Anschluss* in 1938 he was appointed mayor of Vienna. The *Anschluss* theme

1. Nikolaus von Preradovich, *Der nationale Gedanke in Österreich 1866–1938* (Göttingen, 1962), pp. 17, 30.

2. See his memoir *Sonderauftrag Südost 1940–1945: Bericht eines fliegenden Diplomaten*, 2d ed. (Göttingen, 1957).

ties together his many activities and makes his early life a study in the development of an “*Anschluss* man.”

Neubacher (1893–1960) was the son of a school director in the Upper Austrian town of Gmunden. With the aid of a government stipend he attended the Benedictine gymnasium in Kremsmünster and in 1912 enrolled in the *Hochschule für Bodenkultur* in Vienna, where he studied forestry and joined a nationalist gymnastics fraternity, the *Akademischer Turnverein*. During the war he served in Italy, was cited four times for bravery, and earned the rank of *Oberleutnant*. After the war he completed his studies, receiving the degree of *Doktor der Bodenkultur* in 1920.<sup>3</sup>

Like most Austrians, Neubacher opposed the dictated peace settlement, which honored self-determination for the former Habsburg Slavs, Rumanians, and Italians, but denied it to the Germans. He soon became an ardent proponent of *Anschluss* for Austria, a region which, he later wrote, “we love as a *Heimat*, but never wanted as a state.”<sup>4</sup> *Anschluss*, he idealistically believed, was a goal which all parties could support, a cause which could reconcile the ideological tensions dividing his homeland. Like many others, he was also convinced that the tiny republic, stripped of its former Danubian hinterland, simply could not survive economically; to endure, Austria needed to become part of a larger economic unit. Underlying these considerations was the conviction that the “greater German” idea was a product of the “logic of historical development,” and that the union of all Germans in one state was inevitable.<sup>5</sup> These beliefs became the foundation for Neubacher’s steadfast devotion to *Anschluss* in the following years.

Although he opposed Austrian independence, Neubacher was neutral toward republicanism, neither attacking it nor strongly exerting himself in its defense. On one issue his position was clear: monarchism was a lost cause. Beyond this, constitutional questions were subordinate to the problem of union in his thinking. His attitude toward politics—based on the assumption that the true patriot stands above partisan quarrels—was widely shared in interwar Austria and probably did as much to undermine free institutions as more dramatic, open attacks on parliamentarianism by extremists.

3. Private interview with Caroline Neubacher, Vienna, Aug. 20, 1972; Caroline Neubacher to the author, Vienna, Nov. 6, 1971; *Die Presse* (Vienna), July 3, 1960, p. 9.

4. *Der Anschluss: Mitteilungen des Österreichisch-Deutschen Volksbundes* (Vienna), Sept. 21, 1929, p. 2.

5. *Ibid.*, Nov. 15, 1927, p. 1.

In 1920 Neubacher met two men who were to play important roles in Austrian politics. In that year he married the daughter of Wilhelm Löschnig, a minor Lower Austrian official and member of the Christian Social Party. Through his wife's family, Neubacher met the future Austrian chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, who was a former student and close friend of Herr Löschnig. In the following years Dollfuss was a frequent guest in the Neubacher household and the two men became close acquaintances, although never genuine friends.<sup>6</sup> This was due, in part, to differences regarding the church. Dollfuss, trained originally for the priesthood, championed political Catholicism, whereas Neubacher, while not doctrinaire, shared the anticlericalism of prewar Pan-Germanism.

A second, more important acquaintance was Arthur Seyss-Inquart, a young attorney from the former Habsburg province of Moravia. By chance the Neubacher and Seyss-Inquart families found rooms in the same house in suburban Vienna soon after the war. From this, and the fact that both men had served as officers in Italy, a lifelong friendship developed between the two families. Between 1920 and 1938 the wives and children often spent summer holidays together. As for the men, their temperaments, although quite different, seemed to complement one another: Neubacher had an outgoing personality and was a persuasive speaker and conversationalist; Seyss-Inquart was quiet, cautious, and reserved in his dealings with others. Both shared the conviction that Austria and Germany should unite.<sup>7</sup>

Soon after the war Neubacher, Dollfuss, and Seyss-Inquart joined a secret nationalist fraternity called the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*. The history of this organization is still obscure, but it is known to have included a number of prominent men, among them Field Marshal Karl Bardolff, the university professors Othmar Spann and Alfons Dopsch, and the archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Piffl. The goals of the organization, an ephemeral product of middle-class anti-Semitism and the "red scare" of the early twenties, included the cultivation of "folk consciousness," the conquest of *Ungeradatum* (a euphemism for Marxism and Jewry), and *Anschluss*. As fear of communism diminished and economic conditions improved, the organization declined and finally died in 1930. Both Seyss-Inquart and Dollfuss played leading roles in the *Deutsche Gemein-*

6. Private interview with Caroline Neubacher, Vienna, Aug. 20, 1972.

7. *Ibid.*; Caroline Neubacher to the author, Vienna, Nov. 6, 1971; Wolfgang Rosar, *Deutsche Gemeinschaft: Seyss-Inquart und der Anschluss* (Vienna, 1971), p. 20.

*schaft* during the middle twenties, but Neubacher was not an active member. The club provided a link with fellow veterans and a place to discuss the problem of German unity, but Neubacher soon became skeptical of achieving *Anschluss* via conspiratorial tactics and conceived a more ambitious plan: the creation of a nonpartisan *Anschluss* organization which embraced all the major parties, including Social Democracy, a sworn enemy of the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*.<sup>8</sup>

Austrian Social Democracy had emerged from the war firmly committed to the idea of union with Germany, albeit in the interests of a social revolution in central Europe. Unable to form an enduring national government, its leaders nevertheless controlled until 1934 the municipality of Vienna, where they sponsored a model program of social reform and public housing. It was this program which attracted Neubacher to the Socialist camp in 1921, when he took a position with the *Gemeinschaftliche Siedlungs und Baustoffanstalt* (Gesiba), a corporation formed by the city government to finance and supply its housing project.<sup>9</sup>

The president of Gesiba was Julius Deutsch, the man who in 1923 would found the Socialist paramilitary force, the *Republikanischer Schutzbund*. Under Deutsch, Neubacher rapidly won fame as an expert in public finance, mainly by virtue of his successful reorganization of a number of unprofitable construction-materials companies which were absorbed by Gesiba. In 1924 he was appointed general director of Gesiba, a post which he held until the firm was reorganized by the Schuschnigg government in 1934.<sup>10</sup> His association with Gesiba brought Neubacher into a close working relationship with the leaders of Austrian Marxism and he cultivated friendships with some of them, including Deutsch and the economist Hugo Breitner. This, along with frequent visits to the Soviet Union in the 1920s as a commercial representative of the Vienna government, won him the reputation of a “fellow traveler” in some conservative and nationalist circles. Actually, despite close personal and pro-

8. Rosar, *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, pp. 29–37, 47; Gordon Brook-Shepherd, *Dollfus* (London, 1961), pp. 28–29.

9. Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund in Wien, “Anschlusspolitik 1925–1938: Zeitungsausschnittsammlung,” 120 vols. (hereafter ZAS), vol. 118: *Wiener Handelsblatt*, Oct. 5, 1926. This collection of newspaper clippings, now in the *Wiener Stadtbibliothek*, was begun in 1925 immediately after Neubacher founded the Austro-German People’s League (see below) and contains items from Austrian and foreign newspapers relating to the theme of *Anschluss*. In most cases page numbers are missing.

10. Julius Deutsch, *Ein Weiter Weg: Lebenserinnerungen* (Vienna, 1960), pp. 157–58; ZAS, vol. 118: *Wiener Handelsblatt*, Oct. 5, 1926.

fessional ties with Social Democracy and a genuine commitment to social reform, Neubacher was not sympathetic toward Marxism; he was, rather, a municipal socialist in the tradition of Vienna's turn-of-the-century mayor, Karl Lueger, with an added interest in introducing Ebenezer Howard's "garden city" idea of urban reform to Austria.<sup>11</sup> None of this undermined his position in the city government, however, for he was recognized as a talented administrator who could help Social Democracy realize its plans for Vienna. Thus, Neubacher was able to combine middle-class nationalism and a cordial association with socialism, a fact of immeasurable importance for his activity as an *Anschluss* propagandist.

In 1925 Neubacher played a leading role in the formation of two closely related *Anschluss* organizations in Vienna, the Austro-German Action Society (*Österreichisch-Deutscher Arbeitsgemeinschaft*) and the Austro-German People's League (*Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund*). Both began as offshoots of the *Deutsch-Österreichischer Volksbund*, a Berlin organization led by Paul Löbe, the Social Democratic president of the German Reichstag. Löbe's group had originally been established in late 1918 to lobby for Austro-German union on the basis of national self-determination. It never attained real numerical power, however, and did not seek to extend its influence to Austria until 1925, when Löbe gave his blessing to Neubacher and other Viennese organizers.<sup>12</sup>

Of the two Viennese groups the Action Society was founded first, on May 3, 1925. It was composed of a relatively small group of concerned specialists (420 in 1930) who published their opinions on legal, economic, and cultural problems related to *Anschluss* in a journal called *Deutsche Einheit*. Neubacher was a founding member and, along with

11. According to Neubacher's understanding, Marxism fostered class struggle and therefore contradicted the "fundamental truth" that "a nation is a special kind of organism, indivisible, necessarily dependent on all its parts." See Archiv der Stadt Wien, H. A. Akten, Bürgermeister, NS-Zeit (Neubacher, Blaschke 1938-1944, Aussprachen), Schachtel 1-18, Mappe 35 (hereafter ASW, Neubacher-Blaschke), no. 38, Nov. 26, 1938.

12. *Österreich-Deutschland* (Berlin) 2, no. 3 (Mar. 1925): 21; Hermann Neubacher, "Die Organisationen für den österreichisch-deutschen Zusammenschluss," in Friedrich F. G. Kleinwaechter and Heinz von Paller, eds., *Die Anschlussfrage in ihrer kulturellen, politischen und wirtschaftlichen Bedeutung* (Vienna, 1930), pp. 605-17; Mary Margaret Ball, *Post-War German Austrian Relations: The Anschluss Movement, 1918-1936* (Stanford, Cal., 1937); Stanley Suval, *The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era: A Study of Nationalism in Germany and Austria* (Baltimore, Md., 1974), pp. 30-41. Suval estimates the peak enrollment of Löbe's organization at about 21,000.

the economist Gustav Stolper and Benedikt Kautsky (the son of Karl Kautsky), he helped draft the outlines of its program.<sup>13</sup>

The Action Society, however, was less important than the Austro-German People's League, founded on June 4, 1925, and conceived as a "nonpartisan mass organization" which did "not discriminate between party affiliation, ideology, or religion, only between friends and enemies of *Anschluss*."<sup>14</sup> Neubacher was the architect of the People's League and became its president, an office he held until 1935. His program, modeled on that of the older Berlin group, was designed to complement the work of the smaller, academically oriented Action Society: by organizing one million members he hoped to influence world opinion and persuade the League of Nations to sanction a plebiscite on the question of German union.<sup>15</sup>

For a decade, Neubacher's name was virtually synonymous with the People's League. He was its most active speaker and the chief organizer of numerous public demonstrations, which were its primary means of influencing opinion. In addition, he edited a monthly (later bimonthly) press review called *Der Anschluss*, which appeared between 1927 and 1933 and had a peak circulation of about eight thousand. The national headquarters of the People's League was even located in his Gesiba office on the Währingerstrasse in Vienna. As a respected public figure with connections in all the ideological camps, Neubacher was able to fashion the People's League into a meeting ground of sorts for Austria's warring factions; its original executive included representatives of all parties except the Communists and the Nazis. Among the names that stand out today are those of the Vienna city councilman Paul Speiser and Benedikt Kautsky (Social Democrats), university professors Han Eibl (Christian Social) and Wilhelm Bauer (*Grossdeutsch*), Ernst Molden, an editor of the liberal *Neue Freie Presse*, and Gustav Stolper, whose journal *Der österreichische Volkswirt* was one of the most influential voices for *An-*

13. "Das österreichische Wirtschaftsproblem: Denkschrift der österreichisch-deutschen Arbeitsgemeinschaft," *Der österreichische Volkswirt* (Vienna) 17, no. 42 (July 18, 1925): 1153-60; Toni Stolper, *Ein Leben in Brennpunkten unserer Zeit: Gustav Stolper, 1888-1947* (Tübingen, 1960), p. 167.

14. *Der Anschluss*, Sept. 21, 1929, p. 2.

15. *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna), June 5, 1925 (morning ed.), pp. 4-5; International Military Tribunal, *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal*, 42 vols. (Nuremberg, 1947-49) (hereafter *IMT*), 11: 433-35; Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund/Wien, *Warum fordern wir den Anschluss?* (Vienna, 1926); Paul Löbe and Dr. Ing. Neubacher, *Die österreichisch-deutsche Anschlussbewegung* (Wurzen, Germany, 1926).



