

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: CULTURE WARS AND CONTESTED IDENTITIES: SOCIAL POLICY AND GERMAN NATIONALISMS IN INTERWAR SLOVENIA, 1918-1941

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This thesis analyzes the nature of ethnic Germans' self-identities and nationalisms in interwar Slovenia. Slovenia's German minorities' reactions to domestic social policies and world events that impacted them are examined primarily through locally-based German-language newspapers. Germans in Slovenia had had multiple identities and nationalisms, and these were shaped by social policies and domestic and foreign events, especially after the National Socialists' seizure of power in Germany in 1933. Pan-German nationalism was strong and widespread, and viewed Slovene minority policies as being purposeful attempts to eradicate the very existence of Germanism. This type of nationalism competed with other types of German nationalisms and

identities which sought to integrate into and contribute to Slovene society without compromising their uniquely Germanic culture. National Socialism's appeal was so strong because it promised a reunion of Slovenia's Germandom with the wider *Volk* and a restoration of the minorities' societal dominance in the region.

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NATIONALISMS IN INTERWAR SLOVENIA, 1918-1941

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter One – Adjusting to the New Kingdom, 1918-1924.....	14
Violent Struggles for Control and the <i>Marburger Blutsonntag</i>	19
The <i>Deutsche Wacht</i> turns into the <i>Cillier Zeitung</i>	26
The “Slovenization” of German Cultural Institutions.....	28
Slovenia’s Germans and the Yugoslav Constitution.....	34
German Desire for Inclusion in Yugoslav and Slovene Society.....	39
German Identity in Transition from Multinational Empire to South Slavic Kingdom.....	46
The Legacy of the Habsburg Empire in the New Slovenia.....	53
German Political and Cultural Developments.....	57
German Views of Slovenia and Yugoslavia.....	59
1921 – A New Census and a New Constitution.....	61
Formation of the <i>Partei der Deutschen</i> and the Election of 1923.....	65
Developments in Schools and the <i>Deutsches Haus</i>	70
Chapter Two – Of Democracy and Dictatorship, 1925-1932.....	76
The Election of 1925.....	78
German Identity and Nationalism between Culture Wars and Cultural Peace.....	87
The Regional and National Elections of 1927.....	94
Developments in Education Policy and German Schools.....	98
Response to the Rise of Fascism and National Socialism in the 1920s.....	102
Under a Royal Dictatorship.....	105
The <i>Cillier Zeitung</i> becomes the <i>Deutsche Zeitung</i>	109
Reaction to Nazi Electoral Success, 1930-1932.....	112

Chapter Three – In the Shadow of the Third Reich, 1933-1941.....	122
The Reichstag Election of March 1933.....	124
In the Wake of the <i>Machtergreifung</i> and the National Socialist Dictatorship.....	129
The <i>Erneuerbewegung</i> , Conflicted Identities, and Contested Nationalisms.....	136
Reaction to the Plebiscite in the Saar.....	144
German Identity and Nationalism up to the Nuremberg Party Congress.....	147
Between Germany and Austria.....	150
Manufacturing Anti-Jewish Sentiment.....	152
<i>Anschluss</i> with Austria.....	154
German Understanding of the Munich Crisis.....	158
Reaction to the <i>Kristallnacht</i>	160
Legitimizing the Annexation of Czechoslovakia.....	163
Germany and Yugoslavia.....	164
German Views of Slovenia and Yugoslavia up to the Nazi Invasion.....	166
German Identity and Nationalism on the Eve of the 1941 Invasion of Yugoslavia...168	
After the Invasion.....	172
 Conclusion.....	 179
 Bibliography.....	 194

Introduction

I wrote this thesis to answer three main questions about the German-speaking minority¹ of interwar Slovenia: What was the nature of their reaction to domestic social policies and world events throughout the period? What can this reaction tell us about the nature of their identity and nationalism? How and why did the Nazis and the Third Reich influence these minorities? The answers to these questions can, I hope, tell us much about the impact of nationalism on ethnic relations, the appeal of National Socialism and fascism, and the ways in which self-identity is shaped and formed.

