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# The American Reaction to Germany's Annexation of Austria

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The American Reaction to Germany's Annexation of

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BY

Mark A. Tarner

**THESIS**

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# The American Reaction to Germany's Annexation of Austria

by Mark A. Turner

## Abstract

Germany's annexation of Austria in March 1938 was the culmination of almost twenty years of Austrian dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Saint Germain, the lack of consistent political and economic support by the western democracies and the international instability of the 1930s. All these factors worked in favor of pro-Anschluss Germans and Austrians and to the handicap of the allies. Once Adolf Hitler came to power, he drastically changed German policy toward Austria. Anschluss had special significance for Hitler and his decision to abandon an evolutionary revision of Austria's political status to one of radical expansionism and annexation proved fatal to the independence of Austria.

Naturally, Germany's forced union with Austria drew world-wide attention and protest. Among the nations to object to Anschluss was the United States. Approaching the Anschluss, the United States had many domestic problems, which dictated what foreign policy the American government could pursue. The isolationists dominated not only the Middle West, but the entire nation and Congress as well.

President Roosevelt could not endanger his secure political position over a controversial foreign policy. However, at the end of 1937, the President decided to challenge isolation, advocating a gradual acknowledgment of America's role as a world power.

Only six months after Roosevelt's Quarantine Speech, Germany annexed Austria. The overt German action caused great concern in Washington, and even though the American reaction is significant, historians have not adequately focused on this event. Most importantly, Anschluss aided the passage of Roosevelt's naval rearmament program. The President also established an international organization responsible for Austrian refugees in the aftermath of the Austro-German Union. Though Roosevelt did not desire an unnecessary rift between Germany and the United States, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes' refused to sell helium to Germany, causing increased tension between Germany and the United States.

Roosevelt was a pragmatic and skillful politician. He knew the isolationists would not support a rift with Germany over Anschluss. Moreover, given the weak American economy, the State Department desired to continue normal economic relations with the Germans. Though Anschluss caused no sudden change in the foreign policy of the United States, Germany's annexation of Austria did affect and shape American policy. It compelled the United States to criticize the increasing lawlessness of Germany and

formulate a foreign policy in order to respond more forcefully to Hitler's aggressive foreign policy. After Anschluss, Secretary of State Hull, in his National Press Club address, stated that America opposed international lawlessness and blind isolationism, supported rearmament and was ready to cooperate with governments who opposed blatant violators of treaties and human rights.

After Anschluss the American position evolved more clearly. Although the United States Congress remained strongly isolationist, the public began to take notice of Germany's aggressive expansionism and the press declared itself as overwhelmingly anti-German. The German-American relationship rapidly atrophied. America disliked German aggression and chastised Nazi disregard for international law. When reacting to Anschluss, the United States government tried to underscore these principles within the constraints of internal difficulties, and the opposition of a large anti-New Deal coalition and the isolationists. Roosevelt feared an isolationist backlash in unison with anti-New Deal Republicans and conservative Southern Democrats. However, as best expressed by Secretary of State Hull, the Administration was now ready to prepare the way for a more active United States foreign policy in order to meet the combined threat of Germany, Italy and Japan.

## Acknowledgments

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Chapter	
I.    Austria, 1919-1933 . . . . .	3
II.   The Anschluss of Austria, 1933-1938 . . . . .	23
III.  Approaching the Anschluss: The Development of U.S. Foreign Policy, Roosevelt, the Anti-New Deal Coalition and the Isolationists . . . . .	48
IV.   The American Reaction to Anschluss . . . . .	68
V.    American Reaction to Anschluss: A Brief Historiographical Discussion . . . . .	103
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	107



## Introduction

In March 1938 Germany annexed Austria. Without firing a single shot Adolf Hitler, a native Austrian himself, unified over six million Austrians Germans with the Reich. Naturally, there was protest. However, no single country was prepared to go to war over the sovereignty of Austria. Therefore, undeterred Hitler stepped into the power vacuum of Europe. By annexing Austria, Germany surrounded Czechoslovakia, gained a common frontier with Italy, Yugoslavia and Hungary, obtained a dominant position in the Balkans, added an additional 100,000 soldiers to the German army and acquired 440 million reichsmarks in desperately needed foreign exchange reserves. Moreover, Hitler's annexation of Austria represented not only a diplomatic coup d'etat, it consolidated his power within Germany itself. The Reich and the Nazis had now taken on a greater meaning. Hitler was in the process of revising the Versailles Peace Treaty and establishing Germany's predominance over Europe. Anschluss contributed to these ends.

Germany's gains as a result of Anschluss (a German term associated with the forceful incorporation of Austria in 1938) were significant. However, short of war, which no one wanted or could afford, or an effective Anglo-French response, there appeared nothing anyone could do to stop Hitler's expansionism. In addition, Hitler had learned how

to manipulate masterfully the Versailles settlement to benefit Germany, justifying his revisions and hindering allied reciprocation. In the case of Austria, Hitler appealed to Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and more specifically to self-determination as a justification for Anschluss. Britain and France, the principal signatories of the World War I peace treaties could only bow their heads and accept Anschluss and acknowledge that Germany had gained the diplomatic initiative.

Given the above, Anschluss is an extremely important event in modern history. Accordingly, historians have researched Germany's annexation of Austria from every point of view, that is, except for the American reaction to Germany's annexation of Austria. There are publications concerning England, France and Hungary and the Anschluss. However, no corresponding work exists regarding the American reaction to Anschluss. Because of the controversy surrounding American diplomacy prior to World War II, such a study could prove to be a valuable addition to the already existing literature. Presented here is the long over-due account of the American reaction to Germany's annexation of Austria.

## Chapter I. Austria, 1919-1933

Undoubtedly World War I and its legacy of unsolved problems is the most significant event in the twentieth century. First, two former totally dominant world powers, Great Britain and France, suffered greatly during the short but costly four year war. As a result both were no longer powerful enough to maintain their dominance over the world or even Europe. The Paris Peace Treaties only created a divided, revisionistic and insecure postwar Europe. In addition, the League of Nations was merely a cosmetic solution to the difficult problems the Anglo-French faced. Second, the war brought about the end of the Romanov dynasty in Russia and the rise of Soviet Communism. Third, the United States appeared on the world scene as a world power. World War I displayed the overwhelming military and industrial capacity of the United States and firmly established the not yet 150-year old Republic as a world power whose prosperity was directly linked with that of Europe. Finally, the First World War dissolved the polyglot Habsburg Empire, sending its many successor states in search of security and the German-Austrian rump state in search of not only security but a future as well.

The dissolution of the Habsburg Empire occurred with unprecedented quickness. From the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in June 1914 to the signing of

the Armistice which ended World War I in November 1918, the course of Austria's history, with all of its traditions, had been irreversibly and forever altered. Few nations have probably withstood such rapid drastic change in a comparable period of time. However, it was not until November 1918 that the full impact of World War I came to bear. In less than two weeks, pre-war Austria-Hungary had all but disappeared. On November 3, the Armistice between Austria and the Allies was signed. On November 11, Emperor Charles, effectively renounced his control of the state. One day later, the Austrian National Assembly unanimously voted for the establishment of an Austrian Republic within a greater German federal structure. The members of parliament deliberately named the new state Deutschösterreich (German-Austria) in order to stress the German nature of their population and to pursue political alignment with Germany.

The Habsburg monarchy perished, a new tradition had to be created and the young Deutschösterreich had to deal with the consequences of the peace. The Austrians generally condemned their Austro-Hungarian past. "Everything which recalled Austria, her history, or her symbols was persecuted with demonic hatred," recalled the future Austrian chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg. "With inexorable consistency the agitators overwhelmed dynasty, army, above all the high command and corps of officers, with outrageous abuse. Where it was possible to do so at

all, the idea of Austria, the idea of patriotism, were snatched from the hearts of school children."<sup>1</sup>

Austria's condemnation of its Habsburg past necessarily destroyed the past in order to create a new Austria. But this also led to the replacement of imperial Austria's nationalism with Pan-Germanism. Born as a direct result of World War I, and typically a twentieth-century phenomenon, Pan-Germanism swept Austria.<sup>2</sup> In fact, during the first phases of Austria's closer association with Germany "the Austria-Germans were more solidly and enthusiastically committed to it than the Reich-Germans."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, when the members of the Austrian National Assembly established Deutschösterreich, they were dutifully reflecting the majority of opinion in postwar Austria.

The rapid dismantling of Austria-Hungary and the establishment of the new Austria reached a peak in November 1918. However, the events two weeks prior to the proclamation of the Austrian Republic had a resounding effect on the future of the besieged Austrian state. In mid-October, Emperor Charles, in an overdue measure, had formed a federal union which unintentionally gave independence to the Poles, the Czechs, the Southern Slavs and the Hungarians. Five days later on October 21, the 210 members of the Reichsrat (imperial Austrian parliament) organized a national assembly in the name of Deutschösterreich, and before the end of the month declared independence which prepared the way for the

creation of a democratic Austrian republic.

Amidst the chaos of postwar Austria, the new government maintained its desire for a union with Germany as an answer to the economic problems the now-small alpine country faced. Prior to 1914, the Austria-Hungarian Empire composed 51 million people. After the war, the Austrian Republic was reduced to 32,400 square miles with a population of only 6.5 million. The economic situation of Austria accordingly declined. Moreover, the truncated Austrian state could not even feed its own people as Austria's mountainous terrain proved unable to produce a bountiful supply of agricultural products. Vienna, with a population of two million, was especially hard hit and contributed to the political instability which the National Assembly had to contend with. Furthermore, Austria lacked a productive industrial base which caused massive unemployment.

Under such intense duress, the Austrians intensively cultivated a political union with Germany. The major political parties, the Christian-Socialists and the Social Democrats, made unification with Germany a major plank in their party platforms.<sup>4</sup> Despite the Austrian enthusiasm for a union with Germany, the Weimar government remained ambiguous in their commitment to their German-Austrian neighbors.<sup>5</sup> The Germans had to exercise caution because of international public opinion and the fear of adversely affecting the future peace conference and the German

settlement.

The German-Austrians had no such concerns. The German-Austrian state had been founded on the principle of unification with Germany and had applied for peace on the basis of President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, assuming that self-determination would pertain to Austria as well. However, Austrian optimism encountered the stiff reality of the Peace Conference of Saint Germain.

On May 2, 1919, the German-Austrian government was requested by the French Embassy to send Austrian delegates to the Peace Conference.<sup>6</sup> Arriving twelve days later on May 14, the Delegation was assured by the French prime minister that as representatives of Austria they "would be treated with traditional French hospitality."<sup>7</sup> Although the French were not overly hospitable toward the Austrians, as promised, the general opinion among the Allies was that Germany was mainly responsible for World War I, not Austria. Therefore, perhaps Austria could be stabilized and drawn into an alliance system favorable to the Allies.

Obviously, Austria's union with Germany was a main topic of discussion at Paris. Austrian Chancellor Dr. Renner, leader of the Austrian delegation, openly advocated a union with Germany. A conflict surrounding the future of the Austro-German political relationship was certain to develop. Renner had earlier supported a union with Germany and on November 12, 1918, when the Austrian National Assembly had announced its intention to create German-

Austria, the first official action toward an Austria-German union, Renner proclaimed:

of great importance is the relation to our German parent body (Stammvolk). Our great people is suffering great misfortune, the people whose pride it always was to call itself the people of poets and thinkers; our German race with its humanist heritage and its regard for other people; this our German people is now humbled. But in this of all hours, when it would be so easy and perhaps so very tempting to disclaim all affinity, and thus to gain some advantage from our opponents, in this hour our German people everywhere shall know: we are one race and we share their fate.<sup>8</sup>

The Chancellor faithfully continued to pursue a pro-union policy throughout the Saint Germain negotiations, although he knew the Allies were opposed to Austria's union with Germany. He demanded, for example, that the allied powers refer to German-Austria by only that term and not simply "Austria." "Can it be the name?," Renner said. "The name of the German-Austria Republic was expressly chosen to mark the difference between the former polyglot state, composed of nine nationalities, and the new republic, including only one of them. In any case the name cannot be taken as prejudicial to the thing."<sup>9</sup> The Allies, however, clearly realized the tacit meaning of the term German-Austria.

Regardless of Renner's thinly disguised arguments against German-Austria being referred to as the Republic of Austria, the Austria's intention was clear. Therefore, the Allied Supreme Council decided to impose on the new Austria Republic the name the "Republic of Austria."<sup>10</sup>



Initially, the "Austrian Delegation paid absolutely no attention to this warning [of the above decision regarding the nomenclature of Austria]." <sup>11</sup> But the same change was inevitable, and thus, in November of 1919, the Austrians informed the Allies of their official acceptance of the name "Republic of Austria."<sup>12</sup>

Certainly, the forced name change which Austria endured was a superficial matter in comparison to the Diktat von Germain (dictate of Germain), which compelled Austria to renounce its union with Germany as a political objective. Article 88 of the Treaty of St. Germain, submitted by the French government, mandated that a union between Austria and Germany was impossible without the consent of the League of Nations.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, a clause was written into the Treaty of Versailles which restricted any possible German plans for a political union with Austria. "Germany acknowledges," read Article 80 of the Versailles Peace Treaty, "and will respect strictly the independence of Austria . . . ; she agrees that this independence shall be inalienable, except with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations." <sup>14</sup>

Though the Austrians accepted Article 88, they did so only under protest. On September 6, 1919, the Austrian National Assembly resolved to protest "before the entire world against the provisions of the Peace Treaty which, -- under the pretext of protecting the independence of German Austria--deprives the German Austrian nation of its right

of self-determination, and refuses it the right to realize its ardent desire for union with the mother-country Germany, a desire constituting a vital, economic, intellectual and political necessity."<sup>15</sup> The Austrians faithfully believed a union between Austria and Germany would eventually be allowed, but in the meantime Austria desired peace.

On September 10, 1919, the Austrian delegation signed the Treaty of St. Germain out of necessity. The Austrians had no choice but to sign. ". . . The country," the National Assembly declared, "and the people have . . . need of peace which will reopen the world to them from the moral and material point of view . . . ; we need the peace which will at last bring back the prisoners of war . . . ; we need the peace which will bring about the international recognition of our State."<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the Austrian rump state was dependent on the Allies for food, coal and financial support. The Austrians knew the Peace Treaty was "unjust nationally, fatal politically and inexcusable economically."<sup>17</sup> However, because of their destitute political, geopolitical, social and economic position, Austria had to comply with the demands of the Allies and shift the weight of responsibility for the well-being of new Austria to the Great Powers.<sup>18</sup>

Unquestionably, Chancellor Renner and the now legalized Austrian government looked toward the west for support. Specifically, Austria "looked to the United

States and England for help . . . "19 In order to aid Austria's recovery and inhibit any political union between Austria and Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy advanced credit to Austria up to a maximum of \$30 million; a figure which was later increased to \$45 million, then \$48 million between 1919 and 1922.<sup>20</sup> The United States would advance Austria relief totaling more than \$26 million.

All the efforts to restore financial and economic stability to Austria in the first years following World War I failed to revive the Austrian economy until October 1922. Faced with an uncertain political and economic future for Austria, Great Britain, France, Italy and Czechoslovakia undertook to assist in Austrian reconstruction. The combined governments pledged 650 million gold crowns "solely in the interests of Austria and of the general peace."<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the undersigned did indeed extend this sizeable loan to preserve European peace. However, they also wanted to establish firmly Austria as a buffer against Germany and the Soviet Union. In addition, the Italians, British, Czechs, and the French used this opportunity to reaffirm Austria's continued independence from Germany. As a condition of the agreement, in accordance with Article 88 of the Treaty of St. Germain, Austria undertook "not to alienate its independence; it will abstain from any negotiations or from any economic or financial engagement calculated directly or indirectly to compromise this independence."<sup>22</sup>

The Geneva Protocols, the final agreement of financial support signed by the above European powers in 1922, did finally provide the economic aid required. However, the fledgling Austrian state needed political support as well. Undeniably, the Anglo-Americans had provided the necessary monetary support, but refused to commit themselves to any lasting political guarantee. The Americans retreated across the Atlantic while the British turned their attention to their Empire and away from the Continent.