*schluss*. Neubacher's friend Seyss-Inquart was treasurer of the organization.<sup>16</sup>

Support for the loosely structured People's League was, however, unevenly distributed among the ideological camps. Its strongest pillar, at least prior to 1933, was Viennese Social Democracy. Until Hitler came to power in Germany, the Socialist Party and its affiliated trade unions actively supported *Anschluss*, and the People's League enjoyed their official endorsement. Many leading Socialists spoke and wrote in behalf of the organization, among them Deutsch, Breitner, Otto Bauer, and Karl Renner. Moreover, Vienna's Socialist government contributed an annual average of ten thousand schillings to support its work.<sup>17</sup> At early demonstrations Socialist influence was so conspicuous that the anti-Marxist press more than once erroneously denounced the organization as a front for "bolshevism."<sup>18</sup>

Less important than the large, disciplined Socialist movement were nationalist parties such as the *Grossdeutsche Volkspartei* and the *Landbund*. Neubacher had close ties with these groups through nationalist societies such as the *Deutsche Klub*, the gymnastics fraternities, and the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*. By inclination he was most at home in the nationalist camp, although he did not share the rigid anti-Marxism, anti-Semitism, or *Los von Rom* fanaticism associated with its extremist wing. Many nationalist leaders played prominent roles in the People's League but, in the long run, the nationalist parties were too weak and fragmented to contribute significantly to the organization, either in numerical or in financial terms.

The Christian Social Party was divided on the issue of union with Germany and was, for the People's League, the least important of the political groups. Those Christian Socials who supported *Anschluss*, particularly the academics, enthusiastically identified themselves with Neubacher's efforts, but influential traditionalists within the party feared the consequences of merger with the predominantly Protestant and heavily socialist German Republic. This faction broadcast its views in the *Reichs-*

16. Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund in Wien, *Was will der Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund?* (Vienna, 1926).

17. N. von Preradovich, *Die Wilhelmstrasse und Anschluss Österreichs 1918–1933* (Bern, 1971), p. 183.

18. The Christian Social *Reichspost*, for example, reported the presence of uniformed *Schutzbund* members at ceremonies honoring a visit by Paul Löbe to Vienna in 1925, and wondered if, by "Anschluss," the People's League meant union with Germany or Soviet Russia. ZAS, vol. 1: *Reichspost* (Vienna), Aug. 30 and 31, 1925.

*post*, which was one of Neubacher's most severe critics. The leaders of the party—Seipel and later Dollfuss—were ambivalent about *Anschluss* and reserved toward the People's League; Seipel, in a now well known letter of 1928, privately confided that while he supported *Anschluss* in principle, he opposed "premature agitation."<sup>19</sup> Thus, Neubacher was unable to win the official endorsement of Christian Socialism; and, since the clericals were the dominant party in interwar Austria, his efforts to obtain the financial backing of the government went unrewarded.

This weakness was partially offset by secret contributions from Germany. Between 1925 and 1932 both the People's League and the Action Society received, usually via Löbe, substantial assistance from the German ministries of interior and foreign affairs. The Reich ministry of interior, for example, allocated some fifteen thousand marks to the People's League for "Deutschumpflege" in 1930. These funds were drastically curtailed in 1931–32, however, when the world depression struck central Europe.<sup>20</sup>

The tactical philosophy of the People's League was borrowed directly from Löbe and based on the premise that the League of Nations Council could be persuaded to rectify the injustices of the peace settlement. When queried in 1929 regarding the use of force as a possible means of resolving the problem of union, Neubacher affirmed his opposition to direct action, arguing that violence would only tarnish Austria's image abroad; the best solution, he maintained, was a resolute dedication to *Anschluss* diplomacy through international channels.<sup>21</sup> Throughout the 1930s he continued to oppose the use of force as self-defeating. Yet Neubacher embodied within himself much of the ambivalence characteristic of interwar Austria, and his pronouncements on *Anschluss* reveal a fundamental contradiction in his approach to the problem. On the one hand, he appealed to reason, depicting German union as part of an irresistible global trend toward larger, more efficient geopolitical units. On

19. Paul R. Sweet, "Seipel's Views on *Anschluss* in 1928: An Unpublished Exchange of Letters," *Journal of Modern History* 19, no. 4 (Dec. 1947): 320–23. See also Suval, *The Anschluss Question*, pp. 37, 44–45; and Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel: Christian Statesman in a Time of Crisis* (Princeton, N.J., 1972), pp. 112–17, 301–6. To my knowledge there is no adequate study of Dollfuss's relationship to the *Anschluss* movement. See Rosar, *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, pp. 32–37.

20. Preradovich, *Die Wilhelmstrasse*, pp. 180–89; U.S. National Archives (hereafter NA), unsigned report to Wirth, Nov. 20, 1930, Microcopy T-120 (German Foreign Office), roll 2492, frames E266802–3 (hereafter T-120/2492/E266802–3); *ibid.*, Lerchenfeld to Dr. Emminger, Dec. 2, 1930, T-120/2492/E266842–43.

21. *Der Anschluss*, Sept. 21, 1929, p. 2.

occasion, he even argued that *Anschluss* could serve as a model for other states to follow toward the goal of European unity. As a propagandist, however, his real effectiveness lay in the emotional appeal of his speeches and editorials, which were replete with denunciations of French and Czech diplomacy and stressed that *Anschluss* was the necessary product of a unique history which bound Austria and Germany in a “community of destiny.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, despite his essentially moderate approach to the *Anschluss* question, it cannot be said that Neubacher’s rhetoric always nourished a spirit of patience and conciliation among his followers.

Between 1925 and 1933 the People’s League staged numerous demonstrations, the largest and most successful of which occurred in conjunction with the Schubert Centennial, a festival held in Vienna in July 1928 to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the composer’s death. The Schubert festival was one of the most important demonstrations for German unity in the 1920s, attracting singers, musicians, and travelers from throughout Europe, and from abroad. Capitalizing on the enthusiasm aroused by the festival, the People’s League organized demonstrations not only in Vienna, but in Styria and the Burgenland, and founded chapters in Graz and Eisenstadt.<sup>23</sup>

The Schubert Centennial inaugurated a period of rapid growth for the People’s League, and by April 1929 it had achieved its goal of one million members. This included the Viennese parent chapter and branches in Linz, Graz, Eisenstadt, Salzburg, and Klagenfurt, important because they reflected support for *Anschluss* outside of “red” Vienna. The organization attained its peak strength in 1930, when it claimed to speak for 1.8 million Austrians and to represent two-thirds of the electorate.<sup>24</sup> These figures, undoubtedly inflated due to Neubacher’s practice of enrolling entire organizations—trade unions, social clubs, professional societies, etc.—are nonetheless impressive for a country of less than seven million inhabitants.<sup>25</sup>

Writing in 1930, Neubacher optimistically interpreted the growth of his organization as a sign of “successful settlement of the [*Anschluss*] issue within greater Germany” and “hard-won recognition abroad of the urgency of European economic integration, of which Austro-Ger-

22. *Ibid.*, Aug. 15, 1928, p. 2; *Neue Freie Presse*, July 20, 1928 (morning ed.), p. 6.