Prior scholarship has documented the social, political, and cultural developments of the German minority in the interwar period,² noting the ways German cultural

¹ I use the terms “German” and “German-speaking” interchangeably to denote that language was not necessarily a signifier of belonging to that ethnicity, as the national activists would have liked it to be. As well, simply using “German” can be, at times, too ambiguous: does “German” mean a citizen of the German Reich or the Federal Republic of Germany? Were Austrians German? In what sense were the “Germans” of Bohemia, Hungary, Latvia, or Slovenia actually German? It would be clearer if the term “Germanophone” was widely-used, as it is in the French *Sprachraum*. But as it is not, I will stick with the terms “German” and “German-speaking.” The area that is the focus of this study, namely the current Republic of Slovenia, had two main language-groups located in them, and as such, the regions and cities themselves had a Slovene-language and a German-language designation. Though it is somewhat awkward to do so, I will be using both names of these cities, with the German-language version one succeeded by the Slovene-language one, so as to disassociate the “nationalities” of these places from what activists claimed them to be – it is not my intention to endorse or refute national activists’ notions of whether Marburg/Maribor was a “German” or a “Slovene” city, etc. “What people in central or eastern Europe meant when they described themselves as ‘German’ [in the nineteenth century] varied greatly from place to place, and many of them could scarcely understand one another because regional dialects were so strong...’The majority of Austrian peasants do not even know that there is a Germany and that it is their fatherland!’ Waking Germans up to the truth of nationalism was the self-imposed mission of a minority of troublemakers...” Mark Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 17. For more on the methods of German national activists for national “awakening”, see Peter Haslinger, ed., *Schutzvereine in Ostmitteleuropa: Vereinswesen, Sprachenkonflikte und Dynamiken nationaler Mobilisierung 1860-1939* (Marburg, Germany: Verlag Herder-Institut, 2009).

² See Stefan Karner, *Die Deutschsprachige Volksgruppe in Slowenien: Aspekte ihrer Entwicklung, 1939-1997* (Klagenfurt, Austria: Hermagoras/Mohorjeva, 1998); Helmut Rumpler and Arnold Suppan, eds., *Geschichte der deutschen im Bereich des heutigen Sloweniens, 1848-1941* (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1988); Dušan Nečak, *Die “Deutschen” in Slowenien (1918-1955): Kurzer Abriß* (Ljubljana: Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 1998); Harald Heppner, ed., *Slowenen und Deutsche im*

institutions were impacted and how Germans in Slovenia responded through political means to social policies that affected them. Historians, who have almost exclusively been Austrian or Slovene historians, have in recent years also examined the diplomatic and political impact of the shared regions between Slovenia and Austria without confronting enough what the *minorities themselves* felt, said, or perceived of their own situation.³ These historians have debated the extent to which the German minority group of Slovenia became Nazified,⁴ which was partly a result of institutional infiltration from the Third Reich, and participated in the crimes of the Nazi occupiers during World War II, noting that National Socialism caught on quicker and lasted longer among Slovenia's Germans than elsewhere in Yugoslavia.⁵

gemeinsamen Raum: Neue Forschungen zu einem komplexem Thema (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2002).

³ See Arnold Suppan's monumental *Jugoslawien und Österreich, 1918-1938: Bilaterale Aussenpolitik im europäischen Umfeld* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996).

⁴ Slovene historians have tended to argue that a clear majority, though not all, German minorities in Slovenia were staunch National Socialists, which would give Yugoslav reactionary measures in the 1930s legitimacy. See Nečak (who himself relies upon Slovene historians for much of his argument) *Die "Deutschen" in Slowenien*, 11-19. Austrian historians have acknowledged that some nazification did occur, but have tried to show that this was more due to institutional reach from the Third Reich, not ideology, and that in any case, it was not as widespread as Slovene historians have asserted. A form of this argument is present in Karner, *Die Deutschsprachige Volksgruppe in Slowenien*, in Rumpler and Suppan, eds., *Geschichte der deutschen im Bereich des heutigen Sloweniens*, and Heppner, ed., *Slowenen und Deutsche im gemeinsamen Raum*. Slovene historians had for a long time regarded any Austrian scholarship on the subject to be veiled attempts at revisionism, as several books had been written about the German minority by ethnic Germans from Yugoslavia who had themselves been expelled after the war. Examples of these works include Sepp Janko, *Weg und Ende der deutschen Volksgruppe in Jugoslawien* (Graz, Austria: Stocker, 1982); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Nationalitätenpolitik in Jugoslawien: Die deutsche Minderheit, 1918-1978* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980); and Hans Rasimus, *Als Fremde im Vaterland: der Schwäbisch-Deutsche Kulturbund und die ehemalige deutsche Volksgruppe in Jugoslawien im Spiegel der Presse* (Munich: Arbeitskreis für donauschwäbische Heimat- und Volksforschung in der Donauschwäbischen Kulturstiftung, 1989). For the most part, I have not utilized these sources, though, in any case, they are mostly concerned with the German-speaking minority in Yugoslavia outside of Slovenia.