The French were equally, if not principally, to blame for Austria's vulnerable position. Although France had economically aided Austria, she had demanded a harsh peace. Moreover, the creation of the Little Entente in 1921, an alliance system between France, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia, though principally directed against Germany and Hungary, contributed to Austria's problems. As members of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Little Entente nations of Eastern Europe harbored resentment for their Austrian neighbor. They were overly suspicious of Austria. Furthermore, economically, the Entente's tariff policies were hardly calculated to lessen Austria's economic worries. Nevertheless, it would have been quite impossible for France to head-up a Danubian Federation with Austria included.<sup>23</sup>

After the Geneva Protocols, Austria's economy was strengthened and remained constant for almost nine more years. However, instead of domestic tranquility to

accompany this economic stability, as could be expected, Austria's internal politics approached anarchy with Vienna as a battleground. Several para-military organizations took to the streets. The Christian Socialists pitted their forces, the Heimwehr (homeguard), against the Social Democratic supported Schutzbund (Defense League). The struggle between the Austrian Right and Left definitely weakened the young Austrian Republic. But the world depression, which began in 1929 in the United States, inflicted a more exacting toll on Austria. The consequences of the world-wide depression did not reach Austria until 1931.

It was also in 1931 that the plan for a German-Austrian customs union was revealed purportedly to improve the economic difficulties each country faced. Throughout the 1920s German statesmen had concentrated on recognition and revitalization of Germany. Intentionally, Germany had avoided the topic of a union with Austria in international affairs. However, both Germany and Austria continued to promote exchanges, stressed their Germanic origins, which would strengthen Austro-German bonds.<sup>24</sup> German Foreign Minister, Gustav Stresemann, endeavored to cultivate a closer economic relationship between Austria and Germany. Unfortunately, Stresemann died in the fall of 1929 and his successor in the foreign office, Julius Curtius, intensified Germany's foreign policy with the Austro-German customs union playing a central role.

Though in the fall of 1929 the Boden Creditanstalt, Austria's second largest bank, failed and the world economic depression jeopardized Austria's feeble economy, the customs union was viewed by the allies as the first step toward a political union and not solely an answer to either German or Austrian economic problems. Certainly the custom union's logical conclusion would eventually evolve toward a political unification between Austria and Germany. More importantly, however, the customs union plan of 1931 marked a renewed German move towards Southeastern Europe.<sup>25</sup> The German Foreign Minister, Curtius, "had long been convinced of the need to pursue an active policy in the Southeast and especially toward Austria."<sup>26</sup>

In March 1931 the plans for a future German-Austrian customs union were made public. France, along with the Little Entente, violently opposed the proposed union. The Italians, who were as much concerned over French domination of Central and South Central Europe as they were over German hegemony, and the British, who were not as vehemently opposed as the French, eventually sided with Paris against the customs union. Not only a political but also an economic union was forbidden by Article 88 of the Treaty of Saint Germain and by the Geneva Protocols signed in 1922. It was on this basis that the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague, to which the customs union issue was appealed, narrowly voted eight votes to seven to prohibit any union.

The proposed customs union was defeated by only one vote, which illustrates just how closely the Austrians and Germans came to an economic union in 1931. Though the French would probably never have adhered to a pro-union decision from the Hague, the customs union suffered only from unfortunate timing. The whole customs union concept was born in an era of increased diplomatic maneuverability by Germany and the resuscitation of German-Austrian relations.

However, by 1931 the political climate and economic situation in Europe changed. Therefore, the "failure of the Austro-German customs union scheme was less the result of poor planning than of bad timing. And, once the decision was made, there was no turning back. Austria and Germany were forced to abandon it in a series of humiliating public defeats, which had disastrous consequences for the governments involved." 27

Had the customs union defeat been the single misfortune to befall Austria, 1931 would have still been recognized a low watermark for the Viennese government. Another crisis, which further magnified Austria's political and economic problems, was the failure of the Creditanstalt-Bankverein, Austria's largest bank. The collapse of the Creditanstalt brought Austria to the brink of an economic breakdown. This single Viennese bank financed between 60 and 80 per cent of Austria's industry, threatening Europe's economy as a whole. The situation

necessitated immediate aid. Fortunately, extensive loans were provided by the League of Nations and economic catastrophe was avoided.

The effects of the depression had abated, but the consequences of the failed Austro-German customs union, the weak economy and the rise of National Socialism had yet to be reckoned with. In Austria, Engelbert Dollfuss became chancellor in 1932 supported by a Christian Socialist government. In Germany, less than one year later, Adolf Hitler, himself a native Austrian, was appointed chancellor of Germany. Both men had different plans as to the future of Austria.

Looking back over the period from 1919-1933, the new Austria encountered rapid change, a weak economy, internal dissension and a lack of economic or political support from any of the Great Powers. Besides these factors, all of which contributed to Austria's inter-war predicament, two others deserve greater attention: Austria's lack of national identity following World War I and the imperfection of the Treaty of Saint Germain.

A.J.P. Taylor, the renowned European historian and author of The Course of German History, has best characterized the absence of postwar Austrian nationalism and its significance:

What Austria lacked was not economic existence, but spiritual belief, a "way of life." Only the order of the Allies had made Austria independent, and only the veto of the Allies kept her so. Unlike the other "succession states, Austria had no sentiment of nationality--except German. No "Austrian idea" . . . was discovered.<sup>28</sup>



Therefore, Pan-Germanism became an increasingly important factor in Austria's politics, making a union with Germany unavoidable. In fact, it is surprising union was delayed for twenty years. In comparison to Germany, where an Austro-German union was one among many revisionist objectives, union with Germany came to involve the whole political future of this small country.<sup>29</sup> Since the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy and the creation of the Austria's rump state, the majority of Austrians had pressed for a union with Germany. However, Article 88 of the Saint Germain Treaty, endorsed on September 10, 1919, prohibited a union without permission from the League of Nations. Moreover, Saint Germain forced Deutschösterreich to rename itself the Republik Oesterreich, a clear sign of the absence of the will of the Austrians to remain independent following World War I.

Approaching the Paris Peace Conference, the Austrians had naturally assumed Woodrow Wilson's principle of self-determination would apply to Austria's Germans as well, which proved to be a misconception. It is beyond belief, however, to envision, given the mood at Paris, that the Allies would have allowed the union of the German-speaking states under Wilson's concept of self-determination. Nevertheless, "nothing that the Allies could have done in 1919 could have played more effectively into the hands of Anschluss supporters than the banishment of the Habsburgs and the denial to the isolated little country of Austria,

which was hardly capable of existing on its own, of the right of self determination."<sup>30</sup> The realization of the Fourteen Points had meant the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A majority of German-Austrians and especially the Austrian National Socialists (Nazis) "regarded it as at least a compensation that in pursuance of this right of self-determination the German Erblande (the domain of the Holy Roman Emperors) would be able to return to the Reich."<sup>31</sup> Austrian hopes of fair treatment by the Allies was illusory at best.

Although Germany maintained a low profile concerning Austria from 1919-1931, German diplomats rightly stood by the principle of self-determination and shrewdly left the possibility of a future union between Austria and Germany ambiguously open:

In Article 80 the permanent recognition of the independence of Austria . . . is demanded. Germany has never intended, and never will intend to use force to effect any alteration in the German-Austrian frontier. In the event, however, that the people of Austria, whose history and civilization have, for a thousand years, been most closely linked with Germany, which had only been dissolved in recent times by the act of war, Germany cannot pledge herself to oppose wishes of her German brothers in Austria. The right of self-determination of the nations cannot be utilized universally and in all cases to the detriment of Germany.

Any other action would be in contradiction to the principles enunciated by President Wilson . . .<sup>32</sup>

Up until 1933 and Hitler's Machtergreifung, all Weimar governments adhered to the idea that a union with Austria could be obtained, given time and skillful diplomacy. After the failure of the 1931 Customs Union, many gave up

hopes for a peaceful revision of the Paris Peace. Adolf Hitler was assuredly among those politicians who believed the time for action had arrived. He was right in so far as certain members of the allied powers were ready to accept revision.

After Hitler's accession to power, the pace with which a political Anschluss was pursued, increased. The German Nazis were concerned because the new Austrian government under the leadership of Dollfuss had the goal of expelling the "idea of German nationalism from Austria and to replace it by the Austrian idea."<sup>33</sup> The Austrian nationalists would, however, fail to maintain Austrian independence from Germany. Within a period of five years Austria would be a part of the German Reich.

Endnotes: Chapter I

<sup>1</sup>Kurt von Schuschnigg, My Austria, trans. John Segrue (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1938), pp. 48-49.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Cord Meyer, Mitteleuropa in German Thought and Action, 1815-1945 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955), p. 296.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 294.

<sup>4</sup>Stanley Suval, The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era: A Study of Nationalism in Germany and Austria, 1918-1932 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>M. Margaret Ball, Post-war German-Austrian Relations: The Anschluss Movement, 1918-1936 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1937), p. 14; Erich Zoellner, Diplomatie und Ausseepolitik Oesterreichs (Wien: Oesterreichischer Bundesverlag, 1977), p. 149.

<sup>6</sup>Invitation of the French Government, May 2, 1919, Nina Almond and R.H. Lutz, The Treaty of St. Germain: A Documentary History of Its Territorial and Political Clauses, Hoover War Library Publications--No. 5 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1935), p. 39.

<sup>7</sup>Preparations and Internal Work of the Austrian Delegation, Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>8</sup>Stenographisches Protokoll, November 12, 1918, quoted in Karl R. Stadler, The Birth of the Austrian Republic, 1918-1921 (Leyden: A.W. Sijhoff, 1966), p. 70.

<sup>9</sup>Note From Austrian Delegation, June 16, 1919, Almond and Lutz, p. 245.

<sup>10</sup>Nomenclature to be used with Austria, May 29, 1919, Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>11</sup>August 12, 1919, Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>12</sup>Note from Austrian Delegation, November 5, 1919, Ibid., p. 251.

<sup>13</sup>Article 88: Independence of Austria, Ibid., p. 630.

<sup>14</sup>Sec. VI, Article 80: Treaty of Versailles, U.S. Department of State. The Treaty of Versailles and After. Annotations of the Text of the Treaty (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), p. 198.

- <sup>15</sup>Declaration of the National Assembly, Sept. 6, 1919, Almond and Lutz, p. 77.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 78.
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 78-79.
- <sup>19</sup>Mr. Albert Halstead to the Sec. of State, September 15, 1919, U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the U.S.: The Paris Peace Conference, 1919. vol. XII (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), p. 571.
- <sup>20</sup>Discussion by Council of Ten of the Revictualling of Austria, March 5, 1919, Almond and Lutz, p. 94.
- <sup>21</sup>Restoration of Austria, Protocol Num. 1, League of Nations, Treaty Series, vol. XV, Num. 4 (Lausanne: Imprimeries Reunies S.A., 1923), p. 387.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup>Arnold Wolfers, Britain and France between Two Wars: Conflicting Strategies of Peace Since Versailles (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1940), p. 116.
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- <sup>25</sup>Arne Orde, "The Origins of the German-Austrian Customs Union Affair of 1931." Central European History 13 (March 1980): 34.
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- <sup>28</sup>A.J.P. Taylor, The Course of German History, 10th ed. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1979), p. 217.
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- <sup>31</sup>Seyss-Inquart testimony, June 10, 1946, International Military Tribunal, Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. XV (Nuremberg, 1948), p. 611.

<sup>32</sup>Observations of the German Delegation on the Independence of Austria, May 29, 1919, Almond and Lutz, p. 632.

<sup>33</sup>Extracts From the Minutes of the Conference Ministers, May 26, 1933, U.S. Department of State, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, ser. C, vol. I (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957), p. 488 (hereafter cited as DGFP).

## Chapter II. The Anschluss of Austria, 1933-1938

As Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, the Allies were divided and seemed mystified over what policy to pursue in order to counter the new Nazi threat to the European status quo. In 1933, Germany was weak and had little hope of revising the provisions of Versailles. However, by 1939 Austria and even Czechoslovakia had become part of Grossdeutschland. In comparison to Britain, Italy, France and the Little Entente, Hitler had a clear definite aim. Only a few weeks after his ascension to power, Hitler was quoted as saying that "one world war had been enough for Germany; it must not happen again. The German nation was too great to tolerate permanent discrimination. A revision of certain Versailles terms had to be brought about. Nor was it possible for Germany, surrounded as she was by States armed to the teeth, to remain undefended. Yet there was time . . . ." German revisionism was, as Hitler pointed out, a result of the Paris peace treaties. But his revision hardly followed the moderate course he suggested.

Anschluss had been a long standing goal of National Socialism and Hitler himself. Ten years before Hitler's seizure of power, he wrote his autobiography, Mein Kampf. The first two paragraphs of Hitler's work prophetically outlined Hitler's principle diplomatic goal between 1933-1938 and became consequently the crux of his short-term

foreign policy objective:

Today it seems to me providential that Fate should have chosen Braunau on the Inn as my birthplace. For this little town lies on the boundary between two German states which we of the younger generation at least have made it our life work to reunite by every means at our disposal.

German-Austria must return to the great German mother country, and not because of any economic considerations . . . . One blood demands one Reich . . . . Only when the Reich borders include the very last German, but can no longer guarantee his daily bread, will the moral right to acquire foreign soil arise from the distress of our own people.<sup>2</sup>

As early as 1923 Anschluss had become an important part of Hitler's political ideology and by 1933, the new Chancellor decided to realize his dream of a united German state. Austria's union with Germany was the first logical step, and Hitler sprung into action immediately without his usual pragmatic approach to foreign policy.

The consequences of Germany's renewed pressure toward Austria became a serious problem for the Dollfuss government and finally the Allies. Hitler first decided to bring Germany's economic power to bear against its weaker neighbor. On May 26, 1933, the German Reich Chancellor inaugurated a policy which required for German tourists traveling to Austria to purchase a 1,000 reichmark visa.<sup>3</sup> This measure, which by a Nazi estimate would cost Austria 250 million schillings because of the loss of German tourism, was intended to cause the collapse of the Dollfuss government. The Nazis then hoped for new elections, and hence, a Gleichschaltung (unification), obviating "the need for actual Anschluss."<sup>4</sup> In conjunction with this economic



step, hundreds of thousands of leaflets were to be dropped over Austria justifying Germany's action.<sup>5</sup>

Hitler was convinced that the contest between Austria and Germany would be over by the end of the summer. However, he equally underestimated the reaction of the Allies and Austria's resolve. Naturally, because of their vested interests in Austria's independence, France and Italy strongly opposed Hitler's undisguised and aggressive actions toward Austria. The French threatened to take issue with Germany's propaganda war against Austria. However, Paris was only posturing and since the French "assumed without question that the German Government disapproved of the incidents concerned and would use all available means to put an end to them," further action would be therefore unnecessary.<sup>6</sup> The Italians made it clear to Berlin that Italy could never support an Austrian Anschluss and suggested that Germany support the Dollfuss government.<sup>7</sup> Finally, when the Austrian government outlawed the Nazi party, on June 19, 1933, Hitler was forced to rethink his Anschluss policy.

Under pressure from all sides and not desiring to endanger a future Anschluss, Hitler ordered Nazi radio and airplane propaganda to cease and prohibited any "act of terror by the German side."<sup>8</sup> Hitler's readjusted hard-line policy toward Austria was only cosmetic. Germany maintained its economic sanctions against Austria and tacitly prepared to undermine Dollfuss government by

subversion.

Furthermore, a possibility of a speedy German union with Austria was additionally dealt a serious setback because of an alliance involving Austria, Italy and Hungary which developed in the spring following the renewed German menace to Austrian sovereignty. On March 17, 1934, Engelbert Dollfuss, the Austrian Chancellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Benito Mussolini, the fascist dictator of Italy, and Gyula Gombos, Prime Minister of Hungary, met in Rome and signed an agreement involving three protocols. The first two were most important, calling for consultation among the signatory nations on issues concerning international politics and on economic issues with regard to the reconstruction of the Danubian region. The third protocol dealt with Italo-Austrian trade relations.