23. *Der Anschluss*, Nov. 12, 1928, p. 1; Dec. 15, 1928, p. 1; Jan. 26, 1929, p. 1.

24. *Der Anschluss*, Apr. 27, 1929, p. 1; Nov. 29, 1930, p. 1.

25. Preradovich, *Der nationale Gedanke*, p. 21; cf. Suval, *The Anschluss Question*, pp. 43–44.

man union must gradually emerge as the natural starting point.”<sup>26</sup> This observation, while not inaccurate regarding the situation in Austria and Germany, seriously exaggerated and misinterpreted the impact of *Anschluss* propaganda abroad. For, although a few foreign scholars knew of the People’s League and understood its motives, its activities were followed neither closely nor sympathetically in the foreign press. This is reflected in the large file of newspaper clippings assembled by the organization, which consists mainly of items from the Austrian and German press. Although clippings from French and east European newspapers are numerous, they are generally hostile. The Italian press is sparsely represented, and the paucity of clippings from English and American newspapers testifies to the meager and partially negative impact of *Anschluss* propaganda on Anglo-American opinion.<sup>27</sup> The real importance of the People’s League, it would appear, lies less in the achievement of its primary goal—the revision of foreign opinion—than in the fact that it helped prepare Austria for an overly optimistic reception of the customs union proposals of 1931.

The creation of an Austro-German customs union, one of Neubacher’s key demands, was widely discussed in the 1920s as an alternative to French proposals for a “Danubian federation” of Habsburg succession states, and in 1930 Vienna and Berlin secretly began negotiations on the question. At about the same time, Neubacher noticeably intensified his support for an economic union. Disregarding the possible legal restrictions—such as the Geneva Protocols of 1922, which required Austria to avoid economic agreements which might compromise its independence—Neubacher maintained that “there are no international legal obstacles to the customs union.”<sup>28</sup> He greeted the plan, announced on March 21, 1931, as the “first practical result” of the work of the People’s League, and predicted with “complete certainty” that it would succeed.<sup>29</sup> When the governments of France and Czechoslovakia attacked the project as a threat to European security, Neubacher responded by stressing that it provided not only for Austro-German membership, but also encouraged the participation of other states, especially the agrarian nations of eastern Europe; by easing the economic plight of these countries, he argued, it would actually contribute to peace. During the summer the People’s

26. Neubacher, “Die Organisationen,” p. 617.

27. See, for example, the *New York Times*, July 25, 1928, p. 4.

28. *Der Anschluss*, July 22, 1930, p. 1; Sept. 30, 1930, p. 1.

29. *Der Anschluss*, Mar. 28, 1931, p. 1; Nov. 29, 1930, p. 1.

League intensified its propaganda, sponsoring lectures and rallies in every part of Austria.

On May 11, two months after the customs union debate began, the Austrian *Creditanstalt* collapsed and central Europe was plunged into the world depression. Neubacher, who was later appointed to a three-man commission to study the bank's failure, was closely attuned to the financial problems of the state, which seemed to confirm what he had always maintained—that independent Austria was economically viable. For Neubacher, *Anschluss* had always been a question of survival; the failure of the *Creditanstalt*, coming precisely at the time of the customs union controversy, added a new element of urgency to his thinking and transformed the unionist cause into a real life-and-death struggle.

The rejection of the customs union project by the Hague Court in September was a crucial turning point in the history of the Austrian *Anschluss* movement. The negative ruling had a sobering effect on all supporters of *Anschluss*, and especially on Neubacher, who had assured his readers throughout the summer that the verdict would be favorable. Moreover, before the impact of the court's decision could dissipate, Neubacher's career suffered an unexpected reverse which contributed to his decision to reevaluate the entire question of *Anschluss* strategy: in February 1932 Count Clauzel, the French ambassador, intervened with the Austrian government and blocked Neubacher's attempt to become a member of the reformed executive of the *Creditanstalt*.<sup>30</sup>

In March, Neubacher published a pamphlet which revealed the extent of his personal bitterness and reflected a shift in his thinking about *Anschluss*. Entitled *Der Kampf um Mitteleuropa*,<sup>31</sup> the tract was an exercise in geopolitics which purported to offer statistical proof of the "natural relationship" between Germany, Austria, and the other Habsburg succession states. Its argument, however, is less arresting than its tone, which is impatient and aggressively nationalistic. Previously Neubacher had reserved his invectives for France and Czechoslovakia; now he denounced the League of Nations and the system of international law as well, condemning them as mere tools of French diplomacy. In light of the failure of the customs union project he concluded that the "League of Nations" was a senseless contradiction in terms and predicted that it would soon fossilize and die.

Anger and frustration were further compounded by the desperate ef-

30. NA, Rieth to Ritter, Feb. 22, 1932, T-120/5195/κ467397-400.

31. Vienna, 1932.

forts of the Austrian government to stabilize the country's economy. Dollfuss, who became chancellor in May 1932, immediately secured an international loan of 300 million schillings, committing Austria in turn to the Protocol of Lausanne. Neubacher interpreted this agreement, which prohibited experiments in Austro-German union until 1952, as an instrument of international blackmail. By this time he was convinced that the problem of Austro-German union could not be solved through international agreement.<sup>32</sup> "Foreign credit and commissions of the League of Nations cannot save us," he had already written in the previous September. "The road to freedom will only be won through the most earnest efforts of national self-help."<sup>33</sup>

This appeal to "self-help" was the first public indication that Neubacher was shifting from the center to the right wing of the *Anschluss* movement; two months later, in November, this became clear when he praised rumored efforts of the Austrian National Socialist Party and the Styrian *Heimatschutz*, an offshoot of the right-wing *Heimwehr* movement distinguished by its support for German union, to draft a common program for *Anschluss*.<sup>34</sup> Such statements also presaged the decline of the People's League as an organ of mass opinion. Its coffers depleted by the recent propaganda campaign, the organization was on the brink of financial collapse. Its doctrines were bankrupt as well, for the philosophy of nonpartisan cooperation and international conciliation had led to a dead end. Although it survived in name until 1938, the People's League was killed by the Hague ruling of 1931.<sup>35</sup>

Neubacher's initial foray into partisan politics was as a member of the Styrian *Heimatschutz*. As a member of several nationalist fraternities, he

32. ASW, Neubacher-Blaschke, no. 11/3, May 11, 1938.

33. *Der Anschluss*, Sept. 21, 1931, p. 1; July 23, 1932, p. 1.

34. *Der Anschluss*, Nov. 12, 1931, p. 1.