⁵ Though Yugoslavia's diverse and geographically-spread German population was split between an older group who came of age in the Austrian Empire and disliked National Socialism and a younger, more pan-German generation (the so-called *Erneuerungsbewegung*), Slovene historians have noted that this pro-Nazi sentiment caught on quickest and more enthusiastically among Slovenia's German population than elsewhere in the Kingdom. Dušan Nečak, Boris Jesih, Božo Repe, Ksenija Škrilec, and Peter Vodopivec, eds., *Slowenisch-österreichische Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Ljubljana: Historia, 8, 2004), 174-176.

While historians have noted that not every German in Slovenia was supportive of the Nazis, they have not identified what kind of German was against the Nazis – in short, who were these other Germans? What was their identity? Who counted as being German, or part of the German community? Everyone had different ideas and measures. German national activists would have liked anyone who spoke the German language to be considered German, while the Slovene government did not consider a person “truly” German if they also spoke Slovene or had a non-Germanic name.⁶ What prior scholarship has not explained well enough is *why* this was the case: What was different about Slovenia's Germans? *Why* did they seem to latch onto National Socialism quicker and hold on longer than other ethnic-German groups? What was the nature of their identity

Philip Lyon, in his dissertation (written at the University of Maryland, College Park) "After Empire: Ethnic Germans and Minority Nationalism in Interwar Yugoslavia", mainly focuses on German-speakers in Croatia-Slavonia and Vojvodina, using the comparison of Slovenia's Germans simply to note that they were "different" or "unique" from the rest of Yugoslavia's German community. Lyon notes that Slovene-German ethnic tension had been “particularly intense” in the later decades of the Habsburg Empire, only getting worse after the end of the Great War. But he does not elaborate on why this interwar ethnic tension should have been different from that of other majority-minority group relationships, whether involving German-speakers or not. While his dissertation focuses on Yugoslavia's German minorities, he does not include the Germans of Slovenia in his scope. Nonetheless, Lyon's research found a persistence of a nationally-indifferent identity among German-speakers in that area, despite fervent attempts by German national activists to “awaken” them to their ethnicity. Philip Lyon, “After Empire: Ethnic Germans and Minority Nationalism in Interwar Yugoslavia”, PhD dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park (2008), 15-16.

⁶ Slovenes today still refer to anyone who speaks German as “German”, whether they are from Austria, Germany, or any other country with German as an official language. Nećak, “Waren ‘die Deutschen’ Fremde in Slowenien nach 1945?”, in *Österreichischer Zeitgeschichtetag 1995: Österreich – 50 Jahre Republik* (Innsbruck, Austria: Studien Verlag, 1996), 187. Such ambiguity in designating identity led to instances of “fluidity” in daily life; that is, one could be considered a certain ethnicity at one time, according to the census or neighbors or community, while at a different time and place be considered a different one. This was not only the case for German-speakers, but Slovene-speakers as well. See Christian Promitzer, Klaus-Jürgen Hermanik, Eduard Staudinger, eds., *(Hidden) Minorities: Language and Ethnic Identity between Central Europe and the Balkans* (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2009). For more on language and nationalism, see Tomasz D.I. Kamusella, “Language as an instrument of nationalism in Central Europe”, in *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2001), 235-251.

and nationalism?⁷ How did they view Yugoslavia and Slovenia?⁸ How did they view Austria and Germany?