The Rome Protocols clearly improved the diplomatic and economic position of Austria. The Protocols appeared to represent a new alliance system in East Central Europe. According to Admiral Horthy, Regent of Hungary, the Rome Protocols "represented the Hungarian answer to the Pact of Organization recently concluded by the Little Entente, and to the equally anti-revisionist Balkan League . . . ." <sup>9</sup> Naturally, Germany interpreted the Protocols as an alliance directed against its best interests, especially concerning Austria. The Rome Protocols had in effect preserved Austrian independence, and even though the agreements do not mention the protection of Austria from her Germanic

neighbor to the north, Berlin was aware of its implications.

Had a true anti-German block evolved out of the Rome Protocols, Germany would have had something to agonize about. However, the Hungarians remained faithful to the Germans because they desired a revision of Saint Germain and the Germans. In fact, throughout the Rome meeting, Gombos stressed "Italian, German, Austrian and Hungarian friendship and cooperation."<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the Hungarian foreign minister suggested that Italy and Austria support German revisionism above the Danube.

Though the Rome Protocols substantially strengthened Austria's diplomatic position vis-a-vis Germany, events of July 1934 were to even further buttress Austrian independence and deal the Germans both a defeat and a practical lesson. On July 25, 1934, a group of Austrian Nazis, backed by Hitler and the German Nazi Party seized the Federal Chancellery in Vienna and attempted to overthrow the Austrian government. The coup was doomed from the beginning and when the army and police refused to take part, the uprising had no chance of success.<sup>11</sup> However, the conspirators did score a Pyrrhic victory for the Nazi cause. They assassinated Dollfuss, making him a martyr of Austrian nationalism.

The German role in Dollfuss' murder was obvious as were the disastrous consequences. Although all the details of Germany's involvement in the July uprising were not

disclosed until sometime later, clearly the Germans had knowledge of the rebellion as they continued to broadcast their "version to the Austrian events" hours after the putsch had been effectively quelled.<sup>12</sup> The Germans also supplied a convenient refuge for the many refugees involved in the uprising itself. The German minister had unwittingly implicated Germany by providing for their safe conduct out of Austria.

Suddenly the Austrian question attracted world-wide attention and denunciation of Nazi aggressiveness; Hitler had to formulate a new policy toward and improve relations with Austria. Italy reacted most vehemently mobilizing four divisions and stationing them at the Brenner and Carinthian Passes. Hitler was convinced that Germany faced "a second Sarajevo" and that changes had to be made in German foreign policy.<sup>13</sup> He, therefore, ordered all propaganda broadcasts from Munich stopped, the termination of all acts of violence by Austrian Nazis, recalled their leader and replaced the old German Ambassador with Franz von Papen as Hitler's personal representative in Vienna.

Von Papen's replacement of Dr. Rieth, took place only one day after Dollfuss' murder and is singularly important in the reconciliation between Germany and Austria.<sup>14</sup> Upon his appointment, von Papen was summoned to Bayreuth as Hitler was attending the annual Wagner festival. The new German ambassador to Austria found Hitler in a "state of hysterical agitation, denouncing feverishly the rashness

and stupidity of the Austrian Nazi party for having involved him in such an appalling situation."<sup>15</sup> Hitler, enraged, appreciated the seriousness of this situation and correctly opted to pursue an evolutionary approach as an answer to the Austrian problem. In this respect von Papen was instrumental. He thought it wise to isolate Austria, to make "the Austro-German question no longer a matter for decision by other foreign powers or international organizations."<sup>16</sup> Aided by events and skillful diplomacy by von Papen, Germany was successful in manipulating Austria on to a track which eventually would lead to the Anschluss.

The events of 1935 and 1936 worked against Austrian independence and greatly benefited Germany's penetration pacifique of Austria. However, before the true course of events took a favorable turn for Germany, Europe appeared to unite on two fronts against German interests in Austria. On April 11, 1935, Italy, France and Great Britain met at Stresa and, though no agreement was concluded, the conference condemned German rearmament and conscription and guaranteed the independence of Austria. Less than one month later, France signed a Mutual Aid Pact with the Soviet Union.

The Stresa Front and the Franco-Soviet agreement produced pessimism and disappointment in Berlin.<sup>17</sup> But in reality these events marked the climax of allied solidarity against Germany. In October 1935, Italian troops attacked

Abyssinia, and in the spring of 1936, German soldiers marched into the Rhineland, two events which tacitly undermined the European status quo. First, the Italo-Abyssinian war showed the ineffectiveness of the League of Nations, and moreover, drew Mussolini in an alliance with Hitler, leaving Austria without a protector. The balance of power in East-Central Europe collapsed. Second, the remilitarization of the Rhineland on March 7, 1936, violated both the Versailles treaty and the Locarno agreements, paved the way for appeasement, demonstrated the weakness of the French and the strength of the Germans and sent a wave of uncertainty throughout the Little Entente. "France was averse to the prospect of acting on her own initiative without the guarantee and assistance of all the others and especially without being assured of Britain's full agreement and close cooperation," which was not forthcoming.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the six-month period from October 1935 to March 1936 was decisive for Austria, Europe and the World.

In spite of the unfortunate change of circumstances, Austria was not yet totally isolated or without hope. A little over three weeks after Germany's march into the Rhineland, on March 23, 1936, a new Italian-Hungarian-Austrian agreement, the Second Protocol of Rome, was signed; but this pact provided Austria with little security, and apparently Kurt von Schuschnigg, Dollfuss' successor, had long given up on collective security and

determined that appeasement promised the single prospect of preserving Austria's independence. "Everything had to be avoided which could give Germany a pretext for intervention . . . ."19

Therefore in May 1936, Chancellor Schuschaigg initiated talks with Germany in order to achieve a detente so that Austria could finally get on with its future without constant German agitation.<sup>20</sup> The time was ripe for profitable negotiations. The Austrians were searching for security and improved economic relations with Germany. The Germans sought to relax international tensions which were created because of the remilitarization of the Rhineland. They also wanted to nurture and improve relations with Italy and weaken the possibility of a central East European pact including Austria. Finally, Nazi Germany pushed for the legalization of the Nazi Austrian Party and intended to further isolate Austria. On July 11, a German-Austrian Agreement was signed in Vienna. According to the terms of this agreement, Germany recognized the full sovereignty of Austria which was a major victory for the Schuschaigg government. In return, Austria granted amnesty for Nazi political prisoners and promised to admit representatives of the so-called "National Opposition," the Austrian Nazi party, into government.<sup>21</sup>

The German-Austrian agreement served its purpose. The international community relaxed, the Italians included. The Austrian Nazi party was legalized; Arthur Seyss-

Inquart, a moderate leader of the Austrian Nazi party, became a cabinet member and the Austrian question was further isolated from international politics. However, Hitler had not given up his desire to incorporate Austria. As early as 1936, Goering, during a meeting with a Hungarian diplomat confidently announced that the recently signed German-Austrian Agreement "by no means meant the end of Hitler's plan to annex Austria. Sooner or later it would be necessary for Austria to be part of the Reich." 22

By means of the 1936 German-Austrian treaty, Hitler settled several diplomatic problems while not surrendering the possibility of a future Anschluss. Similar to Hitler, Schuschaigg interpreted the Agreement as a temporary settlement. However, Schuschaigg had no intention of an Anschluss with Germany. As to the Austrian position, von Papen later commented, "the wording of the agreement and interpretation placed upon it by the Austrian Government at the time, made it quite clear that it was not to be regarded as the first step towards union with Germany. It was on this point that the Austrian and the Nazi interpretation diverged." 23

At first, the Fuehrer was not completely convinced at the merit of the German-Austrian Agreement, but its positive effect on German foreign policy soon changed his mind. Von Papen, the creator of the Agreement, realized the significance of the German-Austrian understanding.

" . . . Our friends admire the decision; our enemies are



forced to admit the leadership of European policy has slipped from French or Franco-British hands and has passed to Germany." He further alluded to the Agreement as "shaping of the all-German destiny for the future."<sup>24</sup> Von Papen was correct on both counts as Germany, by at least July 1936, had masterfully negotiated itself into its strongest diplomatic position since World War I.

An agreeable by-product of the July Agreement for Germany was Italy's continued alignment and eventual acceptance of Austria's fate. "Mussolini expressed lively satisfaction over the event [the German-Austrian Agreement] which would bring to an end the unhappy situation of Austria as a football of foreign interest and, above all, would finally remove the last and only mortgage on German-Italian relations."<sup>25</sup> The Duce was clearly ready to cede Hitler Austria as a sphere of influence. On October 25, 1936, the coupling of Italo-German interest was formalized by the formation of the famous Rome-Berlin axis.

Schuschaigg, desiring to avoid diplomatic isolation at all costs and concerned about the recent Belgrade agreements between Italy and Yugoslavia, traveled to Italy in April of 1937 to test Mussolini's commitment to Austria. The Italian position was one of indifference. The Duce, though aware of the many differences between Italy and Germany, had found common cause with Hitler because "the two regimes found themselves confronted by the same enemies . . ." <sup>26</sup> It was, then, within Italy's larger foreign

policy that Austria had to secure a safe niche. Mussolini had ceded Germany the Danubian basin and desired to eliminate friction between the two fascist countries by assisting the German bid for control of Austria. Mussolini advised Schuschaigg that Austria should continue to emphasize that it represented a German state, and since the Reich was in favor of a detente with Austria, "it is necessary to rely on them [the Germans] . . ." Mussolini also added the improved relations between German and Austrian military circles would certainly be significant and promising.<sup>27</sup> Italy could no longer be counted on to safeguard Austrian independence.

Italy's total commitment to Germany became uncomfortably obvious by the end of 1937 and the beginning of 1938. In September 1937, Mussolini visited Berlin and was greatly impressed with Hitler's accomplishments, military and economic. Even though Italy's foreign minister, Count Galeazzo Ciano, questioned the durability of the Italo-German understanding, the Berlin visit and "above all Mussolini's fidelity to his political allegiance" with Germany strengthened the alliance.<sup>28</sup>

During the Duce's visit to Germany, the French Ambassador to Berlin melodramatically described and analysed the consequences of a united Italo-German front. During Mussolini's speech to a Nazi rally a storm broke out. "Bursts of thunder and flashes of lightning, across a sky overrun by sinister clouds in the half-darkness of

dusk, suddenly created a background of tragedy. The very elements warned mankind of what evils the mating of the dictators was to let loose upon it." <sup>29</sup> On November 11, 1937, Mussolini signed the Anti-Comintern Pact. On December 11, 1937, he removed Italy from the League of Nations. In January 1938, the Rome Protocol Powers failed to reach an agreement because of Italy's continued alignment with Germany.

Austria was effectively isolated. The Rome meeting was the final signal to Austria and Europe that the Italo-German alliance was consummated. At Budapest, the location of the summit, Austria wanted a declaration guaranteeing her independence, which "out of consideration for Germany" Italy could not make. <sup>30</sup> Austria and the Schuschnigg government had run out of options. Germany had finally succeeded in removing the Austrian question from the realm of European politics. Back in September 10, 1919, the day the Treaty of Saint Germain was signed, the Vienna newspaper, Neue Freie Presse, said: Solange du gluecklich bist, wirst du viele Feinde zaehlen; wenn die Zeiten sich verduestern, wirst du allein sein. <sup>31</sup> If times were dark in 1919, they were much darker now. Immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Saint Germain, the Austrians had the full support of the allies. In the first months of 1938, Austria was truly alone, caught between an Anschluss-crazed Hitler and two powers, Italy and Hungary, who were prepared to sacrifice Austria's independence to satisfy

their own vital diplomatic considerations.

In 1938, the Austrians were left to face Germany alone. Against this seemingly hopeless background, the situation for Austria grew worse. In July 1936, Hitler had agreed to respect Austria's sovereignty; however, he had not renounced his desire to annex Austria and violations of the German-Austrian Agreement had since increased at an alarming rate. Less than two years after the signing of the July Agreement, the Austrian police uncovered a renewed Nazi conspiracy against the government. On January 25, 1938, the Vienna police raided the offices of leading Nazis and found a "Program of Action for the Year 1938." Known as the "Tavs Plan," named after the well-known National Socialist, in whose desk the documents were found.<sup>32</sup> The papers found in Dr. Tav's office revealed a conspiracy against the Austrian government. The plan provided for an internal Nazi coup making German intervention necessary. Tav and other Nazi conspirators were arrested and charged with high treason.

In the wake of the Tav conspiracy, German Ambassador von Papen suffered the same fate as his predecessor and was dismissed as Hitler's special ambassador to Austria. In an effort to discuss his dismissal with Hitler, von Papen suggested that unless Schuschnigg and Hitler met, German-Austrian relations would be permanently damaged. Hitler accepted von Papen's proposal. "It [the meeting] was the beginning of the end."<sup>33</sup>

The time was opportune for a German-Austrian summit. Hitler had recently reorganized the Wehrmacht, discharging both Field Marshall von Blomberg, Minister of war, and General Baron von Fritsch, Commander in Chief of the Army, who disapproved of Hitler's future plans for the territorial expansion of Germany.<sup>34</sup> Hitler called a meeting, which produced the famous Hossbach memorandum of November 5, 1937, where he outlined the German need for living space and pointed to Austria and Czechoslovakia with their German populations as principal areas of expansionism. Field Marshall von Blomberg and General Fritsch fell victim to Hitler's desire to personally control the military. In view of their dismissal, which caused concern in Germany, a successful German and Austrian accord would cancel out the controversy involving changes in the structure of the military high command.<sup>35</sup>

The Berchtesgaden meeting between Hitler and Schuschnigg in February 1938 undeniably supplied Hitler with the diplomatic victory he needed and marked a substantial triumph in the battle for supremacy over Austria. At Berchtesgaden Hitler demanded Dr. Seyss-Inquart's appointment as Minister of Public Security, the release of Nazi political prisoners, the legalization of the National Socialist Party, the reinstatement of its members in government and military positions and greater coordination in military and economic policies between Germany and Austria.<sup>36</sup> In return, Germany reaffirmed the

July 11, 1936 agreements.

Schuschnigg was more or less forced into compromising with Germany. At Berchtesgaden, Hitler intimidated Schuschnigg with military intervention and generally browbeat the Austrian Chancellor. He recounted Austria's past record in relation to Germany. "The whole history of Austria," Hitler berated, "is just one uninterrupted act of high treason."<sup>37</sup> He continued, "I am telling you [Schuschnigg] that I am going to solve the so-called Austrian problem one way or the other."<sup>38</sup> "Who knows? Perhaps you will wake up one morning in Vienna to find us there--just like a spring storm."<sup>39</sup>

The outcome of the Berchtesgaden meeting was sweetened by Italian cooperation and English and French inactivity. Hitler accurately summarized Austria's diplomatic situation relative to her allies for the distraught Schuschnigg at Berchtesgaden. "I, Hitler pointed out, "see eye to eye with Mussolini, . . . And England? England will not move one finger for Austria. And France? . . . Now it is too late for France."<sup>40</sup> Commenting on the Hitler-Schuschnigg meeting to a foreign Ambassador, Hermann Goering, Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe, confirmed Hitler's appraisal of Austria's diplomatic position and added that Germany "would not hesitate to march in Austria" given the opportunity.<sup>41</sup>

Though the no major political power in Europe was prepared to intervene on Austria's behalf, the Berchtesgaden meeting did not go unnoticed. Winston

Churchill, member of the British Parliament and future Prime Minister, observed:

The brutal bullying of Herr Schuschnigg at Berchtesgaden, where the most horrible threats were uttered, is in its secondary stage producing a very strong national rally throughout Austria. The Union of the Socialists with the Catholics gives a very strong foundation to the Vienna Government which they have never had before. They have now probably two-thirds of the people of Austria behind them in defense of their independence. They could now probably face a plebiscite conducted under fair conditions without fear.<sup>42</sup>

Though Churchill's observations were inaccurate, Schuschnigg had, in his mind, no alternative but to put Austria's independence or a union with Germany to a vote.