35. In October 1933, the Social Democratic Party officially struck *Anschluss* from its program and withdrew its representatives from the executive of the People's League. During the next two years Neubacher's organization was watched by the police and meetings were sometimes cancelled. Following his arrest in June 1935 (see below) Neubacher resigned as president of the People's League. It remained dormant until June 1937, when Seyss-Inquart revived it as a forum for academic opponents of the Schuschnigg regime such as Srbik, Nadler, Menghin, and Eibl. The last meeting was held in Vienna on May 11, 1938. ASW, Neubacher-Blaschke, no. 11/3, May 11, 1938; Nuernberg, Military Tribunals, *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10*, 15 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1949-53) (hereafter NMT), 12: 694, memorandum of Captain Leopold, Aug. 7, 1937, doc. 3282-NG; ZAS, vol. 118: *Freie Stimmen* (Klagenfurt), June 26 and 29, 1937; Rosar, *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, p. 158; *Frankfurter Zeitung*, May 4, 1938 (Reich ed.), p. 2.



was well acquainted with most of the *Heimwehr* leaders, but he had hitherto rejected their militant anti-Marxism and emphasis on direct action.<sup>36</sup> In late 1932, however, both he and Seyss-Inquart joined the Styrian group.<sup>37</sup> The *Heimatschutz* was only one branch of the fragmented *Heimwehr* and offered scant promise of ever becoming a base for the mass movement Neubacher had sought to build since 1925. Nevertheless, it was through the *Heimatschutz* that he forged his first links with the National Socialist Party. Because *Anschluss* was a basic part of the Nazi program, Neubacher had followed the activities of the NSDAP for some time;<sup>38</sup> there is no indication, however, that he regarded National Socialism seriously before 1931. The Austrian Nazi Party, with only a few thousand members in the late 1920s, was not even represented on the executive of the People's League. But the People's League was ineffectual during the customs union and *Creditanstalt* crises, while Hitler's party grew rapidly in Germany and made startling gains in the Austrian provincial elections of April 1932. Considering political developments in Germany, it seemed reasonable to expect that the next national elections would make the Nazi Party a force in the Austrian parliament. For Neubacher, as for Seyss-Inquart, the NSDAP now became the logical vehicle for *Anschluss*. In April 1933, following the Nazi "seizure of power" in Germany, leaders of the Styrian *Heimatschutz* and the Austrian NSDAP concluded an alliance which recognized Adolf Hitler as "Führer of the German nation." Shortly thereafter an article appeared in *Der Panther*, the organ of the Styrian *Heimatschutz*, describing Neubacher as a man "who enjoys the trust of all greater German circles in Austria and the Reich." Henceforth Neubacher was intimately involved in the activities of the Austrian Nazi movement.<sup>39</sup>

36. *Der Anschluss*, Aug. 15, 1927, p. 1; Sept. 21, 1929, p. 2; Oct. 31, 1929, p. 1.

37. In light of Neubacher's remarks of May 11, 1938, in which he emphasized the importance of the Lausanne Protocol (July 1932) in reshaping his attitudes, it seems likely that he joined the *Heimatschutz* in the summer or autumn of 1932. Seyss-Inquart testified at Nuremberg that he (Seyss) joined the organization in the autumn. ASW, Neubacher-Blaschke, no. 11/3, May 11, 1938; *IMT*, 16: 81.

38. U.S. Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, 10 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1946-48) (hereafter *NCA*), 2: 958, Seyss-Inquart to Himmler, Aug. 19, 1939, doc. 3271-PS.

39. ZAS, vol. 118: *Der Panther* (Graz), Apr. 29, 1933; Rosar, *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, pp. 59-60. Neubacher did not officially receive a party number until May 1938. On relations between the Styrian *Heimatschutz* and the NSDAP see Bruce Frederick Pauley, *Hahnen-schwanz und Hakenkreuz: Steirischer Heimatschutz und österreichischer Nationalsozialismus 1918-1934* (Vienna, 1972).

As president of the People's League, Neubacher, conscious of the need to appeal to the widest possible audience, had never precisely defined the constitutional form which *Anschluss* should assume. As a participant in the Nazi movement, however, it became clear that his idea of Austrian self-determination was based on the idea of "home rule." Immediately he identified himself with the opponents of Theo Habicht, the German citizen whom Hitler had named "Landesinspekteur" for Austria in 1931. The leader of this opposition faction was Anton Reinthaller, who broke with Habicht in the spring of 1933 over the issue of terrorism. Reinthaller favored a negotiated settlement of the *Anschluss* question and, according to one of his followers, stood for a synthesis of Austrian "state consciousness" and the "greater national idea," hoping to transform the NSDAP into a national front composed of the Pan-German groups, the *Heimwehr*, and the nationalist wing of the Christian Social movement.<sup>40</sup> Under his leadership the so-called "national opposition" to Dollfuss developed.

It is a mark of the fluidity of Austrian politics that Neubacher's identification with Reinthaller's group coincided with an attempt by Dollfuss to draw him into the government. Neubacher's contacts with the Socialists, the *Heimatschutz*, and the moderate wing of the NSDAP made him a potentially valuable ally for the government, especially in Vienna, where he was associated with the popular housing program. In April 1933 Dollfuss offered Neubacher the position of undersecretary of state for labor. The chancellor's policies, however—negotiation of the Lausanne Protocol, and subsequently his suspension of parliament in March 1933—had opened a breach between the two men. Neubacher refused the post and at the same time, publicly declared himself a member of the national opposition.<sup>41</sup>

This incident was one of the first in a series of well-documented attempts by Dollfuss to reach an understanding with representatives of National Socialism and the *Anschluss* movement. For over a year he walked a diplomatic tightrope, fearing the "protection" of Mussolini nearly as much as the Austrian Nazis and domination by Berlin. Although attempts to deal with Habicht were fruitless and led to the banning of the Nazi Party in June, Dollfuss kept the back door open to

40. Franz Langoth, *Kampf um Österreich: Erinnerungen eines Politikers* (Wels, Austria, 1951), pp. 209, 383–84.

41. ZAS, vol. 118: (title missing), Apr. 23, 1933; Caroline Neubacher to the author, Vienna, Nov. 6, 1971.



Reinthaller's national opposition, hoping to find someone other than Habicht with whom to negotiate. In the late spring of 1934, shortly before he was murdered, Dollfuss entertained a proposal, sponsored by Neubacher, to circumvent Habicht and deal with the higher leadership of the NSDAP in Berlin.<sup>42</sup>

Neubacher's strategy—which he discussed with Dollfuss in late May or early June<sup>43</sup>—was designed to capitalize on tensions within the Austrian Nazi movement and to take advantage of recent international developments. Like almost every aspect of Austrian life, the NSDAP suffered from acute factionalism; since mid-1933 the movement had been divided by a struggle between Habicht (supported by a small SS organization) and the SA, led in Austria by Hermann Reschny. As early as November 1933, Ernst Röhm, chief of the SA, began to take a personal interest in the rivalry, which intensified following the civil war in February 1934.<sup>44</sup> Through contacts at the German embassy, Neubacher knew that Habicht's credit in Berlin had begun to decline after February and that, in deference to Mussolini, Hitler was adopting a more flexible Austrian policy, based on a gradual settlement of the *Anschluss* question. At the same time, prospects for an agreement with Dollfuss seemed promising, since the Austrian chancellor was himself involved in a desperate struggle with the *Heimwehr* members of his cabinet—Prince Starhemberg and Emil Fey—to win the support of nationalist forces.