⁷ Nationalism can be defined as “a movement to defend the interests of a nation, to defend or secure its political independence.” Stephen Barbour and Cathy Carmichael, eds., *Language and Nationalism in Europe* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4. Benedict Anderson posited that a nation can be “imagined” or invented if its adherents all believe that they are part of this nation. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991). After the collapse of the multi-ethnic empires that ruled the peoples of Eastern Europe after 1918, the successor states maintained the region’s national diversity but changed the status of the state from a somewhat impartial imperial apparatus to aggressive nation-state. Thus, the new national minorities in Eastern Europe were faced with a “triadic configuration”: contending with political and economic reconfiguration, the “nationalizing” nationalisms of their new states, and the “homeland” nationalisms of the cultural/ethnic states that they allegedly (or presume to be) belong to. See Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 55-78. With nationalism in Eastern Europe tending to be organized around ethnicity and language, one could often “choose” (or be chosen) to be part of a certain ethnic group by choosing to speak in that language. For more on language and nationalism in Europe, see Barbour and Carmichael, eds., *Language and Nationalism in Europe*, 1-17; and in East Central Europe, 182-220. Pieter Judson, in his book *Guardians of the Nation*, traces the contours of German nationalism and its organization in the Habsburg Empire, including in Slovenia, through the end of World War I but stops at 1914. Judson found that, despite attempts by national activists on both the Slavic and German side to portray the situation in Central Europe as one of “wins” and “losses” for one side or the other after “gaining” Germans or Czechs or Slovenes (i.e., people claiming to speak those languages), many remained indifferent to these appeals – they had not yet “awakened” to their national identity which the activists were fervently trying to convey to them that they held. Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006). For more on the issue of identity and nationalism in Habsburg East Central Europe, see Pieter Judson and Marsha Rozenblit, eds., *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).

⁸ Yugoslavia had no single ethnic majority, unless one grouped together the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes under one designation as “Yugoslavs.” Due to differing historical experiences under the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, different areas of Yugoslavia had varying experiences with the German community. The relationship between the Serb, Croatian, and Slovene populations of Yugoslavia was complex and had a long history. A major problem for this newly-christened Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes lay in the fundamental idea of what Yugoslavism meant; each different ethnicity had large portions of the population who held a different conception of how a united Yugoslav state would function and in what manner it could be run. Slovenia largely wished to be part of a larger South Slavic state to protect itself and the ethnic Slovenes that lived outside its immediate borders from Austrian and Italian irredentism. See Dejan Djokić, *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918-1992* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003). See also Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1984). Yugoslavia was an ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse country: The 1921 census gave a combined population of almost 12 million in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes; almost 40% were Serbian (Orthodox Christianity), with about 24% Roman Catholic Croats, 8.5% Roman Catholic Slovenes, 6.3% Muslim Bosnians, 5.3% Macedonians, 4.3% Germans (Catholics and Protestants), 4% Albanian, 4% Hungarian, and almost 5% Turkish, Romanian, and Italian. John Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice there was a Country* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 129.

With this thesis, I seek to understand the nature of Slovenia's ethnic-German community; that is, this thesis will be a political history in that I will trace how German-speakers in interwar Slovenia reacted to minority policies that affected them, whether from the regional government in Ljubljana, the federal government in Belgrade, or the international treaties fostered by the League of Nations.⁹ I seek to understand how these ethnic Germans saw themselves and their place in the world; why they reacted the way they did to the policies that affected them, and what the nature of this reaction was. I am hopeful that this thesis will contribute to an understanding of the history of Germans in Eastern Europe in the twentieth century,¹⁰ the complexities of German identity,¹¹ and the

⁹ Prior to the ratification of a formal constitution, there was a provisional Slovene National Council that administered the formerly-Austrian crownlands of Lower Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola. The 1921 Constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, would establish the country as a unitary state with 33 administrative districts, whose “prefects were appointed from Belgrade.” A multi-party political system was set up for elections in a national parliament (called the *Skupština*) in Belgrade, though there were also municipal and local governments in cities. Contemporaries colloquially called the Kingdom “Yugoslavia” and the districts that comprised the Slovene lands “Slovenia”, and will be referred to as such in this thesis. See John Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe: A Century of War and Transition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 89-97.

¹⁰ For Eastern Europe’s large ethnic German population and the rise of the National Socialist state, the question of the Germans’ loyalty to their state of citizenship has been put forth; that is, were the Germans of Eastern Europe a fifth column? What was their relationship with their home country and their ancestral homeland of Germany? What was the nature of their identity? In what sense were they German? What was the influence of National Socialism on the German minorities? What was or was not appealing about National Socialism for the ethnic Germans (part of a broader question about the appeal of National Socialism and fascism)? These questions are addressed in Anthony Komjathy and Rebecca Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich: Ethnic Germans of East Central Europe between the Wars* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1980), in Krista O’Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin, eds., *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2005), Charles W. Ingrao and Franz A. Szabo, *The Germans and the East* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2008), and Mariana Hausleitner and Harald Roth, eds., *Der Einfluss von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus auf Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa* (Munich: IKGS Verlag, 2006). For a recent analysis of Germans’ understandings of Eastern Europe through time and space, see Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East: 1800 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹¹ Language and national identity are closely linked in German-speaking Europe, though this poses certain problems as the German language itself is very diverse. See Barbour, “Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg: The Total Coincidence of Nations and Speech Communities?”, in Barbour and Carmichael, eds., *Language and Nationalism in Europe*, 151-167. For more on the ways German emigrants and their descendants in Europe, North and South America, Asia, and Oceania formed unique German identities

impact of nationalism in East-Central and Southeastern Europe.¹² This is a study of self-identity, nationalism, and their impact upon policy and violence.