The Austrian Chancellor was well aware that his Berchtesgaden compromise would only lead to further compromises and the final dominance of Germany over Austria. Therefore, Schuschnigg, in an isolated and desperate position, decided to challenge Hitler alone. In an emotional speech at the Stadthalle in Innsbruck, on March 9, 1938, Schuschnigg proclaimed simply that on "next Sunday, March 13, we are holding a plebiscite."<sup>43</sup> The Chancellor felt it necessary to "give proof before God and the world and the whole German people that . . . we are prepared to stand up for our independence, for the political independence of Austria."<sup>44</sup> Schuschnigg hoped to receive support from the Catholics, the Socialists and the Communists. If the plebiscite were successful, Hitler's own argument of self-determination would be turned against him, greater support from Great Britain and France might have been obtained and Austrian independence saved.

Schuschnigg gambled on the plebiscite and lost.

Hitler received the news of the planned Austrian national plebiscite and was well aware of Schuschnigg's intent.<sup>45</sup> During the confusion which followed, Germany threatened to interfere. Under German intimidation Schuschnigg cancelled the plebiscite and, under German pressure, he finally resigned. On the evening of March 11, Schuschnigg announced that under force the Austrian government had collapsed.<sup>46</sup>

Dr. Arthur Seyss-Inquart, who was a leading Austrian Nazi and had been appointed Minister of the Interior as a result of the Berchtesgaden meeting, became Chancellor. Then, under the tutelage of Herman Goering, Seyss-Inquart requested German troops to preserve law and order and prevent bloodshed.<sup>47</sup> On March 12, German troops crossed the Austrian frontier.

Although Nazi Germany had certainly desired an Anschluss with Austria, Schuschnigg's surprise announcement of a plebiscite forced Hitler to take action.<sup>48</sup> By the overwhelming welcome the German Army and Hitler received when they entered Vienna, the Germans justified their military intervention. The German-Austrians looked to Germany to solve their economic problems, unemployment and supply Austria with renewed prestige which had been missing since the days of the Habsburg monarchy. On March 13, Austria was officially annexed into the German Reich and a "free and secret" plebiscite was scheduled one month later.<sup>49</sup>



Ninety-nine percent of Austria voted for Anschluss.

Undoubtedly the majority of Austria favored a union with Germany, however the Nazis certainly influenced the final outcome of the vote. "Of course," an election officer said to a fellow Austrian voter, "you can go into one of the booths at the other end of the room. But as I suppose you have decided to vote right, you can just as well mark your ballot here on this table, and hand it to me." <sup>50</sup> Catholics, Socialists and Communists who opposed the Anschluss with Hitlerite Germany totaled more than the small faction assigned to them. Nevertheless, by the "will" of the Austrian people the Austrian Republic ceased to exist.

In retrospect, the Anschluss of March 1938 was the culmination of the historical past, developments since 1918 and the diplomatic skill of German politicians; all three worked together in favor of Germany and to the handicap of Great Britain, France and Austria. Hitler said, "Das Jahr 1938 als das Jahr der Wiedervereinigung Oesterreichs mit dem Reich wird in der deutschen Geschichte immer einen besonderen Platz einnehmen. Jedoch ist es gut, sich zu erinnern, dass auch in der Politik nichts von ungefähr kommt. Was gelingen soll, muss auf soliden Grundlagen ruhen . . . ." <sup>51</sup> For Hitler, the basis for Germany's Anschluss with Austria was indeed solid based on over nineteen years of dissatisfaction by the Austrian people.

The period from the end of World War I to 1933,

beginning with the Treaties of Paris through the aborted Customs Union Project in 1931, supplied Hitler with enough popular German dissatisfaction and foreign sympathy to achieve his revisionist goals. When he rose to power in 1933, his mission of uniting all German peoples seemed justified and within his grasp. Anschluss was to be the first step in his search for Lebensraum and autarky. In this sense, and possibly because Hitler was a native Austrian, Germany's Anschluss policy came under his direct control not the German Foreign Office.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, throughout his tenure as German Minister in Austria, Herr von Papen reported only to Hitler.<sup>53</sup> Germany's reunion with Austria held special significance for Hitler.

The year 1933 marked a drastic change in Germany's relationship to Austria. Though there was a linear development from the policies of the Weimar period to the Nazi period, with the German-Austrian Customs Union Project as the bridge between the two eras, Hitler's policy toward Austria was not evolutionary in nature.<sup>54</sup> He demanded immediate change and Austria's union with Germany.

Germany's policy toward Austria from 1933 to the putsch of July 25, 1934 was, however, atypical. No other foreign policy question received such intensive attention as Austria in the first year of Hitler's rule.<sup>55</sup> The Dollfuss affair, as a result of Hitler's ill-considered approach, ended as a German foreign policy fiasco. Germany was perceived as violating the sovereignty of a smaller

nation. World opinion denounced the German support of the putsch. Most importantly, Mussolini ordered the Italian army to the Brenner. The threat of war was imminent.

Hitler was forced to retreat. The British and French looked on the German Chancellor as "isolated and disgraced."<sup>56</sup> They believed his policy toward Austria must therefore become more cautious. What the Anglo-French diplomats failed to realize was that Hitler had learned a valuable lesson. "The disastrous consequences of the Dollfuss murder had made . . . clear to him . . . that this delicate problem must be handled with the greatest caution on the German side."<sup>57</sup> However, Hitler now realized "the problem was to find a good way of removing the [Austrian] question from the field of European politics and dealing with it in isolation."<sup>58</sup>

Hence, the July 1934 putsch had been both a defeat and a victory. For Hitler opted for an evolutionary approach. Aided by Mussolini's alignment with Germany, the diverging policies of Britain and France, their lack of commitment to East Central Europe and Schuschaigg's plebiscite, Austria was not only effectively isolated but she also supplied Germany with an opportunity for intervention. Consequently when German troops marched into Austria, Hitler was reasonably certain of success.

Endnotes: Chapter II.

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<sup>3</sup>Extracts from the Minutes of the Conference of Ministers, May 26, 1933, DGFP, ser. C, I, p. 488/

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 489.

<sup>6</sup>Memorandum by the State Secretary, August 7, 1933, DGFP, ser. C, I, p. 721.

<sup>7</sup>Memorandum by the Director of Department II, March 23, 1933, DGFP, ser. C, I, p. 207.

<sup>8</sup>Neurath to Buelow, July [August]4, 1933, DGFP, ser. C, I, p. 718.

<sup>9</sup>Miklos Horthy, Memoirs (New York: Robert Speller and Sons, 1957), p. 140.

<sup>10</sup>Lajos Kerekes, Abendaeumerung einer Demokratie: Mussolini, Gombos und die Heimwehr (Frankfurt: Europa Verlag, 1966), p. 187.

<sup>11</sup>Head of the Volksbund fuer das Deutschtum im Ausland to the Foreign Ministry, August 2, 1934, DGFP, ser. C, III, p. 286.

<sup>12</sup>Note by the State Secretary, July 26, 1934, Ibid., p. 236.

<sup>13</sup>Franz von Papen, Memoirs, trans. Brian Connell (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1953), p. 338.

<sup>14</sup>Hitler to von Papen, July 26, 1934, DGFP, ser. C, III, pp. 252-53.

<sup>15</sup>Von Papen, p. 339.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 342.

<sup>17</sup>Andre, Francois-Poncet. The Fateful Years: Memoirs of a French Ambassador in Berlin, 1931-1938, trans. Jacques LeClercq (New York: Howard Fertig, 1972), pp. 176-177.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 196.

<sup>19</sup>Kurt von Schuschnigg, Austria's Requiem, trans. Franz von Hildebrand (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1964), p. 5.

<sup>20</sup>Von Papen to the Foreign Ministry, May 4, 1936, DGFP, ser. C, V, p. 449.

<sup>21</sup>The German-Austria Gentleman's Agreement and German-Austria communique, July 11, 1936, Ibid., pp. 755-760.

<sup>22</sup>Discussion between Goering and Kanya, October 1936, in Laszlo Zsigmond, ed., Diplomaciai iratok Magyarorszag Kulpolitikajahoz, 1936-1945, vol. I No. 158, quoted in Betty Jo Winchester, "Hungary and the Austrian Anschluss," East European Quarterly 10 (1976): 416.

<sup>23</sup>Von Papen, p. 376.

<sup>24</sup>Von Papen to Hitler, July 16, 1936, DGFP, ser. C, V, p. 772.

<sup>25</sup>Hassell to Foreign Ministry, July 11, 1936, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 283.

<sup>26</sup>Conversation between Mussolini and Schuschnigg, April 22, 1937, Malcolm Muggeridge, ed., Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, trans. Stuart Hood (London: Odham Press, 1948), p. 112.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>28</sup>September 29, 1937, Galezzo Ciano, Ciano's Hidden Diary, 1937-1938, trans. Andreas Major (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1953), p. 16.

<sup>29</sup>Francois-Poncet, p. 246.

<sup>30</sup>January 10, 1938, Ciano; p. 63.

<sup>31</sup>As long as you are lucky, you will be able to count many joys. However when the times darken, you will be alone. Neue Freie Presse, September 10, 1919, evening edition, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup>Stein to Foreign Ministry, January 29, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, pp. 494-495.

<sup>33</sup>Schuschnigg, Austria's Requiem, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup>For the opinions of Blomberg and Fritsch see: Memorandum, Minutes of the Conference in the Reich

Chancellory, November 5, 1937, DGFP, ser. D, I, pp. 38-39.

<sup>35</sup>Lipski to Beck, February 19, 1938, Jozef Lipski, Diplomat in Berlin, 1933-1939, ed. Waclaw Jedrzejewicz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 343.

<sup>36</sup>Protocol of the Conference of February 12, 1938, DGFP, sec. D, I, pp. 515-517.

<sup>37</sup>Schuschaigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>41</sup>Lipski to Beck, February 19, 1938, Lipski, p. 342.

<sup>42</sup>"Carry on!", March 4, 1938, Winston S. Churchill, Step by Step, 1936-1939 (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), p. 190.

<sup>43</sup>Schuschaigg, My Austria, p. 348.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 349.

<sup>45</sup>Foreign Ministry to Embassy in Great Britain, March 9-10, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, pp. 562-563.

<sup>46</sup>Schuschaigg's farewell address, March 11, 1938, Schuschaigg, My Austria, p. 354.

<sup>47</sup>Seyss-Inquart to Hitler, March 11, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 580.

<sup>48</sup>Jurgen Gehl, Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss, 1933-1938 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 195.

<sup>49</sup>Memorandum, March 13, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 591.

<sup>50</sup>An Austrian Officer, "A Vienna Diary," Yale Review 28 (June 1939): 684.

<sup>51</sup>The year 1938 as the year of the unification of Austria with the Reich will always occupy a special place in German history. Though we would do well to remember that in politics nothing comes by chance. What is to succeed must rest on solid bases. Fritz Berder, ed., Jahrbuch fuer Auswartige Politik, 1938 (Berlin-Wilmersdorf: August Gross Verlag vorm. Bruecke-Verlag, 1938), p. xi.

<sup>52</sup>Ribbentrop, pp. 83-84.

<sup>53</sup>Hitler to von Papen, DGFP, ser. C, III, p. 253.

<sup>54</sup>Stambrook, p. 94.

<sup>55</sup>Dieter Ross, Hitler und Dollfuss: Die deutsche Oesterreich-Politik, 1933-1934 (Hamburg: Leibniz Verlag, 1966), p. 256.

<sup>56</sup>Francois-Poncet, pp. 152-153.

<sup>57</sup>Von Papen, p. 341.

<sup>58</sup>Weizsaecker, p. 111.

Chapter III. Approaching the Anschluss: The Development of U.S. Foreign Policy, Roosevelt, the Anti-New Deal Coalition and the Isolationists

By the turn of the century it was evident that the United States had finally become a world power. However, after the extended American involvement in World War I, the young Republic preferred to find its own way into the realm of international affairs. At the end of World War I, the United States took an unprecedented course. Disgruntled with war and United States' involvement in European affairs, an overwhelming majority of Americans opted to withdraw behind their ocean boundaries and allow Europe to continue the struggle for security, economic and political, unaided by their distant American allies.

Though the American exodus from European economic concerns failed to materialize, the political withdrawal had a more lasting effect. From the United States refusal to ratify the Versailles Peace in 1919 to the Neutrality Acts of the 1930s, the United States government mirrored the isolationist attitude of its people. The United States was caught up in an isolationist eddy. As a consequence, the U.S. State Department formulated little policy. The State Department considered its main function gathering information concerning potential trouble spots in Europe and accurately relaying this information to the Roosevelt Administration. In this respect, Franklin D. Roosevelt,



thirty-third President of the United States and Cordell Hull, his Secretary of State, were well-informed, particularly about Germany and the Austrian question.

During the Weimar period the United States had actively worked to stabilize Europe through the Dawes Plan which provided both private and public loans to revitalize Germany. United States investment was facilitated by a rescheduling of German reparation payments. However, after the Stock Market Crash in 1929, United States' loans were recalled and investments all but ceased. During this period both Adolf Hitler and Franklin Roosevelt came into office. Hitler promised the masses Neuordnung (a new order) and Roosevelt, a "New Deal." The latter, though possessing charisma and ability, worked within the constraints of a democratic government, the former used the Weimar Republic's weaknesses to seize power and form a totalitarian fascist state.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt assumed the presidency of the United States on March 3, 1933, at the height of the Depression, the most desperate era in American history since the Civil War. He planned to help America to recover with his radical and now famous New Deal. His programs revolutionized the American system, and represented a watershed: a transition from a laissez-faire economy to one of direct governmental intervention. This conversion did not take place without opposition. Among the most ardent protesters, Father Charles E. Coughlin, the influential

radio priest, went so far as to accuse Roosevelt of being in league with both the money changers of Wall Street and the Communists.

In connection with Coughlin's accusations, only two months after Anschluss, the infamous House Committee on Un-American Activities was established. Headed by Martin Dies, this committee had been set up during the spring of 1938 because of a German spy trial and a riot by the German-American Bund in New York. Ironically, because of the political make-up of this committee, the Roosevelt government came under pressure. A New Jersey Republican, Representative Parrell Thomas, concentrated on the New Deal and associated "Bolshevism, Nazism, Fascism, and New Dealism into one ideology--Together they were the four horsemen of autocracy."<sup>1</sup> ". . . The chief activities of the Dies Committee seem to have concentrated in two directions: to embarrass the Administration in a political campaign, and to get as much and as favorable publicity as possible."<sup>2</sup> Both were successful.

The pressure forced by the conservatives on Roosevelt mounted. The Supreme Court invalidated many New Deal measures and during the 1936 elections the Republican party announced that they considered America in peril because of the many unconstitutional actions committed by Roosevelt. Despite the Republican rhetoric, Roosevelt won the 1936 presidential elections without a struggle. However, only one year later his luck came to an end.

In 1937 the United States experienced a recession that discredited the administration. The New Deal was not working. Even though industrial production and stock dividends were within ten percent of the post-Depression peak, by 1937 capital expenditures had not drastically improved.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the Democrats lost eighty seats in the House and seven in the Senate in the 1938 Congressional elections, despite a vigorous campaign by Roosevelt.<sup>4</sup> The election defeat was associated with the recession. This economic downturn made it particularly difficult for Roosevelt to risk a political fight over foreign affairs. Roosevelt feared an isolationist backlash in unison with anti-New Deal Republicans and conservative Southern Democrats. Of these three, the isolationists were the most threatening in regard to United States foreign policy.

Since the end of World War I, isolationism had dominated the American psyche. The Nye Commission kept isolationism alive, by concluding in a biased study that the arms industry and bankers had made huge profits during World War I and had been responsible for United States involvement. Both the public and Congress alike were determined not to allow this to occur again. Congress, therefore, enacted the Neutrality Acts of 1935, 1936, and 1937.