In their meeting Dollfuss and Neubacher discussed the possibility of the latter's becoming leader of the NSDAP in Austria (presumably through Röhm's influence), and Dollfuss promised the national opposition four cabinet posts if Neubacher replaced Habicht. Unaware that Röhm's stock was declining even more rapidly than Habicht's, Neubacher carried his plan to the very top of the Nazi hierarchy, securing an audience with the *Führer* himself. When he attempted to discuss his

42. Dieter Ross, *Hitler und Dollfuss: Die deutsche Österreich-Politik 1933–1934* (Hamburg, 1966); Jürgen Gehl, *Austria, Germany and the Anschluss, 1931–1938* (London, 1963), pp. 45–87.

43. U.S. Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945*. 13 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1957–64), series C (1933–36) (hereafter *DGFP*), 3: 47, Habicht to Hüffer, June 18, 1934, doc. 17. This report is the only record of the Neubacher plan. Ross believes that it was written by Otto Wächter (an agent of Habicht) shortly before Hitler's meeting with Mussolini in Venice on June 14–15, and that it was instrumental in Habicht's final decision to launch a putsch in July. Ross, *Hitler and Dollfuss*, p. 229.

44. Helmuth Auerbach, "Eine nationalsozialistische Stimme zum Wiener Putsch vom 25. July 1934," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 12 (Jan. 1964): 201–18; Ross, *Hitler und Dollfuss*, pp. 113–17, 184, 214.

project, however, Hitler avoided the issue and asked him not to talk about Austria at all. Habicht, still confident of Hitler's support, warned Neubacher not to accept an invitation to visit Röhm while he was in Germany.<sup>45</sup>

The purge of Röhm on June 20 brought the project to a sudden halt, and Neubacher was fortunate that his career in Nazi politics was not ended by his association with the SA leader. His future would almost certainly have been darker had it not been for the fact that, less than a month after the liquidation of Röhm, Theo Habicht was himself recalled by an enraged Hitler for having planned the putsch of July 25 in which Dollfuss was killed. Neubacher was arrested by the Austrian police and held briefly on suspicion of complicity in the putsch, but he was soon released for lack of evidence. Although his precise relationship to the events of July 25 remains unclear,<sup>46</sup> a persuasive reason for believing that he was not actually involved is the fact that the attempted coup was carried out by members of the Austrian SS *Standarte* 89. It is unlikely that Neubacher's close ties with the SA—which did not participate in the putsch—and his long hostility to Habicht would have made him welcome among the conspirators, even had he wanted to become involved.

The putsch altered the situation in Austria. Hitler, anxious to disassociate himself from the affair, made it clear that—for the present—there was to be no direct contact between the Reich and the Nazi movement in Austria.<sup>47</sup> This gave the national opposition leaders what appeared to be a new chance to shape the movement without interference from the north, albeit in even less favorable circumstances than had existed before July 25.

45. *DGFP*, 3: 47, Habicht to Hüffer, June 18, 1934, doc. 17; cf. Gehl, *Austria, Germany and the Anschluss*, p. 94; Ross, *Hitler und Dollfuss*, p. 299.

46. Otto Wächter and Rudolf Weydenhammer, two of the leading conspirators, later wrote accounts of the putsch. Neither mentioned Neubacher in connection with the plot, although Weydenhammer stated that he talked briefly with Neubacher in the vicinity of the Ballhausplatz on the afternoon of July 25, while members of the SS *Standarte* 89 were occupying the chancellery. Rudolf Weydenhammer, "Bericht über die Erhebung der Nationalsozialisten am 25. Juli 1934 in Wien," NSDAP Hauptarchiv, The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, reel 33, folder 634, frames 212ff. (written shortly after the *Anschluss* in 1938); Auerbach, "Eine nationalsozialistische Stimme," pp. 204–5; Rosar, *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, pp. 74–75.

47. According to Hitler's deputy, Hess, "The Austrian NSDAP must decide where and in what form they will build a new party by themselves." *DGFP*, 3: 352–53, Hess to Frauenfeld, Aug. 21, 1934, doc. 173.

Although Schuschnigg, the new chancellor, was less flexible than the agile Dollfuss, certain of his actions encouraged the Reinthaller group to renew contacts with the government. Chief among these was Schuschnigg's toleration of the activities of the "Langoth Circle," a group formed by Franz Langoth after the July putsch to assist the families of imprisoned and exiled Nazis. It was also well known that, like Dollfuss, Schuschnigg distrusted Mussolini and the influence he exercised through the *Heimwehr* members of the government. Under these circumstances Reinthaller launched a fresh effort to reach an accommodation with the government. Meanwhile, he assigned Neubacher the task of reorganizing the illegal Nazi party.<sup>48</sup>

The July putsch had thrown the party into chaos, and Neubacher sought to use the opportunity to bring it under the control of the Reinthaller faction. His major difficulty, aside from keeping his activities hidden from the authorities, was winning the acceptance of the militant older members of the party who opposed Reinthaller for advocating compromise with the government. The subsequent failure of the "Reinthaller Action," which culminated in an unsuccessful October meeting between Schuschnigg, Starhemberg, and a delegation of the national opposition (including Neubacher),<sup>49</sup> forced Reinthaller to renounce his claim to party leadership in favor of Neubacher, who assumed the task of keeping the moderate position alive. A struggle for leadership of the party ensued, the national opposition grouping itself around Neubacher, the older members rallying behind Joseph Leopold, a senior party member from Lower Austria. Leopold consistently opposed the evolutionary strategy favored by Reinthaller, Neubacher, and their successor, Seyss-Inquart; reluctant to adapt his own ideas to the shifting policies of Berlin, he ultimately became a black sheep in the party and was ordered out of Austria by Hitler shortly before the *Anschluss* in 1938. He was a formidable opponent, nonetheless, and proved stronger than Neubacher, who was handicapped by his lack of seniority, his past association with

48. NA, report by Prinz zu Erbach, "Bisherige Ergebnislosigkeit der Verständigungsaktion Reinthaller," Oct. 18, 1934, T-77 (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, OKW) /900/5653797-805; NCA, 2: 962-63, Seyss-Inquart, "The Austrian Question, 1934-1938," Sept. 9, 1945, doc. 3254-PS; DGFP, 3: 334, memorandum by Hüffer, Aug. 20, 1934, doc. 166.