based on language, culture, and history, see O'Donnell, Bridenthal, and Reagin, eds., *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*; see also Mathias Schulze, James M. Skidmore, David G. John, Grit Liebscher, and Sebastian Siebel-Achenbach, eds., *German Diasporic Experiences: Identity, Migration, and Loss* (Waterloo, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008); and David Blackbourn and James Retallack, *Localism, Landscape, and the Ambiguities of Place: German-speaking Central Europe, 1860-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007). Much has been written about German identity and nationalism in Bohemia, in particular. See Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002); Scott Spector, *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin-de-Siècle* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000); and Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981).

¹² Eastern Europe was the site of the majority of the brutality, carnage, horrors, and death in the first half of the twentieth century. See Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010). Historians have sought answers to the following questions: Why did the situation in this region become so volatile between 1914 and 1945, after relative peace and stability for centuries prior to that? What made ethnically-diverse areas go from indifference or ambivalence to nationalism before the late-nineteenth century to the ethnic cleansing and expulsions of World War II? What caused the violence in the borderlands to be so intense? What can we learn from the failure of East, Central, and Southeastern Europe to peacefully incorporate its minorities into stable, democratic states? Alexander Prusin, *The Lands Between: Conflict in the East European Borderlands, 1870-1992* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). The rise of nationalism and the nation-state has usually been given the dominant role in causing Eastern and Southeastern Europe's political instability and ethnic violence. See Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), Prusin, *The Lands Between*, and Mary Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2011). Under imperial rule, the region's various ethnic groups were afforded relative tolerance and economic stability without overtly favoring one group over another. Whereas historically different groups in Eastern Europe had shared identities based in religion, language, culture, or geographic area, the spread of nationalism divided these loyalties and increased the majorities' anxiety over the loyalty of potentially-hostile ethnic minorities' relationships with their "mother" country. As the nationalizing state became stronger, so too did state-led attempts to make a reality of a pure instead of diverse "nation-state." Prusin, *The Lands Between*, 6. Others have stressed the economic difficulties faced by East-Central European states in the aftermath of the Great War and into the 1930s as a major cause for those countries' tensions, while not necessarily discounting the role of nationalism and the state in facilitating ethnic conflict. See Dejan Djokić, *Elusive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). Eastern Europe's history of violent nationalism and ethnic cleansing still resonates today, as can be seen in the Balkan wars of the 1990s and ongoing language/cultural issues in the border regions of Austria, Slovenia, and Italy. For more on ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and in Europe, see Paul Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides: Holocaust and Ethnic Cleansing in the Twentieth Century* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011); Cathie Carmichael, *Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans: Nationalism and the Destruction of Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 1-20; and Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001).

Germans and Slovenes in Interwar Europe

In the 1910 Austrian census, Germans made up almost 10% of the population of what would become the modern Republic of Slovenia.¹³ More than 100 years later, this large German-speaking population has virtually disappeared. In the interwar period, Slovenia, and the larger Kingdom of Yugoslavia of which it was a part, was the home of more than 500,000 ethnic Germans.¹⁴ This population comprised part of the millions of other Germans who lived outside the borders of the German Reich. Together, these German minorities constituted almost one-quarter of the German-speaking population in Europe.¹⁵ Protecting the rights of these minorities and ensuring their peaceful existence within the nation-states that had been created in the aftermath of the Great War was absolutely vital to the stability of Europe.¹⁶

¹³ This amounted to about 100,000 German-speakers. Slovenes made up 80% of the rest of the population, making up the overwhelming majority of the surrounding areas outside of the cities. There were five major centers of German-speakers in 1910: 22,635 in Marburg/Maribor (81% of the city's population); 4,625 in Cilli/Celje (67% of the city's population); 6,742 in Ljubljana (14.5% of the city's population); 17,016 in Gottschee/Kočevska (almost 89% of this predominantly-rural region); and 3,672 in Pettau/Ptuj (79% of the town's population). Mitja Ferenc and Božo Repe, "Die Deutsche Minderheit in Slowenien in der Zwischenkriegszeit", in *Slowenisch-österreichische Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, 162-163.