On October 5, 1937, Roosevelt challenged the isolationists in Chicago, while dedicating a Public Works

Administration (PWA) bridge, with his so-called Quarantine Speech. "It seems to be unfortunately true," Roosevelt proclaimed, "that the epidemic of world lawlessness is spreading. When an epidemic . . . starts to spread, the community approves and joins in a quarantine of patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease."<sup>5</sup> The President further warned that "War is a contagion, whether it be declared or undeclared. It can engulf states and peoples remote from the original scene of hostilities . . . . We are adopting such measures as will minimize our risk of involvement, but we cannot have complete protection in a world of disorder in which confidence and security have broken down."<sup>6</sup>

The speech met with strong opposition from the isolationist leaders and the press, causing Roosevelt to deny that he meant that the United States should take any active roll in quarantining the aggressors. However, Roosevelt had made his position clear and "although the president had not yet involved any program for action . . . , the speech proved to be a significant indicator of future policy directions."<sup>7</sup>

The Germans, particularly German Ambassador Dr. Hans Dieckhoff, also took notice of Roosevelt's Quarantine Speech. Dieckhoff, always an astute observer, realized that this speech was directed against Japan not Germany. He repeatedly stressed that "thus far there are no indications that the United States intends to intervene

actively in the Far Eastern conflict, let alone in European conflicts." <sup>8</sup> However, after the Second World War had begun, Dieckhoff concluded that the Quarantine speech was unknowingly directed against Italy and Germany and marked a change in the direction of Roosevelt's foreign policy. <sup>9</sup>

By the end of 1937 and the beginning of 1938, Roosevelt began to take active notice of the international situation. On January 3, 1938, addressing Congress in his annual State of the Union message, Roosevelt briefly turned to foreign policy. The President's address repeated his message of October 5, 1937, although in a diluted form: "There is a trend in the world away from observance both of the letter and spirit of treaties . . . . Disregard for treaty obligations seems to have followed the surface trend away from the democratic representative form of government. It would seem, therefore, that world peace through international agreements is most safe in the hands of democratic representative governments--or, in other words, peace is most greatly jeopardized in and by those nations where democracy has been discarded or has never developed." <sup>10</sup> Undoubtedly only a few countries fit this description and Germany belonged solidly to that group. The United States had, according to President Roosevelt, done everything to advocate peace. "But in a world of high tension and disorder . . . it becomes the responsibility of each nation which strives for peace . . . to be strong enough to assure the observance of those fundamentals of orderly existence." <sup>11</sup>

Though not advocating a great change in foreign policy, that is, a radical shift away from isolationism, Roosevelt certainly urged preparedness. The President, however, was ready to more than simply equip the United States with a strong military. He longed for possible negotiations of the many disputes that directly threatened United States security or indirectly might lead to United States involvement. In fact, only one day after Roosevelt's Quarantine Speech, Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles, an old friend of the President's and an internationalist, proposed an international peace conference to be held on Armistice Day (November 11) in 1937 in an effort to maintain international law and order.

The President, searching for a foreign policy initiative, accepted Welles' idea. Roosevelt especially favored Welles' proposal because the United States would have no part in the conference only in so far as acting as a medium for international peace. The Welles Plan offered Roosevelt the opportunity to continue his search for peace while making no military or political commitments.<sup>12</sup>

The Administration greeted what seemed to be the perfect compromise. Not only would the anti-New Dealers and the isolationists be placated, but public opinion as well. Over sixty-six percent of the American public favored a world disarmament conference, however fifty nine percent opposed Roosevelt calling one.<sup>13</sup> Unquestionably, the isolationist public feared that United States

involvement would lead directly to a commitment. The Welles Plan, however, guaranteed the neutrality of the United States while furthering world peace. The only purpose of the proposed conference would be to get an agreement on the principles of international conduct, discuss disarmament and insure future economic stability. Such a proposal was bound to find support among the people. But the Welles Plan was too idealistic. Secretary of State Cordell Hull quickly pointed this out, adding that the Welles proposal was "thoroughly unrealistic."<sup>14</sup> The Welles Plan, therefore, proved unacceptable to Hull.

Despite the Secretary's objections, the issue resurfaced again in January 1938. The State Department sent a letter to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in an effort to sound out the British opinion with reference to the "Roosevelt-Welles" Plan before taking any preparatory action. Chamberlain's reaction was negative.<sup>15</sup> Although the Prime Minister was aware of the United States' significance as a British ally and later said that a combination of the two countries would "represent a force so overwhelming that the mere hint of the possibility of its use is sufficient to make the most powerful of dictators pause . . . ." <sup>16</sup> He questioned America's reliability and Roosevelt's power to influence the isolationists.<sup>17</sup>

Chamberlain had long been skeptical of the United States commitment to Great Britain and of the dependability

of the United States. Even in reaction to Roosevelt's Quarantine speech, the Prime Minister remained doubtful of America's intentions. Chamberlain read Roosevelt's speech with "mixed feelings . . . seeing that patients suffering from epidemic diseases do not usually go about fully armed . . ." <sup>18</sup> There was something lacking in Roosevelt's analogy, to be sure.

However, Chamberlain's rejection of the Roosevelt-Welles Plan was based on more than simple skepticism; British foreign policy under the direction of Chamberlain had two objectives in negotiating with the European dictators, economic collaboration and political appeasement. Chamberlain believed that if trade were increased, and political demands met, followed by a degree of economic prosperity, peace would be maintained. Therefore, it was Chamberlain's fear that "if the President's suggestions are put forward at the present time Germany and Italy may feel constrained to take advantage of them both to delay consideration of specific points which must be settled if appeasement is to be achieved . . ." <sup>19</sup>

"Chamberlain's reply sorely disappointed FDR . . ." However, he "remained eager to show aggressors that the United States was not indifferent to their actions." <sup>20</sup> The President never seriously considered such a conference again. It was not until March 13, 1938, the day that Hitler declared Austria a province of the German Reich, that the British informed Roosevelt of their desire to



postpone the conference indefinitely.<sup>21</sup> Roosevelt was responding to a note from Lord Halifax, Lord President of the Council, who stated, "In these circumstances [Anschluss] I am bound to confess that one of the twin efforts which His Majesty's Government was anxious to make to prepare the way for an appeasement, and on account of which we asked the President to postpone his initiative, has failed."<sup>22</sup> This cable from Halifax and Roosevelt's response ended any effort by the United States to call an international peace conference. However had the Roosevelt-Welles Plan become reality, it might have "faced the dictators with the necessity to declare themselves and their demands before the world . . ." <sup>23</sup> No peace conference materialized, and therefore the opponents of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy had no alternative but to wait. The diplomatic initiative was out of their control.

Chamberlain's expeditious and inept rejection of the American peace initiative, his appraisal of the strength of isolationism in the United States was accurate. Peace, patriotic and isolationist groups had extensive support. There were fifty national patriotic organizations, twenty-seven national peace organizations, forty-three national organizations with active peace committees, and numerous local patriotic and peace committees desiring to influence public opinion in favor of the peace movement.<sup>24</sup> These associations reflected the mood of the American public which endeavored to insure peace by exercising control over

the machinery of government. In fact, in October 1937, the same month that Roosevelt addressed the isolationists in Chicago, over seventy-three percent of the public approved of a measure requiring Congress to obtain consent of the people before declaring war.<sup>25</sup> The realization of such a proposal would have had a significant effect on Roosevelt's ability to conduct foreign policy.

This radical brand of isolationism reached its zenith in the spring of 1938. Louis Ludlow, a Democratic Representative from Indiana, in reaction to the Panay incident introduced a resolution for a Constitutional Amendment which would subject the ability of Congress to declare war to a national referendum. On December 12, 1937, the Japanese had sunk the gunboat Panay while it was patrolling in Chinese waters. The whole affair caused panic among the isolationists and the peace movement. Many were concerned that the accidental sinking might start a war, as the sinking of the Maine had.

A conflict between Japan and the United States was avoided, but the damage was done. The isolationists, still under the influence of the Panay incident, hoped the Ludlow Resolution would eliminate the chance of such events leading the United States into war. As a result, Roosevelt followed a more conciliatory policy toward Japan than he might have.<sup>26</sup> The Ludlow Resolution still went to the floor of the House, but was defeated narrowly 209 to 188.<sup>27</sup> Roosevelt knew that Ludlow's proposal would have crippled

his foreign policy and would have encouraged "other nations to believe that they could violate American rights with impunity."<sup>28</sup>

Fortunately, the Ludlow Resolution was defeated. Although "the strength that so foolhardy a scheme was able to muster was a clear warning to Roosevelt and Hull to proceed with caution."<sup>29</sup> In retrospect, Hull commented that the whole Ludlow affair revealed the "difficulties the President and I had in carrying out toward the aggressor nations the stronger policies we should have liked to follow."<sup>30</sup> The twenty-one votes which defeated the Ludlow Resolution represented the first break in the isolationist domination, allowing Roosevelt a little more room to develop his policies, while maintaining the support of the American people. Progress in this direction was further intensified regarding German-American relations in February 1938.

Two years earlier, on July 11, 1936, Hitler had signed an agreement promising to respect Austrian sovereignty. In reality, he had not renounced his desire to annex Austria. Less than two years later, in January 1938, a renewed Austrian Nazi conspiracy against the government was uncovered. Seeking a solution to the Austrian problem Hitler threatened military action against Austria at the Berchtesgaden meeting with Schuschnigg.

The Americans had closely watched the Hitler-Schuschnigg meeting and realized its seriousness. Jay

Pierrepont Moffat, Chief of the Division of European Affairs, noted "the Austrian situation . . . is even worse than I had anticipated, and I was generally considered a pessimist at that."<sup>31</sup> Moreover, Roosevelt and the State Department were even well-informed about the actual meeting itself. John C. Wiley, American charge d'affaires in Vienna, attended a dinner party only three days after Berchtesgaden, during which Schuschnigg described his visit with Herr Hitler as the most horrible day of his life. He said that Hitler was undoubtedly a madman, who openly confessed his desire to annex Austria.<sup>32</sup> Several American diplomats were aware of the dangers that Germany presented and knew that it was "only a matter of time before the Anschluss takes place."<sup>33</sup>

The State Department was uncertain about the meaning of the British response to the Hitler-Schuschnigg meeting. As former Consul General in Berlin and Minister to Austria, Assistant Secretary of State George S. Messersmith was the foremost German specialist in the State Department. He had been the first to warn of Hitler's expansionist foreign policy.<sup>34</sup> After Berchtesgaden, he could not "understand the English attitude. There seems to be still a group which believes that they can purchase security through giving Germany a free hand in Southeastern Europe. It would be well if they realized that Germany with a free hand in Europe has a good deal freer hand in the rest of the world."<sup>35</sup> The Americans were consciously aware that

the Goetterdammerung approached, however they were in no position to stop Hitler's forward march. On March 12, 1938, German troops advanced into Austria.

Schuschnigg had decided to challenge Hitler.

On March 9, he announced a plebiscite to be held on March 13 which would determine whether or not Austria would remain independent or become part of the German Reich. As a result, Hitler forced Schuschnigg to resign and Seyss-Inquart became chancellor. Seyss-Inquart then, with German assistance, requested German troops to help preserve law and order. Jay Pierrepont Moffat, Chief of the Division of European Affairs, followed these events in Austria and commented about the surrender of the Austrian Embassy in Washington:

Saturday Prochnik [Edgar L.G. Prochnik, Austrian Minister to the United States] received orders to hoist the swastika flag over his Legation and as much as anything else the sight of that flag floating conspicuously in the spring breeze brought home to Washingtonians that Austria was no more.<sup>36</sup>

Hitler's coup was complete and the world finally came to realize the geopolitical significance of this small alpine country.

Approaching the Anschluss, the United States was faced with many domestic problems and similar to France, Great Britain and Germany, these same issues that dictated what foreign policy the Roosevelt Administration could pursue. The isolationists dominated not only the Middle West, but the entire nation and Congress as well. Roosevelt could not endanger his already strong political position over a

controversial foreign policy. However, at the end of 1937, the President decided to challenge isolation, advocating a gradual acknowledgment of America's role as a world power.

Roosevelt and the State Department had devoted special attention to Germany from 1933 and Hitler's rise to power. The Americans viewed Hitler's drastic nazification, restrictions on the press and political freedoms, suspension of the constitution, conflicts with the church and persecution of Jews, as adverse developments in the relationship between the United States and Germany. The detrimental nature of Nazi Germany was confirmed by the many well-educated political exiles who had emigrated to the United States. Unquestionably, both Washington and a vast majority of the nation believed Germany to be responsible for threatening international peace.

Therefore, in the winter of 1937-1938, Roosevelt, pressed by the failure of his New Deal, concerned about Japanese and Italian aggressiveness and certainly conscious of the Nazi menace, became determined to use the power of the United States to prevent war. As evidenced by his Quarantine Speech and the State of the Union message in January 1938, Roosevelt was preparing the way for a graduated change in American foreign policy. Increasingly, the President seemed to have been determined to bring pressure against those nations which violated international law and threatened peace. "Unfortunately, he regularly failed to define this for those subordinates responsible

for executing this policy . . . . "37

A linchpin in Roosevelt's evolving pre-Anschluss foreign policy was the Roosevelt-Welles Plan. It seemed to satisfy perfectly the President's domestic and foreign policies. However, the Plan fell victim to the foreign policy of British Prime Minister Chamberlain. Not that Great Britain's immediate support of the Roosevelt-Welles Plan would have altered Hitler's foreign policy. However, the long term effects might have brought the United States into closer alignment with Great Britain as well as accelerating the American commitment to the anti-fascist block in Europe.

In the end the Anglo-American lack of an agreement or closer understanding only quickened Hitler's aggressiveness. In the United States, the isolationists vowed to keep America out of another war. They inhibited the United States' effort to rearm; they delayed United States military aid to anti-Hitlerite nations; and most importantly, they supported and encouraged Hitler's disregard and underestimation of the United States.

On the other side of the Atlantic, Chamberlain overzealously pursued appeasement in spite of Germany's lack of cooperation or adherence to international law. Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, who opposed Chamberlain's rebuff of the Roosevelt-Welles Plan, concluded the "union of Germany and Austria might have been inevitable . . . , but the impression of weakness created

by British foreign policy accelerated . . . these events  
. . . . "<sup>38</sup> In any case neither the British nor the  
Americans had any effective policy to counter Hitler's  
uncontrollable expansionism.



Endnotes: Chapter III

<sup>1</sup> New York Times, September 21, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> D.A. Saunders, "The Dies Committee: First Phase," The Public Opinion Quarterly 3(April 1939): 238.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Freidel, The New Deal in Historical Perspective, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: American Historical Association, 1965), p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 1083.

<sup>5</sup> Address at Chicago, October 5, 1937, Samuel L. Rosenman, comp., The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Continuing Struggle for Liberalism 1938 (New York: MacMillan Co., 1941), p. 410, (Here after cited as Papers) vol. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 411.

<sup>7</sup> Manfred Jonas, The United States and Germany: A Diplomatic History (Ithaca: Cornell University press, 1984), p. 153.

<sup>8</sup> Dieckhoff to Foreign Ministry, October 15, 1937, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 641.

<sup>9</sup> Hans Dieckhoff, Roosevelts Politik gegenüber Frankreich (Berlin: Junker und Dunhaupt Verlag, 1942), p. 10; also see by same author, Zur Vorgeschichte des Roosevelt-Krieges (Berlin: Junker und Dunhaupt Verlag, 1943).

<sup>10</sup> Annual Message to the Congress, January 3, 1938, Papers, vol. 7, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Robert A. Divine, The Reluctant Belligerent: American Entry into World War II (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1965), p. 46.

<sup>13</sup> George Gallup and Claude Robinson, "American Institute of Public Opinion--Surveys, 1935-1938," The Public Opinion Quarterly 2 (April 1938): 387.

<sup>14</sup> Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, vol. 1 (New York: MacMillan Co., 1948), p. 547.

<sup>15</sup>Chamberlain to Roosevelt, January 14, 1938, U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, vol. I, 1938 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 117-120. (Hereafter cited as FRUS).

<sup>16</sup>Chamberlain to Mrs. Morton Prince, January 16, 1938, Keith Feiling, The Life of Neville Chamberlain (London: MacMillan & Co., 1946), p. 323.

<sup>17</sup>Diary entry, February 19, 1938, Ibid., 322.

<sup>18</sup>Feiling, p. 325.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 120

<sup>20</sup>Robert Dallek, pp. 156-157.

<sup>21</sup>Arnold A. Offner, American Appeasement: United States Foreign Policy and Germany, 1933-1938 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 229.