49. NA, report by Prinz zu Erbach, Oct. 18, 1934, T-77/900/5653797-805; Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Memoiren* (Vienna, 1971), pp. 209-14. Secondary accounts of the failure of the Reinthaller action are plentiful. See Gehl, *Austria, Germany and the Anschluss*, p. 105.

Austrian Marxism, and his former connections with the SA leadership and the Styrian *Heimatschutz*.<sup>50</sup> The struggle, which lasted well into the spring of 1935, soon attracted a wider audience. As early as January 1935, the press reported rumors that Neubacher was the new Nazi leader, and surmised that the information had been leaked by his enemies as a way of eliminating him. In May a Vienna newspaper named Leopold as chief of the illegal Nazis and Neubacher as the “grey eminence” of the movement.<sup>51</sup> On June 21 the police searched Neubacher’s residence and office, uncovering documents which enabled them to arrest Neubacher, Leopold, and a number of others. Both men were tried for illegal political activity and sentenced to periods of imprisonment.<sup>52</sup>

This arrest ended Neubacher’s political activity in Austria for a period of three years. Although he was released after the Austro-German agreement of July 11, 1936 (which included an amnesty for political prisoners), Neubacher renounced his claim to party leadership and took a position with I. G. Farben in Berlin. In Austria the struggle between the moderate and radical wings of the *Anschluss* movement was renewed in the form of a rivalry between Seyss-Inquart and Leopold (also released by the 1936 amnesty), but Neubacher was not directly involved. Between January 1937 and March 1938 he worked for Farben as a specialist in the economic affairs of Austria and southeastern Europe and traveled widely in the Balkans, where he gained experience which qualified him for diplomatic posts in the area during World War II. He played no role in the events immediately leading to *Anschluss* in 1938.<sup>53</sup>

The final chapter in Neubacher’s involvement in the *Anschluss* movement began on March 13, 1938, when he was appointed mayor of Vienna under Austria’s new chancellor, Seyss-Inquart. The appointment was tactical; Neubacher’s past association with Social Democracy and its popular housing program made him one of the few figures in Nazi circles qualified to exploit working-class hostility toward the Schusch-

50. *IMT*, 34: 1–11, speech by Rainer, Mar. 11, 1942, doc. 4005-PS; *IMT*, 26: 349–51, report by Rainer, July 6, 1939, doc. 812-PS. The struggle was complicated by a rivalry between “old fighters” of the NSDAP and men who had entered the movement via the *Heimatschutz*, who were never completely accepted.

51. ZAS, vol. 118: *Telegraf am Mittag* (Vienna), Jan. 15, 1935, and *Der Österreicher* (Vienna), May 3, 1935.

52. *IMT*, 34: 1–11, speech by Rainer, Mar. 11, 1942, doc. 4405-PS; *IMT*, 26: 349–51, report by Rainer, July 6, 1939, doc. 812-PS; Langoth, *Kampf um Österreich*, p. 202.

53. *NMT*, 7: 1397–98, extracts from the minutes of Farben’s Commercial Committee, Mar. 23, 1938, doc. 9289-NI; private interview with Caroline Neubacher, Vienna, Aug. 20, 1972; Rosar, *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, p. 264.

nigg regime and to prepare the city for the plebiscite of April 10 on the question of union. To this end he revived the idea that the NSDAP was a social revolutionary party, pledging the Vienna workers a “socialism of the deed” and promising an end to unemployment by the end of the year.<sup>54</sup>

Immediately, Neubacher began a program to reinstate Socialist activists dismissed from municipal jobs by the Schuschnigg government and, in numerous speeches, tried to win the support of former *Schutzbund* members, basing his appeal on the idea that both Socialists and Nazis had waged a revolutionary struggle against the clerical dictatorship. Depicting National Socialism as an alternative to capitalism, he emphasized rationalization and planning as essential aspects of Nazi economic policy.<sup>55</sup> On March 31 he unveiled plans for a housing program modeled on that of the Social Democrats, and public housing became a major theme of his speeches for several months. During the summer he also outlined ambitious proposals for public works in Vienna to create employment and prepare Vienna for a new role as the Third Reich’s gateway to southeastern Europe.<sup>56</sup>

Neubacher’s sincerity in these matters is indisputable since, next to *Anschluss*, his major concern had always been municipal reform. Initially, he seems to have been fairly successful in rallying support for the NSDAP; in April the *Times* correspondent reported that “Of all the local Nazis, Dr. Neubacher, the new Burgomaster of Vienna, has probably done the most to conciliate those, especially in the working class, who do not have Nazi convictions.”<sup>57</sup> Since municipal reform was never a genuine priority of the higher officials of the Reich, however, Neubacher’s housing and public-works programs, which would have taken decades to complete, hardly got off the ground. Over a year after

54. ASW, Neubacher-Blaschke, no. 11/1, Apr. 25, 1938. An illustrated booklet, *Die nationalsozialistische Revolution in Wien: Bildbericht über die Wiener Ereignisse vom 11 März bis 10 April 1938* (Vienna, 1938), conveys the spirit of the propaganda campaign; Neubacher wrote the introduction.

55. *Wiener Zeitung*, Apr. 1, 1938, p. 4, and Apr. 8, 1938, p. 7; ASW, Neubacher-Blaschke, no. 18/7, Oct. 10, 1938.

56. *Wiener Zeitung*, Apr. 1, 1938, p. 10; *Neue Freie Presse*, Aug. 1, 1938 (Monday ed.), p. 3; *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Dec. 9, 1938 (Reich ed.), Southeast Europe supplement, p. 9; ASW, Neubacher-Blaschke, no. 12/6, July 16, 1938. Friedrich Heer, *Der Glaube des Adolf Hitler: Anatomie einer politischen Religiosität* (Munich, 1968), p. 416, describes Neubacher’s interest in southeastern Europe as representative of a “k.-k.-österreichisch-ostmärkischer Nationalsozialismus.”