¹⁴ Toussaint Hočevar, "Linguistic Minorities of Yugoslavia and Adjacent Areas during the Interwar Period: An Economic Perspective", in *Nationalities Papers* (November 1984), 219. German-speakers in interwar Yugoslavia were clustered in large numbers in the Banat, Bačka, and Vojvodina in Serbia. These were the so-called Danube Swabians (*Donauschwabern*). There were also smaller populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Lyon, "After Empire", 1-3.

¹⁵ Ingrao and Szabo, *The Germans and the East*, 1.

¹⁶ On average, the post-Versailles countries of Eastern Europe held between 20% and 29% national minorities, many of whom bordered nation-states composed of that minority's ethnic group who struggled over possession of those territories. Raymond Pearson, *National Minorities in Eastern Europe, 1848-1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 147-149. The minorities issue was a key reason for the destabilization of the interwar period. When speaking of the German minorities, the use or exploitation of their presence factored into Hitler's expansionist aims. How did Germany's concern for Germans abroad affect international relations? How did the German minorities affect the domestic and foreign policy of Eastern Europe's nation-states. See Ronald Smelser, *The Sudeten Problem: Volkstumspolitik and the Formulation of Nazi Foreign Policy, 1933-1938* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975). See also Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich* and Norman Rich, *Hitler's War Aims, volume I: Ideology, the Nazi State, and the Course of Expansion* (New York: W.W.

Slovenia's German-speaking population¹⁷ was, unlike the rest of Yugoslavia's ethnic German population, predominantly urban, industrialized, relatively affluent, and more nationally conscious of their German identity.¹⁸ The 10% of Slovenia's population that was German-speaking was a much higher rate than in Croatia, Serbia, or Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ethnic tension between Slovenes and Germans was also more intense than that of Germans and Serbs or Croats.¹⁹ This resulted in, from the German perspective, harsher minority social policies that closed German-language schools, removed the

Norton, 1973). The role of the League of Nations in enforcing the minorities treaties, which many countries did little if anything to follow in the interwar period, has come under scrutiny for several reasons: the Allied Powers seemed little inclined to apply the same rigor to accommodating their own minority groups, but had no problem interfering in these same issues in Eastern, Central, and Southeastern Europe; it was difficult to bring cases to the League's attention, and even more so to try and successfully navigate these cases through the League's system; the League also did little to placate the various minority groups' irritation at what they perceived as the League's indifference to their plight, causing tension in those countries. See Mark Mazower, "Minorities and the League of Nations in Interwar Europe", in *Daedalus*, Vol. 126, No. 2 (Spring 1997), 47-63. See also Martin Scheuermann, *Minderheitenschutz contra Konfliktverhütung? Die Minderheitenpolitik des Völkerbundes in den zwanziger Jahren* (Marburg, Germany: Verlag Herder-Institut, 2000).

¹⁷ Why Slovenia? It is among the lesser-studied groups of ethnic Germans in the interwar period, with the Germans of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary taking precedence. Even Hausleitner and Roth's *Der Einfluss von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus auf Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa*, which deals specifically with Southeastern Europe, focuses on Romania, Hungary, and Croatia. Slovenia is an oft-overlooked part of the three ethnic groups that made up Yugoslavia, where issues between Serbs and Croats often takes precedent. Slovenia was, however, more industrialized than Croatia and Serbia and, unlike the other two, belonged to the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary.

¹⁸ In Lower Styria, for example, 25.9% of Germans were involved in trade and transport, 21.7% in commerce, 17.9% in the "free professions", and only 14.1% in agriculture. These were all much higher rates than the Slovene majority. See Nečak, *Die "Deutschen" in Slowenien*, 11. On the eve of World War I, Slovenia's German-speaking population generally enjoyed predominance in such prominent societal positions as the courts, the banks, big business, politics, and large landed estates. Ferenc and Repe, "Die Deutsche Minderheit in Slowenien in der Zwischenkriegszeit", 162. As well, the German language dominated the upper echelons of society in the region, meaning that often native Slovene-speakers had to learn German in order to economically and socially advance. Hočevar, "Linguistic Minorities of Yugoslavia", 215.