<sup>22</sup>Telegram from Lord Halifax, March 11, 1938, FRUS, I, p. 132.

<sup>23</sup>A.L. Rowse, Appeasement: A Study in Political Decline, 1933-1939 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1961), p. 67.

<sup>24</sup>Elton Atwater, "Organizing American Public Opinion for Peace," The Public Opinion Quarterly 1(April 1937): 112.

<sup>25</sup>Gallup, p. 387.

<sup>26</sup>Dallek, p. 155.

<sup>27</sup>Hull, p. 564.

<sup>28</sup>President's Views on the Proposed Referendum to Declare War, January 6, 1938, Papers, vol. 7, p. 37.

<sup>29</sup>Selig Adler, The Isolationist Impulse (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1957), p. 270.

<sup>30</sup>Hull, p. 564.

<sup>31</sup>Nancy H. Hooker, ed., The Moffat Papers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 189.

<sup>32</sup>Wiley to Hull, February 15, 1938, FRUS, I, p. 393.

<sup>33</sup>Lane to Hull, February 17, 1938, Ibid., p. 399.

<sup>34</sup>see Kenneth Moss, "George S. Messersmith and Nazi

Germany: The Diplomacy of Limits in Central Europe," in U.S. Diplomats in Europe, 1919-1941, ed. Kenneth Jones (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1981).

<sup>35</sup>Memorandum by Messersmith to Hull, February 18, 1938, FRUS, I, p. 21.

<sup>36</sup>Hooker, p. 192.

<sup>37</sup>Mark M. Lowenthal, "Roosevelt and the Coming of the War: The Search for United States Policy, 1937-1942," Journal of Contemporary History 16(April 1981): 413.

<sup>38</sup>Eden to Mr. Rupert Becket, April 1938, Anthony Eden, The Reckoning: The Memoirs of Anthony Eden (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965), p. 14.

## Chapter IV. The American Reaction to Anschluss

Germany's annexation of Austria drew world-wide protest. The British and French were among the first to make their dissatisfaction known to Berlin.<sup>1</sup> German Foreign Secretary Baron von Weizsaecker characterized "the British and French notes as 'strongly worded protests'; they did not 'ask anything' but protested against German action as violating the independence of a third state including the employment of military compulsion."<sup>2</sup> But the Anglo-French objection carried little weight with the German government. The German foreign office knew the protests were backed by empty threats.

Hitler had correctly reasoned that both the British and French were in no position to intervene. Besides, many British statesmen were indifferent to Anschluss and only objected to the method which Germany carried it out. "After all, the Austrians and Germans and their separation from the Reich was very artificial."<sup>3</sup> With the exception of New Zealand, the dominions accepted Anschluss and believed the Germans had valid grievances.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, Chamberlain chose to push for rearmament on the one hand and appeasement on the other. As for the French, they were experiencing a change in government, and without the support of a powerful ally, were not prepared to challenge Germany.

In East-Central Europe Anschluss was viewed with mixed

emotions. Czechoslovakia, the country most effected by Anschluss, feared a German invasion across the Czech-Austria border despite German assurances that they had no intention of invasion. The Poles accepted Anschluss without protest. A German diplomat had informed the Poles as early as February 19, 1938, that there was "no possible way of solving the situation [the Anschluss question] by German-Austria negotiations, and therefore he was not excluding the possibility of an outburst inside Austria."<sup>5</sup> The Poles saw the inevitability of Anschluss and announced in February that their interest in Austria was not political. However, the Poles were seriously interested in the Czech problem.<sup>6</sup> The actual annexation of Austria, though sobering up the Poles, did not alter their neutral position. Finally, Anschluss caused "no noticeable disturbance" in Yugoslavia, "although there were strong repercussions in public opinion."<sup>7</sup> On March 14, Yugoslavia declared publicly its disinterest in the Anschluss.

The Eastern European country which had the most to gain from Anschluss was Hungary. Since the end of World War I, the Hungarians had sought close association with Germany in hopes of revising the Treaty of Trianon, the Hungarian World War I peace settlement, which was extremely unfavorable to Hungary. Accordingly, on March 14, 1938, Hungarian Foreign Minister Kanya telegraphed Dome Sztojay, Hungarian minister in Berlin, to congratulate the Germans on the success of their union with Austria. The Hungarians had been the first

to acknowledge this important Nazi accomplishment.<sup>8</sup> Admiral Horthy, later proclaimed the official Hungarian view concerning the Anschluss:

For anybody with an open mind and seeing eyes who judges the situation must know that the union of Austria with Germany means only one thing for our country: that an old friend of ours who has been dragged by the peace treaties into an impossible situation has united with another old friend and faithful comrade-in-arms of ours, i.e. with that Germany which in the testimony of history always was a trustworthy ally of her friends, and has kept her pledges for life and death. This is the whole thing. Nothing else happened from our point of view.<sup>9</sup>

Despite Horthy's appeasing words, something had happened, and it had greater significance than an old friend uniting with another. Privately, a large majority of the Hungarian ruling class worried about German designs on East Central Europe and how far they planned to expand. Even some members of the extreme Hungarian right became nervous. To calm any Hungarian misconceptions, Hitler guaranteed the independence of Hungarian territory.

The American reaction to Anschluss had little in common with the European response. As a rule the United States had no direct interests involved in Anschluss as did the British, French, Poles, Czechs, Yugoslavs and Hungarians. Even if United States interests were affected, the isolationist foreign policy which Roosevelt followed would have drastically limited the response and reaction of the United States.

Prior to the 1930s few nations had a better relationship than the United States and Germany. Many Americans hailed the success of the German experiment in democracy and welcomed increased cultural and economic ties. Weimar Germany equally appreciated its association with the United States. The Germans hoped for American support of revision of the Versailles Peace Treaty. They gladly received American aid and investment. But the German-American relationship drastically changed in 1933.

Undoubtedly, Hitler's appointment as German chancellor adversely affected German-American relations. While the American isolationists and peace groups pushed for an international understanding, Hitler rearmed, occupied the Rhineland, imprisoned political opponents and Jews and supported General Francisco Franco. The aggressive policies of Hitler's Germany came to oppose directly those of the United States.

However, Hitler's rise to power was not singularly responsible for the declining German-American accord; economic factors also played an important role. After the Depression, the United States could no longer export capital and provide loans to Germany. In fact, it had to develop a policy which would increase American trade. Secretary of State Cordell Hull initiated a policy of reciprocal trade agreements between the United States and other countries which promoted both prosperity and maintain peace. Hull firmly believed countries which traded together could not

afford to jeopardize peace by starting a war. In opposition to Hull's trade program, Germany developed restrictive trade policies and began to penetrate the traditional American market in Central and South America. However, despite the ideological and economic differences between Germany and the United States, both countries remained on cordial terms as long as possible, given their opposing positions.

Since the ascendancy of the Nazi party, several American diplomats had warned of Germany's desire to incorporate Austria.<sup>10</sup> During the five years which separated Hitler's rise to power and the Anschluss, American diplomatic observers specifically focused on Austria.<sup>11</sup> In February 1938, Assistant Secretary of State George S. Messersmith sounded the final warning about Austria's impending fate. He was convinced that unless some great change occurred in the European picture, Austria would soon be absorbed into Germany. On March 13, 1938, Messersmith's prediction was realized.<sup>12</sup> Four days later, the Assistant Secretary wrote to John C. Wiley, the American charge in Vienna, that "the barbaric hordes have swept over Austria again . . . ," and "words would be inadequate to tell you how I feel . . . my heart goes out to our Austrian friends."<sup>13</sup> Messersmith's comments aptly expressed the American opinion and emotion over Germany's annexation of Austria.

Contrary to the shock and outrage felt by America, the German Ambassador in Washington, Dr. Hans Dieckhoff,



initially reported to Berlin that the rapid developments in Austria were accepted with passive detachment in the United States. The announced Austrian plebiscite was received with "apprehension and even annoyance."<sup>14</sup> According to Dieckhoff, the State Department allegedly believed, "that fellow [Schuschaigg] is asking for trouble."<sup>15</sup> The Ambassador also reported that when Herr Schuschaigg, realizing the failure of his planned plebiscite, resigned, "it was considered an altogether logical development . . ." by the State Department.<sup>16</sup>

Dieckhoff's appraisal of the allegedly calm American reaction to Anschluss was further supported by his meeting with Secretary of State Cordell Hull after Seyss-Inquart's appointment as Chancellor and German military intervention. During their encounter, Hull simply "asked a number of questions, showed a keen interest, but gave no evidence of any apprehension, nor did he express any critical or even disapproving attitude."<sup>17</sup> After a press conference with the American Secretary of State, the press similarly reacted as Hull had and, in the Ambassador's opinion, the journalists "appreciated fully the German point of view . . ."<sup>18</sup> At the same news conference, Hull announced that "nothing has yet happened in Austria which involves American interests."<sup>19</sup> The New York Herald Tribune reported that Hull emphasized nothing had happened "but an internal change of government. Such changes in government do not involve the question of recognition by the United States, but State Department

officials conceded if Germany attempts to assert sovereignty over her Austrian neighbor the question of recognition undoubtedly would arise. The present attitude of the department, however, is not to cross that bridge until it comes to it." 20

The reaction of Congress also reflected American impartiality and the unwavering strength of isolationism. Under the headline, "U.S. attitude on Hitler Coup Is 'Hands Off,'" Senators Hiram Johnson, J. Hamilton Lewis, Key Pittman and House Representative Sam D. McKeyolds agreed Anschluss would have no effect on United States isolationist foreign policy. Furthermore, Pittman discounted fears that there might be immediate serious consequences from the forcible Anschluss between Germany and Austria.<sup>21</sup> Such reports and the general inactivity of Congress concerning the Anschluss helped to shape Dieckhoff's early picture of the American reaction to Anschluss.

Even as Dieckhoff was reporting about the indifferent American reaction to Germany's annexation of Austria to Berlin, the result of Anschluss became obvious in Washington. In Congress an important naval expansion bill, amounting to \$1,113,000,000 and part of the Administration's strategy to rearm America, was under debate. Germany's nazification of Austria proved perfectly timed for those in favor of the bill. It was welcomed by many who supported American rearmament. Anschluss gave new strength to the supporters of the Naval Expansion Act.<sup>22</sup>

Anschluss attracted limited attention in Congress. On March 13, Senator Lewis B. Schwellebach of Washington discussed the current Austro-German crisis over the Columbia radio network. As a result of Anschluss, the Senator saw the futility of dealing with Germany. Anschluss directly violated the Berchtesgaden Agreement. Treaties with Hitler were worthless. "We cannot deny," the junior Senator stated, "the fact that Adolf Hitler today is Europe's leader. We tremble at what he will do next. We know what will become of religious liberty in Austria, both for the Jews and the Catholics. It just will not exist. We know what will happen to freedom of speech and of the press. They will be suppressed. Democratic processes for the 7,000,000 Austrians are extinct."<sup>23</sup> Despite his castigation of Germany, Schwellebach concluded the United States should remain steadfast in its isolation and let no outside influences alter America's course.

In another radio address by Senator William E. Borah of Idaho, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee and opponent of interventionism, the topic of Anschluss provided an excellent opportunity to reaffirm America's neutrality. In comparison to Senator Schwellebach's address, Borah condemned Germany less and went so far as to rationalize its annexation of Austria:

The German dictator reached out recently and took under his control and direction the once proud country of Austria. It is a sad and stirring thing to see a once great nation--the vast estate of Maria Teresa--

pass under the domination of another power. But if you begin your study of the event with the signing of the Versailles Treaty, that which happened to Austria would appear natural, logical, inevitable, and a thing which is not of the slightest moment to the Government, as a government, of the United States.<sup>24</sup>

Borah considered Austria's independence a small matter, a passing moment, in comparison to his war against United States interventionism, and, therefore, the United States should not allow itself to be drawn within a possible European conflict by overemphasizing the events of mid-March 1938. Borah's address unquestionably "promoted an understanding of the German action among wide circles" in the United States.<sup>25</sup>

Other Senators were less isolationist and warned of the consequences of Germany's annexation of Austria. On March 11, Senator J. Hamilton Lewis, a Democrat from Illinois, announced his concerns over the rapidly developing Austro-German conflict. He understood the significance of Anschluss for the United States, not only in Europe but in the Far East as well. "When new control of Austria is had by Germany, the move then will be directly to bring about an arrangement between the newly empowered Germany, Italy and Japan, to carry out the complete possession of what we now speak of as the Orient. That complete possession is addressed wholly against the United States."<sup>26</sup>

Senator Lewis' prediction of the effect of Anschluss on the Far East was accurate. Only three days after Hitler declared Austria a part of the Reich, the State Department

received word from its China Embassy that Hitler's success in Austria "had been a great encouragement to the Japanese in carrying on their activities in China."<sup>27</sup>

There was only one radical among all the Senators and Representatives on Pennsylvania Avenue. Donald L. O'Toole, a Democratic Representative from New York, sponsored a resolution calling for the United States to immediately sever diplomatic relations with Germany until the independence of Austria was recognized and the persecution of minorities ceased.<sup>28</sup>

With few exceptions, Congress was unusually quiet during the initial phase of the Anschluss, much more so than the President and the State Department. The initial calm Dieckhoff had observed disappeared on Monday, March 14. Anschluss, having occurred over the weekend, was complete, and the reports of the German subjugation of Austria had become common news. According to Dieckhoff, Anschluss was now "stigmatized as a breach of treaty, as militarism, as the rape of defenseless little Austria by her big neighbor bristling with arms, and as the consequence of the policy of 'might makes right.'"<sup>29</sup> The government, press and public denounced the German action against Austria.

Under these new conditions, Dieckhoff went to the State Department in order to officially inform Secretary of State Hull of the Austro-German reunion. The German Ambassador first met with the Secretary, who accepted Dieckhoff's information "without a word."<sup>30</sup> Hull did speak with

Dieckhoff but "carefully avoided saying a word on the topic [Anschluss] and merely made a dry remark that he would have the note translated . . . ." <sup>31</sup> Hull was courteous, a perfect "Southern Gentleman;" however, Dieckhoff's subsequent meeting with Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles was not as pleasant.

After the cool reception by the Secretary of State, Dieckhoff encountered the hostility of the Under Secretary of State. Welles and Dieckhoff had long been on friendly terms, but their meeting of March 14 was anything but congenial. Dieckhoff, only wanted to discuss his meeting with Hull, whereupon Welles gave Dieckhoff his personal opinion about the whole matter. <sup>32</sup> Also, Welles made no attempt to answer many of Dieckhoff's questions. Dieckhoff found Welles' silence "somewhat exasperating" and gave Welles the impression of "laboring under a very considerable degree of nervous excitement . . ." <sup>33</sup> To break the tension Dieckhoff commented, "this is a great day, a wonderful day for Germany." Welles again made no comment, whereupon Dieckhoff broke into a "tirade," exclaiming the world always questioned Germany's good faith and misinterpreted her actions. Moreover, Dieckhoff continued, it is now "evident to the whole world that the Austrian people unanimously desired to become an integral part of the German Reich." <sup>34</sup>

Welles did not agree. He interjected that as far as the world was concerned Austria had been annexed by Germany with the use of physical force. The Austrian people had

exercised no choice. Dieckhoff promptly reminded Welles of the welcome Hitler had received in Vienna. Welles again made no comment, and an overly defensive Dieckhoff then attacked the American press, concluding that the "Jews here [in the U.S] are only a small proportion of your population. Why should you permit them to dominate the press and to dominate public opinion?"<sup>35</sup>

Dieckhoff's uncustomary reaction was recorded throughout the State Department.<sup>36</sup> However, State Department officials were disquieted by more than the Ambassador's uncontrolled discussion with Welles. Most importantly, Dieckhoff's visit was a violation of diplomatic etiquette. Under traditional diplomatic protocol, it was the duty of the Austrian Ambassador to inform the American government of Austria's annexation. The entire affair made a poor impression on the United States government and underscored Germany's international lawlessness.