57. *The Times* (London), Apr. 2, 1938, p. 11.

the *Anschluss*, the housing situation in Vienna was still described as critical, and Neubacher was forced to qualify his earlier promises.<sup>58</sup>

Following the plebiscite of April 10, Neubacher's prominence in Austria's "new order," like that of many other former leaders of the national opposition, rapidly diminished. Inevitably he became involved in the power struggle between his longtime friend Seyss-Inquart and Joseph Bürckel, the Rhinelanders who came to Vienna to act as "coordinator" of *Gleichschaltung* with the Reich. Bürckel, who surrounded himself with associates from the Rhineland, quickly replaced Seyss as the most important man in Austria. In June 1938 rumors circulated that Seyss and Neubacher had submitted grievances to Hitler at Berchtesgaden, only to be rudely rebuffed.<sup>59</sup> Seyss was quickly pushed to the periphery of Austrian affairs, and eventually excluded entirely. Neubacher suffered a similar fate: in late 1938 Bürckel's staff began to prepare a case against the new mayor. The question of Neubacher's "bolshhevik" sympathies was revived, and he was also accused of association with the "most vile" Jewish circles. On the basis of these charges Bürckel reorganized the city government in February 1939, naming himself "Gauleiter" and "Reichstatthalter" of Vienna; Neubacher remained in the municipal government, but only as Bürckel's "general representative."<sup>60</sup> As the year wore on and Neubacher's authority continued to diminish, it became clear that he had no future in Vienna; when the opportunity presented itself he accepted a "temporary" position as economic advisor to the German embassy in Rumania, where he helped negotiate the Oil-Arms Agreement of May 1940. He was still formally a member of the Viennese government and, for a time, tried to maintain contact with Vienna from his post in Bucharest. He soon realized the futility of his efforts, however, especially after a new personality ar-

58. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Apr. 9, 1939 (Reich ed.), p. 5; ASW, Neubacher-Blaschke, no. 97, July 8, 1939. More important than new construction in dealing with the problem of working-class housing was the requisitioning of Jewish apartments, an aspect of the official anti-Semitism introduced by the NSDAP. Neubacher endorsed requisitioning but opposed the violent outbursts of popular anti-Semitism which followed the *Anschluss*. *Neue Freie Presse*, Mar. 17, 1938 (evening ed.), p. 1; Deutsch, *Ein Weiter Weg*, p. 158.

59. Arnold J. Toynbee and V. M. Boulter, eds., *Survey of International Affairs: 1938* (London, 1941), pp. 257-58.

60. NA, Bürckel to Göring, Oct. 15, 1938, T-84 (Miscellaneous German Records) /13/10360; NA, Bürckel to Göring, Oct. 27, 1938, T-84/13/10362-64; NA, Records of the Reichkommissar für die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs mit dem deutschen Reich, T-84/13/10368-72; *IMT*, 11: 434; *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Apr. 22, 1939 (Reich ed.), p. 2, and May 5, 1939 (Reich ed.), p. 10.



rived on the scene in the Austrian capital, one with even more influence than Bürckel: the Nazi youth leader, Baldur von Schirach. Schirach, who was appointed *Gauleiter* of Vienna by Hitler in the summer of 1940, was given access to the file concerning Neubacher's past and warned by Bürckel that Neubacher wanted to become "king of Vienna." The whole affair dissipated as the war progressed and Neubacher's "temporary" appointment with the foreign ministry became permanent.<sup>61</sup>

Neubacher's early career, no less than that of his friend Seyss-Inquart, mirrors the difficulties which beset interwar Austria. Political life in the first republic was a peculiar blend of lofty idealism and petty intrigue. In retrospect it is difficult to avoid the conclusion—shared by many Austrians at the time—that Austrian politics were absurdly parochial, that the issues debated so fiercely were too grand for the forum, that the "great social, cultural, and economic questions, the ones that affect the world," could never be resolved within the confines of the tiny state.<sup>62</sup> Underlying the tumult was one inescapable fact: regardless of ideological persuasion (or lack thereof) the majority of Austrians simply refused to accept the idea that they were no longer the ruling nationality of a great empire, that they were no longer a "historic people." No one expressed this feeling more clearly than Ignaz Seipel, twice chancellor of the republic, when he called the Austrians a "big-state people" with a mission yet to perform in the world.<sup>63</sup> In the minds of most Austrians, that ill-defined mission would be fulfilled within the context of some form of union with Germany.

For many people—particularly in Vienna—Hermann Neubacher, the impartial career bureaucrat, became in the late 1920s a symbol of opposition to Austria's seemingly untenable situation. His Austro-German People's League, more effectively than any other organization, articulated popular resentment toward an ethically indefensible peace, one which forced Austria to "accommodate herself to artificial boundaries far below her historical and national level" and transformed her into a "stagnant pool . . . separated from the great living current of world events."<sup>64</sup> From his own point of view, Neubacher acted as a patriot, one who avoided the nostalgia of monarchism while working to recap-

61. NA, Neubacher to Wiehl, Apr. 17, 1940, T-120/1170/471746; ASW, Neubacher-Blaschke, no. 119, Mar. 9, 1940.

62. *Der Anschluss*, May 16, 1929, p. 1.

63. Sweet, "Seipel's Views," p. 323.

64. *Der Anschluss*, Oct. 31, 1929, p. 2.

ture for Austria the greatness she had once enjoyed as the heart of a cosmopolitan empire. The decisions and agreements of 1931–32 destroyed the work he had begun, and the triumphs of National Socialism in Germany and Austria confronted him with a critical choice. Like many of those who became leaders of the “national opposition,” Neubacher was by temperament a moderate who opposed the use of force and favored “legal” (i.e., bureaucratic) solutions to problems; but his uncompromising will for *Anschluss* made him a potential ally of radicalism and, in the end, he placed himself at the disposal of ultranationalism.<sup>65</sup>

Neubacher had always supported *Anschluss* in the name of self-determination, and he continued to do so after 1933 in the expectation that Austrian autonomy would be honored within the framework of the Third Reich. These were illusory hopes and, since 1938, they have been regularly cited as evidence of the naiveté of Hitler’s moderate supporters in Austria. Such charges are not entirely justified, however, since the precise meaning of “Anschluss” was never firmly established prior to March 1938, either in Austria or in Berlin. Under the circumstances, the idea that Austria might enjoy special status within a greater Germany did not necessarily seem invalid; indeed, it appears that only after his enthusiastic reception in Linz on March 12 did the *Führer* himself decide against a personal union of the two countries in favor of total absorption of Austria.<sup>66</sup> Once that decision was made, *Gleichschaltung* became the sobering epilogue to the history of the Austrian *Anschluss* movement.

Little is gained, however, by dismissing Neubacher and Hitler’s other moderate supporters as naive dupes, or as “crypto-Nazi” leaders of a “fifth column”; the history of interwar Austria has been too long obscured by oversimplification and emotionalism. The “*Anschluss* men” were essentially motivated by the desire to see Austrians determine their own fate; the irony is that in pursuing this goal so singlemindedly they unconsciously contributed to the destruction of their dream.

65. See the comments of Alexander Bernhard Spitzmüller-Harmersbach, “. . . *Und hat auch Ursach, es zu Lieben*” (Vienna, 1955), pp. 396–97.

66. Gehl, *Austria, Germany and the Anschluss*, pp. 194–95.