¹⁹ Germans and Slovenes had, by 1918, been living in the same region for decades. Beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century and continuing up to 1914, the two ethnic groups struggled over political, and with it, societal and cultural control of the Slovene lands. Such political, cultural, and social conflicts centered around language use, education, and political representation, becoming increasingly tense as both groups' sense of national identity increased. For more, see Martin Moll, *Kein Burgfrieden: Der deutsch-slowenische Nationalitätenkonflikt in der Steiermark, 1900-1918* (Vienna: Studien Verlag, 2007). In the middle of WWI, news broke out in Austrian newspapers of the so-called "May Declaration" of 1917 that declared the South Slavic population of the empire to "no longer believe in the continued existence of the state in which it exists." The German-language press in Lower Styria reacted angrily to this, accusing the

German language from public life, and generally sought more aggressively to assimilate or overwhelm the German-speaking community. Slovenia shared a border with Austria, but not Germany, who did not have any territorial claim on the ethnically-mixed border regions. After invading and occupying Yugoslavia, the Nazis annexed the parts of Slovenia under its control and administered it as a part of the Greater German Reich, despite its non-German ethnic majority.²⁰

The treaties that ended the First World War in Europe and finalized the continent's borders resulted in a German nation-state but left almost a quarter of Europe's German-speaking population outside of the new Weimar Republic's borders. These ethnic German minorities were citizens and minorities of proclaimed nation-states, whose protection was supposed to be guaranteed by international treaties signed by their home countries. Following the horrors and violence of the Great War, Europe's political and social stability relied in large part upon the peaceful incorporation of these ethnic German minorities into the new states of East, Central, and Southeastern Europe. With the rise of the National Socialist movement in Germany and the Nazis' occupation policies that were employed across the continent, these ethnic Germans that had lived outside of Germany's borders were seen as "fifth columns" who had helped Nazi Germany in

Slovenes and other South Slavs of being "traitors" and purposefully trying to sabotage the war effort. Needless to say, such words did not engender reconciliation either during or after the war between Germans and Slovenes. See Gregor Jenuš and Darko Friš, "Die Reaktion der Deutschen der Untersteiermark auf die Mai-Deklaration", in *Studia Historica Slovenica*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2008), 141-170. German Austrians during the Great War suspected ethnic Slovenes of inherently being traitorous, and treated them in a repressive manner. See Janko Pleterski, "The Southern Slav Question", in Mark Cornwall, ed., *The Last Years of Austria-Hungary: A Multinational Experiment in Early Twentieth-Century Europe* (Exeter, United Kingdom: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 119-148. For more on the period of nationalities politics in the Habsburg Empire, see Gary B. Cohen, "Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867-1914", in *Central European History*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (June 2007), 241-278.

²⁰ See Timothy Kirk, "Limits of Germandom: Resistance to the Nazi Annexation of Slovenia", in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (October, 1991) 646-667.

invading, occupying, and ravaging Eastern Europe; this view was used in part as justification for the mass expulsion of millions of ethnic Germans from lands they had lived in for centuries.²¹ Views of Slovenia's Germans being from the state's inception against its existence and staunch supporters of National Socialism contributed to the reasoning behind their expulsion after the war.²² But were they disloyal? Were they all in favor of National Socialism and the occupation? If not, then what was their view of Slovenia, Slovenes, Germany, Germandom, and National Socialism and its impact?

Methodology

The main sources that I rely upon for my analysis are several German-language newspapers based out of the cities in Slovenia that had a majority German-speaking population, Cilli/Celje and Marburg/Maribor.²³ The newspapers are analyzed in the

²¹ Komjathy and Stockwell, in *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, tackle these questions on a state-by-state basis, and come to various answers. Sometimes, the German minorities were exploited by the Third Reich for its own expansionist aims while in other cases, there was a substantial involvement on the side of the German minorities with the Nazi occupying forces. Valdis Lumans, in *Himmler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), mostly endorses the view that the majority of ethnic Germans outside of Germany were complicit and guilty of collaborating with the Nazis and their occupation policies. R.M Douglas takes issue with these justifications for the expulsion of the Germans from Eastern, Central, and Southeastern Europe in *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2012), as does Alfred M. de Zayas in *A Terrible Revenge: The Ethnic Cleansing of the East European Germans* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

²² The Slovene historian Tone Ferenc, in a brief chapter about interwar Slovenia and the Slovenes' subsequent resistance to Nazi aggression after 1941, discusses Slovenia's interwar ethnic-German population as if they were a homogenous group of like-minded individuals, the entirety of whom were ardent nationalists and proponents of National Socialism. Tone Ferenc, "The Austrians and Slovenia during the Second World War", in F. Parkinson, ed., *Conquering the Past: Austrian Nazism Yesterday and Today* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 207-233.