Under the circumstances, Dieckhoff's report was merely treated as information, although within a week Mr. Edgar L.G. Prochlik, the Minister of the Republic of Austria, gave the formal notice that Austria had been annexed into the greater German nation.<sup>37</sup> Prochlik's announcement forced the issue of United States recognition of Anschluss back into the State Department's lap. Hull's initial comment was that when Austria officially informed the United States of its annexation, some small "technical adjustments" in relations with Germany would become necessary. But such adjustments

would not "involve recognition of the legality of Germany's annexation of the neighboring state."<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, the State Department had to act upon Prochazka's notice of Austria's annexation. The United States Embassy in Vienna was to be closed, and the American government made Germany responsible for the Austrian debt to the United States. These actions meant a de facto recognition by the United States of Anschluss. However because the State Department "met Germany's seizure of Austria . . . with a frigidty so great . . . it amounted to nonrecognition,"<sup>39</sup> that is according to a later account of the American government.<sup>40</sup>

Regardless of the American reaction to and the lasting nature of Anschluss, the State Department had to accept Anschluss as a fait accompli and thus recognized the German action. Assistant Secretary of State Messersmith, probably best expressed the reality of the American position and the dilemma of recognition with which the State Department had to contend:

. . . I am for one not yet sure that German domination of Austria is a permanent matter . . . . Whether we will recognize what we can only see as the forcible absorption of Austria is still another question presented in a slightly different form but we may find the basic principle involved identic . . . .<sup>41</sup>

Though the State Department had successfully stalled for time, the status quo necessitated action on the part of the United States as the British and French had already recognized Anschluss. On April 5, 1938, three weeks after Anschluss, the State Department instructed American



Ambassador Hugh Wilson to inform the Berlin government that the United States Embassy in Vienna would be changed to a consulate effective April 6.<sup>42</sup> Because of Germany's incorporation of Austria, the United States found "itself under the necessity as a practical measure" of closing its legation at Vienna.<sup>43</sup>

In connection with the State Department's termination of the Vienna Embassy, the decision to delete Austria from the list of nations receiving the most-favored-nation status finally certified United States recognition of Germany's annexation of Austria. But as an immediate retort to Anschluss, Roosevelt and the State Department denounced its trade agreements with Austria. This action carried a special significance because Secretary of State Hull had long believed that increased international trade would lead to better diplomatic relationships between nations and had often used the most-favored-nation status clause as an extension of his foreign policy.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, one can assume when Roosevelt suspended the reciprocal trade agreements between the United States and Austria not entitling Germany to the same benefits, he not only acted under normal procedure, "it had the effect of emphasizing Hull's diplomatic reserve."<sup>45</sup>

However, the importance of the United States' withdrawal of Austria's trade status lies in the question of recognition. On April 6, the United States closed its Embassy and the very next day Austria's name disappeared

from the list of nations enjoying trade concessions. The result was the de facto recognition of Anschluss by the United States.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, despite the State Department indignation, the withdrawal of the most-favored-nation status from Austria finalized United States recognition.

On March 17, 1938, in Washington, Secretary of State Hull delivered an important speech before the National Press Club which outlined American policy. Hull spoke out strongly against the extremes of isolationism and internationalism, warned against the encouragement of international lawlessness by "complete aloofness" and lobbied for the Naval Expansion Act by suggesting the United States rearm as a deterrent against the aggressors. "No policy," Hull proclaimed, "would prove more disastrous than for an important nation to fail to arm adequately when international lawlessness is on the rampage."<sup>47</sup> He advised of a closer cooperation with other nations sharing common interests and recommended that the United States "should not hesitate to exchange information and confer with the governments of such other nations and, in dealing with the problems confronting each alike, to proceed along parallel lines."<sup>48</sup>

German Ambassador Dieckhoff reasoned from Hull's address and a speech given by the newly arrived American Ambassador to England, Joseph Kennedy, on March 18, that the United States "does not wish to obligate itself, that it will not, however, commit itself to an unconditional

isolationist policy, but that it is prepared if necessary, to take an active part in a conflict on the side of Great Britain."<sup>49</sup>

The German Ambassador feared that the intervention of the United States in another European war on the side of the British would mean another German defeat. Dieckhoff even received praise from Foreign Minister Weizsaecker for his warnings of the consequences of a closer American alignment with Great Britain.<sup>50</sup> However, Dieckhoff's warnings went unnoticed. Hitler had developed a distrust for "all Foreign Office reports" and "was suspicious of anyone whom he did not know personally . . . ." <sup>51</sup> The German Chancellor had already made up his mind about the United States. He vastly underestimated the potential military and industrial power of the United States. Though Hitler sometimes praised the accomplishments of the Americans, he considered the United States to be an inept, Jewish controlled nation incapable of greatness and, therefore, did not include one of the strongest nations in the world within his foreign policy.

Despite the futility of Dieckhoff's mission, he had correctly ascribed great significance to Hull's address on March 17. The speech had been painstakingly prepared and had Roosevelt's written approval.<sup>52</sup> So carefully had the speech been written that Assistant Secretary of State Messersmith advised "every word in it must be carefully weighed by our people for they have been so weighed here. It should give all of our people abroad, as well as our

people at home, a very clear conception of the broad lines of our policy . . . " <sup>53</sup> Therefore, importance of Hull's speech cannot be underestimated.

Even though Hull's outline of American foreign policy was little more than a clarification, such an announcement, considering the strength of isolationism, found support not only in Washington but among the general public as well. To begin with, Anschluss produced considerable protest by fringe and minority groups. In front of the German Consulate General in New York 1,000 American Communist party members demonstrated. The marchers demanded the United States government to condemn Germany's "monstrous invasion" of Austria while shouting "Up with Democracy! Down with Hitler; Hitler wants war! We want peace; Down with Hitler and Save Austria!" <sup>54</sup> The demonstration was effective enough for the German Embassy to issue an official complaint to the State Department. <sup>55</sup>

This was just the first of many demonstrations in New York. On the evening March 16, 2000 people demonstrated at the north end of Union Square against the increasing violations of international law and Germany's seizure of Austria. The demonstration was organized by the New York City Division of the American League for Peace and Democracy which complemented its protest by telegraphing Roosevelt to urge against recognition of Anschluss and suggesting an embargo against Germany. <sup>56</sup> On March 17, at an anti-Fascist meeting at the College of the City of New York, students

burned a three-headed effigy of Hitler, Benito Mussolini and Francisco Franco while shouting "No Pasaran" (they shall not pass).<sup>57</sup> Finally, on March 19, about 100 members of several anti-fascist societies attempted to protest in front of the German Consulate; 3,000 Socialists and Communists were driven from Times Square by police.<sup>58</sup>

Across the country smaller demonstrations took place. In Washington eighty people picketed the German Embassy. Some were arrested or routed by police acting under a new law, recently passed by Congress, making such demonstrations in front of embassies illegal without a permit.<sup>59</sup> Even in far removed Denver, twenty to thirty people protested before the German Consulate.<sup>60</sup>

Besides the Communists, Socialists, and radical peace groups, more mainstream ethnic and religious groups spoke out. American-Jewish leaders vehemently denounced Germany's actions. Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, president of the Rabbinical Council of America, advocated stronger European resistance to Hitler and active United States support of these nations.<sup>61</sup> He later telegraphed Roosevelt demanding him to "sound the note of humanitarianism as the voice of America to the German government for justice and mercy to Catholics and Jews . . ." <sup>62</sup>

Since 1933, American Jews warned of the dangers of National Socialism and offered organized opposition to its anti-Semitic policies. The American-Jewish minority believed it was their role to publicize and resist Hitler's

racial theories.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, on August 20, 1933, the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Congress declared a Jewish boycott against Nazi Germany.<sup>64</sup> This embargo had two purposes: 1) change the policy of the Third Reich and 2) influence the foreign policy of the United States.<sup>65</sup> Undoubtedly, when in reaction to Anschluss a number of New York importers and merchants announced the extension of their boycott of German goods to include Austria, both objectives were firmly in mind.<sup>66</sup>

The Jews were not the only religious group to appeal to Washington for a more aggressive policy in face of Germany's annexation of Austria. The World Alliance for International Friendship through the churches sent a telegram to Roosevelt and Hull urging them to express the United States' great concern at Germany's "flagrant breach of international law . . ." <sup>67</sup> In their opinion, "every act of lawlessness, if passed by unreputed, encourages new acts of lawlessness and operates as a new threat to peace." <sup>68</sup> Certainly the Administration shared and appreciated the judgement of the World Council and tried to act on it.

Germany's annexation of Austria had produced protest from the periphery of the American public. But to what extent did Anschluss affect the majority of the population who were devout isolationists? First, Anschluss caused most Americans to perceive of Germany as an aggressor nation. Meanwhile, the American public gained greater sympathy for Great Britain and France. But, most importantly, Anschluss

raised the question whether isolationism was the appropriate policy in view of Anschluss. Only the day after Anschluss took place, the president of Columbia University, Dr. Nicholas M. Butler, publicly denounced isolationism and the "wait and see" attitude of the United States.<sup>69</sup>

Evidence of the weakening isolationist position became more and more obvious. Dieckhoff reported a storm of editorials, speeches and resolutions raging against the Neutrality Act in the press.<sup>70</sup> In addition, on March 25, the National Peace Conference met in Washington where the isolationists among their ranks were defeated by proponents of collective security.<sup>71</sup> Anschluss sharply divided this peace group. However, concerning the status of isolationism in America as Dieckhoff would say, "matters have not gone so far that the isolationist stronghold could be stormed in broad daylight."<sup>72</sup> The nation was still in the grips of isolationism.

During and after the Anschluss crisis, the American press reported accurately the aggressive Nazi reunion with Austria. It was this coverage which formed public opinion about the nature of Hitler's diplomacy and his methods of occupation and helped make clear how idealistic isolationism was. The press was as aggressive in its reporting of the Anschluss as Germany had been in its takeover. In Dieckhoff's opinion, the press only focused on "the poor Jews, the disheartened Catholics, the grieved aristocracy, and the unhappy Socialist workers."<sup>73</sup> Dieckhoff referred to

the American reporting as "atrocities propaganda" that portrayed "our police, our SA-men, our SS looting in Vienna . . . , brutally destroying Jewish shops, removing Jewish scholars of world-wide reputation to concentration camps, insulting bishops and priests, etc., etc. In short, the Prussian wolf raging amongst the Austrian sheep."<sup>74</sup>

Undoubtedly, the American press corps reaction was accurately described by Dieckhoff and according to other sources, the press was only describing the truth of the German annexation of Austria.<sup>75</sup> In the end the hostility of the American press caused lasting friction between Washington and Berlin since Anschluss.<sup>76</sup>

Even though Dieckhoff referred to the press coverage of Anschluss as propaganda, he could not deny that Jews were being persecuted and sought political asylum. The United States Embassy in Vienna processed 2500 visas in the first 8 days following Anschluss. The flood of emigres necessitated action.<sup>77</sup> Because of the recent publicity and the large Jewish element, the Austrian refugee problem found sympathy in the United States. Rabbi Louis Newman spoke for many Americans when he said that Austrian Jews, liberals and anti-Nazis should be protected. "The world must find the means to safeguard those who are threatened by the Nazi terror."<sup>78</sup> Newman's view was shared by Representative Charles A. Buckley, who on March 15 appealed to Secretary of State Hull on behalf of the oppressed Austria.<sup>79</sup> By March 17 Hull informed Buckley of the State



Department's efforts to expedite applications for immigration visas in Vienna as quickly as possible.<sup>80</sup>

Only one day later the Austrian refugee issue came up in a Cabinet meeting.<sup>81</sup> The President thought immigration should take top priority, leaving the decision of whether or not the emigrants could stay under the quota laws to a later date. Another Cabinet member Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, came out in favor of Jewish immigration to the United States. He, moreover, pointed out that "we stood to have a fine class of citizen, similar to the type that we got after the abortive revolution of 1848," immigrate to the United States.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, Ickes argued Jewish immigration would be advantageous.

Ickes' pleas were realized within only one week as Hull, with Roosevelt's approval, organized a special refugee committee which would facilitate emigration.<sup>83</sup> This action, on Roosevelt's part, was favorably received by the American public and other nations in the world. Some 33 nations responded to Hull's invitation with the Western Hemisphere making a particularly strong show of support; even Haiti agreed to cooperate.<sup>84</sup> At the suggestion of the United States, the first meeting was held on July 6, 1938, at Evian-les-Bains, France.<sup>85</sup> Myron C. Taylor, the chairman of the United States delegation, was selected as chairman. The commitment and leadership of the United States was assured, and, despite the difficulties the conference faced, it also made certain the Austrian

refugees were receiving aid.

In spite of Roosevelt's successful initiation of the Austrian emigration issue, there were other areas where the Administration had less fortune. Concerning the Austrian debt problem, the United States negotiations were totally ineffectual. Roosevelt and the State Department's first response to Anschluss was to ask Germany for payment of the Austrian debt. Massachusetts Representative Mrs. Rogers introduced a resolution requesting the Secretary of State to secure payment from the German government. She also felt it should to be "suggested to Germany that she pay her own debts, because she seems to have money to raise and equip an army and march her men into territory not her own."<sup>86</sup>

As of 1938, Austria owed the United States \$26 million and Germany simply denied responsibility. However, the State Department continued to press for payment. As 1938 drew to a close, Germany had concluded trade agreements with every creditor nation except with the United States. The Germans only offered to exchange the Americas held Austrian bonds for 4 1/2 per cent German bonds. But the State Department found the adjustment unacceptable.<sup>87</sup>

The German government never made a payment. The German refusal to negotiate a satisfactory settlement stressed the relationship between the two countries. No single State Department official understood this better than American Ambassador to Berlin, Hugh Wilson. He,

however, would be the first to admit that the debt problem, though severe, was surpassed in seriousness by the conflict between Germany and the United States over the issue of helium. Wilson wanted to maintain peace between Germany and the United States at all costs. However, the helium affair jeopardized Wilson's scheme of a working German-American relationship.

Prior to Anschluss, in September 1937, Congress passed the Helium Act which permitted the sale of the government's monopoly on helium abroad. The Act also stipulated that helium could only be sold for peaceful purposes and the sale required the unanimous vote of the National Munitions Control Board, including the Secretary of the Interior. These two restrictions were the root of the future controversy over the sale of helium to Germany.

After the explosion of the Hindenburg and the passage of the Helium Act, the German Zeppelin Company ordered 17,900,000 cubic feet of helium. Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, had first approved of the sale, but during the first few months of 1938, the Secretary had a change of heart. During the Anschluss, Ickes was deeply effected by Nazi brutality and took the liberty of speaking out against Nazi aggression.<sup>88</sup> Now, Ickes refused to sell 17,500,000 cubic feet of helium to the German Zeppelin Company, because he was sure the Germans would put it to military use. Even after an expert on helium assured Ickes that there were no military uses for helium, he continued

to withhold the sale from Germany, despite the pleas of Roosevelt and Hull in Germany's favor.<sup>89</sup>

The Germans even sent Dr. Hugo Eckener, a German dirigible expert, to Washington in order to convince Roosevelt that helium had no military significance whatsoever.<sup>90</sup> The President was bound to the law and tied to any decision the Secretary would make. Only ten days before Eckener had met with the President, Ickes, despite the arguments of the President and the majority of his cabinet, refused to submit.<sup>91</sup> Ickes was, convinced that "helium could play a very definite and useful part in a war."<sup>92</sup>

Ickes' decision not to sell the helium to Germany was a reaction to Anschluss. He noted, "I confess frankly that when this matter came up for final decision after the rape of Austria by Germany, I was really glad of a good excuse of disapproving this shipment."<sup>93</sup> Because of Nazi Germany's "ruthless and wanton invasion of Austria," he would not sell "any helium gas to Germany under any pretext."<sup>94</sup> In the end Ickes weathered all criticisms and refused to sell the helium to Germany.

The consequences of Ickes' one-man campaign against Hitlerite Germany were grave. According to Wilson, the Germans believed the American refusal "cast doubt upon the good faith of the German Government in making a promise not to use helium for war purposes."<sup>95</sup> Clearly, the decision not to sell had been made "to show the Nazis a measure of

disapproval." <sup>96</sup> Ickes found the Germans untrustworthy and wanted to show American resolve against German aggression.

The helium affair brought German-American relations to the lowest possible point over a trivial issue. <sup>97</sup> Ickes' May 11 conference with Roosevelt over the helium situation had indeed been final. Thereafter Hull informed Ambassador Wilson the sale would not take place. <sup>98</sup> As a result, Herman Goering stated that America must be counted as one of Germany's enemies. <sup>99</sup>

Wilson, who had gained a good deal of German respect, <sup>100</sup> sensed German "disappointment and resentment" over Ickes' refusal to sell helium to Germany. Wilson, further commented, that in view of the United States position on the helium issue, the State Department should refrain from asking "anything in the nature of a favor from the German government." <sup>101</sup> He also feared what "may be serious repercussions on the treatment of our great trade and investment interest in Germany . . . ." <sup>102</sup>

The helium issue clearly increased tensions between Germany and the United States. However, the German-American relationship survived in a state of belligerent limbo for three more years. When the United States would enter the war against Nazi Germany, it determined Germany's fate and changed the balance of power in Europe and the postwar world.

But Germany's annexation of Austria did indeed cause great concern in Washington. Roosevelt was upset, even

depressed about the entire situation.<sup>103</sup> He feared Hitler's next victim would be Czechoslovakia and had therefore decided to strengthen America's resolve against any further German aggression. He continued to support his naval rearmament program, established an organization responsible for Austria's refugees and used every opportunity to remind Germany of the presence of the United States.<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, the President did not desire an unnecessary rift between Germany and the United States to develop over the helium affair. Roosevelt's major concerns were domestic. He knew that the isolationists would not support a conflict with Germany. Moreover, given the weak economic condition of the United States, he and Hull especially desired to continue normal economic relations. Above all, Roosevelt was a pragmatic and skillful politician.

Instead of a sudden shift of foreign policy, Roosevelt and Hull advocated gradual change. Though Anschluss brought about no immediate change in U.S. foreign policy, it did affect and shape American policy.<sup>105</sup> Anschluss compelled the United States to formally establish a broad outline of its foreign policy. Secretary of State Hull, in his National Press Club Address, clearly stated that America opposed international lawlessness and blind isolationism, supported rearmament and was ready to cooperate and communicate with governments who opposed blatant violators of treaties and human rights.

In Congress, the Austro-German reunion generated only a limited response. Unquestionably, both the House and the Senate were in the control of the isolationists. Even though there was opposition to Germany's annexation of Austria, many Congressmen justified it in order to insure American neutrality. Congress was too deeply involved in domestic matters to give Anschluss any special attention. An opportunity to issue a strong warning to Hitler passed by Congress. Thus, despite its intentions, Congress tacitly encouraged violations of international law by Germany by not taking a firm stand.

Despite the passivity of Congress, the press attacked Germany's annexation of Austria which in turn had a resounding effect on the American public. Reports from Vienna filled newspapers, magazines and were heard over the radio. The message was simple: once again German militarism threatened Europe. And, with uniformed members of the American-Nazi Band marching through major American cities, these reports took on new life.<sup>106</sup> In any case, by early 1938, America was more anti-German than in 1914 and the nation's reaction to Anschluss reflected this feeling.<sup>107</sup>

Anschluss angered the United States and adversely contributed to the already acrimonious American-German relationship. The one-sided reaction by the press marked the beginning of an anti-German campaign which lasted until the final defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945. However, contrary to the press, the American public, though anti-German, was

not yet ready to accept the abandonment of isolationism. This contradiction in American public opinion remained a question mark in the German-American relationship and Roosevelt's foreign policy as well. The most serious developments to occur as a result of Anschluss were the Austrian debt issue and the helium affair. Clearly, the failure of Germany to make payment on the Austrian debt agitated Washington, as did the refusal of the United States to sell helium to Germany.

Since Anschluss, the relationship between Germany and the United States deteriorated at an alarming rate. In the end, the response of the United States to Germany's annexation of Austria is clear in its meaning. The Americans disliked German aggression and disregard for international law and tried to underscore these principles within the constraints of a weak American economy and the anti-New Deal coalition. Anschluss served to define more clearly the American relationship to Nazi Germany. As best evidenced by Hull's National Press Club speech, the United States was prepared to initiate a more forceful foreign policy toward Germany which included a program of rearmament and a closer cooperation with other nations who opposed the expansionism of Germany, Italy and Japan. The future course of American Foreign policy was determined.



Endnotes: Chapter IV

<sup>1</sup> Henderson to Neurath, March 11, 1938 and Francois-Poncet to Neurath March 11, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, pp. 578-579.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson to Hull, March 13, 1938, FRUS, p. 434.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Dalton, Hitler's War: Before and After (London: Penguin Books, 1940), p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> Ritchie Owendale, 'Appeasement' and the English Speaking World (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975), p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> Lipski to Beck, February 19, 1938, Ibid., p. 342.

<sup>6</sup> 2nd Conference of Beck and Goering, February 23, 1938, Ibid., p. 348.

<sup>7</sup> Conversation between Ciano and Yugoslav Minister, April 15, 1938, Muggeridge, p. 200.

<sup>8</sup> Mikos Horthy, The Confidential Papers of Admiral Horthy (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1965), p. 95.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>10</sup> Testimony of George S. Messersmith, August 25, 1945, International Military Tribunal, Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. XXVIII (Nuremberg, 1948), p. 262.

<sup>11</sup> Franz Goldner, Dollfuss im Spiegel der US-Akten (St. Pölten: Niederoesterreiches Pressehaus, 1979), p. 105.

<sup>12</sup> Messersmith to Hull, February 18, 1938, FRUS, I, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> Messersmith to Wiley, March 16, 1938, FRUS, I, p. 451.

<sup>14</sup> Dieckhoff to Foreign Ministry, April 18, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 616.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 617.

<sup>19</sup> New York Herald Tribune, March 13, 1938 (Hereafter cited as NYHT).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> NYHT, March 12, 1938.

<sup>22</sup> NYHT, March 13, 1938.

<sup>23</sup> Radio Address of Lewis B. Schwellenbach, March 13, 1938, U.S., Congress, Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3rd sess, vol. 83, part 9 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1938), p. 1016.

<sup>24</sup> Radio Address of William E. Borah, March 28, 1938, Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3rd sess, vol. 83, part 10, p. 121.

<sup>25</sup> Dieckhoff to Foreign Ministry, April 18, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 620.

<sup>26</sup> Debate over American or International control of Pacific Islands-Treat of War possibilities, March 11, 1938, Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3rd sess., vol. 83-part 3, p. 3244.

<sup>27</sup> Allison to Hull, March 16, 1938, FRUS, III, pp. 123-24.

<sup>28</sup> NYHT, March 15, 1938.

<sup>29</sup> Dieckhoff to Foreign Ministry, April 18, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 617.

<sup>30</sup> Dieckhoff to Foreign Ministry, March 15, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 604.

<sup>31</sup> Dieckhoff to Foreign Ministry, April 18, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 618.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 618.

<sup>33</sup> Memorandum of Conversation between Welles and Dieckhoff, March 14, 1938, FRUS, I, p. 442.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 443.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 444.

<sup>36</sup> Hugh R. Wilson, Jr., ed., A Career Diplomat (New York: Vantage Press, 1960), p. 26; Hooker, Moffat Papers, p. 192.

<sup>37</sup> U.S., Department of State, Press Releases, March

19, 1938, vol. XVIII (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1938), p. 375.

<sup>38</sup>NYHT, March 20, 1938.

<sup>39</sup>Donald F. Drummond, The Passing of American Neutrality, 1937-1941 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1955), p. 74.

<sup>40</sup>U.S., Congress House, The Attitude of the United States Toward Austria, by Herbert Wright, H. Doc. 477, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., 1944, pp. 1-26.

<sup>41</sup>Messersmith to Wiley, March 16, 1938, FRUS, I, pp. 451-452.

<sup>42</sup>Hull to Wilson, April 5, 1938, FRUS, I, p. 473.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>see Press Releases, "Trade and Peace," February 15, 1936, vol. XIV, pp. 158-161; "World Peace and Economic Cooperation," September 25, 1937, vol. XVII, pp. 239-242.

<sup>45</sup>Drummond, The Passing of American Neutrality, p. 72.

<sup>46</sup>Press Releases, April 19, 1938, vol. XVIII, p. 474.

<sup>47</sup>Press Releases, April 9, 1938, vol. XVIII, p. 452..

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Dieckhoff to Foreign Ministry, March 22, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 695; Dieckhoff to Foreign Ministry, March 30, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, pp. 700-701.

<sup>50</sup>Weizsaecker to Dieckhoff, April 30, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 706.

<sup>51</sup>Von Papen, p. 373.

<sup>52</sup>Hull, p. 576.

<sup>53</sup>Messersmith to Wiley, March 16, 1938, FRUS, I, p. 464.

<sup>54</sup>NYHT, March 13, 1938.

<sup>55</sup>German Embassy to State Department, March 24, 1938, FRUS, I, p. 464.

<sup>56</sup>NYHT, March 17, 1938.

57 Ibid., March 18, 1938.

58 Ibid., March 20, 1938.

59 Ibid., March 15, 1938.

60 Ibid., March 20, 1938.

61 Ibid., March 13, 1938.

62 Ibid., March 19, 1938.

63 Pierre Paasseur and James W. Wise, eds., Nazism: An Assault on Civilization (New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas, 1934), p. 211.

64 Joseph, Tevessabaum. "The Anti-Nazi Boycott Movement in the United States," in Yad Washem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance, ed. Esh, Shaul (no publishing location given: KTAV Publishing House, 1975), p. 147.

65 Ibid., p. 150.

66 NYHT, March 15, 1938.

67 Ibid., March 16, 1938.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid., March 14, 1938.

70 Dieckhoff to Foreign Ministry, March 30, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 699.

71 New York Times, March 26, 1938.

72 Dieckhoff to Foreign Ministry, March 30, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 700.

73 Dieckhoff to Weizsaecker, March 22, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 696.

74 Ibid.

75 see Wiley to Hull, March 16, 1938, FRUS, I, p. 449.

76 Memorandum by Weizsaecker, April 29, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, pp. 704-705.

77 Wiley to Hull, March 20, 1938, FRUS, II, p. 507.

78 NYHT, March 13, 1938.

<sup>79</sup>Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3rd sess., vol. 83-part 10, p. 1315.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes: The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939, vol. II (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), pp. 342-343.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 343.

<sup>83</sup>Hull, p. 578; Roseman, pp. 169-170.

<sup>84</sup>Press Releases, March 29, 30 and 31, April 2, 7, 9, and 16, 1938, vol. XVIII.

<sup>85</sup>Press Releases, May 14, 1938, vol. XVIII, p. 575.

<sup>86</sup>March 21, 1938, Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3rd sess., vol. 83-part 4, p. 3764.

<sup>87</sup>Hull to Bigert, November 23, 1938, FRUS, II, pp. 497-499.

<sup>88</sup>Ickes, pp. 347-348 and 355.

<sup>89</sup>Ickes, pp. 391 and 396-397.

<sup>90</sup>Dieckhoff to Foreign Ministry, May 21, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, pp. 706-707.

<sup>91</sup>Ickes, pp. 391-393.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 372.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 428.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 334.

<sup>95</sup>Wilson to Hull, April 13, 1938, FRUS, II, p. 457.

<sup>96</sup>Wilson to Hull, April 21, 1938, FRUS, II, p. 459.

<sup>97</sup>Wilson to Hull, April 29, 1938, FRUS, II, p. 460.

<sup>98</sup>Hull to Wilson, May 12, 1938, FRUS, II, p. 460.

<sup>99</sup>Wilson, A Career Diplomat, p. 30.

<sup>100</sup>Weizsaecker to Deickhoff, April 30, 1938, DGFP, ser. D, I, p. 706.

<sup>101</sup>Wilson, A Career Diplomat, p. 30.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>103</sup>John B. Blum, From the Morgenthau Diaries: Years of Crisis, 1928-1938 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), p. 50.

<sup>104</sup>Elliott Roosevelt, ed., F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1928-1945, vol. II (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), p. 767.

<sup>105</sup>Messersmith to Wiley, March 16, 1938, FRUS, I, p. 451.

<sup>106</sup>Joachim Remak, "Friends of the New Germany." The Bund and German-American Relations," Journal of Modern History 29 (March 1957): p. 41.

<sup>107</sup>Hans W. Gatzke, Germany and the United States, A "Special Relationship?" (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 123.

Chapter V. American Reaction to Anschluss: A Brief  
Historiographic Discussion.

Because of the rapid pace of Hitler's European conquests, any analysis of the American reaction to Germany's annexation of Austria is limited to the spring and early summer of March 1938. However, such research is inherently part of the over-all foreign policy of the United States between 1933-1938. This period remains under continual investigation and has produced several opposing schools of historical thought.

Beginning in the immediate postwar period, most American historians contended that prior to World War I, the United States wanted peace and had little involvement with the conflicts which led to World War II. The Germans, Italians and Japanese were entirely responsible for the war. The first historians to have access to State Department documents and the Roosevelt papers were William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason. In their book, The Challenge to Isolation, 1937-1940, published in 1952, they maintained that the events in Europe and the Far East prior to World War II forced the United States out of its isolationism.

The opinion of Langer and Gleason came under the constant criticism of the revisionist school. First, in the 1940's Charles A. Beard, author of American Foreign

Policy in the Making, 1932-1940 and President Roosevelt and The Coming of the War, 1941, claimed that Roosevelt led the United States into war against America's public opinion. Another revisionist historian, Charles C. Tansill, who published Backdoor to War in 1952, reconfirmed Roosevelt's principal role in the American involvement in World War II.

The traditionalists and the revisionists continued to wage their historiographical conflict unmolested until 1969-70. Arnold A. Offner, in his American Appeasement: United States Foreign Policy and Germany, 1933-1938, challenged both schools. He concluded in a well-documented study that the Americans, as the title suggests, appeased the Germans as much as the English or the French. Moreover, the Americans missed many chances to support the allies which only encouraged Hitler's aggressive foreign policy. Only one year later, a German historian, Hans-Jürgen Schroder, argued in Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten 1933-1939: Wirtschaft und Politik in der Entwicklung des deutsch-amerikanischen Gegensatzes that the American involvement in the Second World War resulted from the threat of German economic expansion in critical areas such as Central and South America. The debate between Offner and Schroder, though their positions have been challenged, is no less pointed today than it was fifteen years ago. Their updated arguments can be found in America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-hundred-year History, Vol. II edited by Frank Trommler and Joseph



McVeigh. The most contemporary research into pre-war American foreign policy and Germany is Hans W. Gatzke's Germany and the United States: A "Special Relationship?", Gerhard Weinberg's The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Starting World War II, 1937-1939 and Manfred Jonas' The United States and Germany. All three publications share the common desire to be more comprehensive and steer a middle course between the conflicting historiography surrounding the German-American relationship and World War II. Of the three, Jonas' and Weinberg's works offer, if not a complete picture of the American reaction to Anschluss, an accurate one. Jonas correctly maintains that in response to Anschluss the only American action likely to have impressed Hitler was the expenditure of over \$1 billion for rearmament. In addition, Weinberg's examination stressed the seriousness of the failure of Germany to repay the Austrian debt to the German-American relationship.

However, the most comprehensive account of America's reaction to Anschluss is described in Offner's American Appeasement. Offner's eleven page summary is unequalled by any other historian. Offner benefited by his access to the private papers of Roosevelt, Hull and Messersmith. He develops the thesis that American diplomats "missed opportunities to shape events to the benefit of their own and later generation" in his chapter concerning the American reaction to Anschluss. In this respect Offner is

correct. The United States did indeed miss an opportunity to show its support for Great Britain and France. However, Offner underestimated the strength of the anti-New Deal coalition and isolationism which Roosevelt had to contend with. Moreover, Offner's account did not analyze the effects of Anschluss on American foreign policy. He misinterpreted it because of his failure to emphasize Hull's National Press Club address. As expressed by Hull, the Administration was now ready to prepare the way for a more active United States foreign policy in order to counter the actions of the aggressor states, Germany, Italy and Japan.

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