²³ These newspapers were accessed through the Digitalna knjižnica Slovenije, part of the National and University Library of Slovenia in Ljubljana, and ANNO (AustriaN Newspapers Online), part of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

context of their editorial stance and their readership; the *Deutsche Wacht/Cillier Zeitung/Deutsche Zeitung* was generally conservative nationalist, while the *Marburger/Mariborer Zeitung* tended to be more centrist.²⁴ Despite this, their editorials and articles did more than just relate the days' events – they also expressed and reflected the opinions of a socially-elite German perspective, whose differing and contrasting opinions are able to be discerned. The newspapers are understood to be at times expressing widely-held opinion as well as urging or imploring a certain viewpoint upon portions of its readership who feel different about a topic.²⁵ I have also used primary documents from the United States National Archives, with reports in the Records of the Department of State and captured Records of the German Foreign Office. All translations from German-language sources are, unless otherwise noted, my own.

Chapter One, “Adjusting to the New Kingdom, 1918-1924”, analyzes the first 6 years of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes after the end of the Great War and how the German minority community of Slovenia adjusted to new social policies impacting them and their new lives as national minorities. The German minority community's views of Slovenes and Yugoslavia, their identity, as well as the nature of their reactions to social policies impacting their language, culture, and education will be analyzed. I will argue that some German minorities were reluctantly accepting of becoming part of the new Yugoslav state, but did take steps to try and integrate insofar as

²⁴ The newspapers changed their names at various points throughout the interwar period, but these changes were in name only.

²⁵ See Michael Nagel, “Deutschsprachige Presse ausserhalb des Deutschen Sprachraumes: Entwicklungen, Perspektiven, Forschungsansätze”, in Andrei Corbrea-Hoişie, Ion Lihaciu, and Alexander Rubel, eds., *Deutschsprachige Öffentlichkeit und Presse in Mittelost- und Südosteuropa (1848-1948)* (Konstanz, Germany: Hartung-Gorre Verlag, 2008), 15-44. For more on the German-language press in Slovenia, see Tanja Žigon, *Deutschsprachige Presse in Slowenien (1707-1945)*, three volumes (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2004).

it was possible for them to while policies that closed German-language schools, outlawed German cultural associations, and banned the German language in public were enacted; some German nationalists and nationalist activists were openly resistant and hostile to the nature of the South Slav kingdom; while others were somewhere in between; as such, I argue that there were multiple and contested German identities and nationalisms in Slovenia at the time.

Chapter Two, “Of Democracy and Dictatorship, 1925-1932”, deals with the middle of the 1920s, through the so-called Royal dictatorship of 1929 in Yugoslavia and up to the eve of the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. I will argue that some German minorities were optimistic and loyal citizens, still willing to contribute to the Yugoslav state, while others became annoyed and remained hostile as minority policies did not much change in their favor. I will show how identity changed to more political action, and then weariness with politics – greeting the royal dictatorship in Yugoslavia as a positive event while leaving the door open to possible German intervention in the future. The Slovene Germans’ views of National Socialism as its electoral fortunes change and improve will be examined, as well as the community’s views of other fascist movements during this time. The mixed reaction to the increased electoral power of the National Socialists and the re-election of Hindenburg as Reichspräsident support the argument of contested and multiple identities and nationalisms.

The third chapter, “In the Shadow of the Third Reich, 1933-1941”, analyzes the reaction of Slovenia’s Germans to events after the seizure of power by the National Socialist German Worker’s Party in the German Reich. Despite the pro-Nazi editorial stance of the *Deutsche Zeitung*, I will argue that there is still evidence that some Germans

in Slovenia were skeptical or disapproving of the NSDAP and events in Germany, and what this might mean for interpretations of German identity. The appeal of the Nazi movement to its German supporters in Slovenia will be analyzed over the course of events through the 1930s and up to the German invasion and occupation of Yugoslavia in the spring of 1941.

Finally, I conclude by briefly reviewing the Nazi occupation of Slovenia and its impact upon the German and Slovene population. The plans for population transfers and summary executions and expropriations of ethnic Slovenes leads to partisan resistance against the Nazi forces and reprisals against ethnic Germans from 1944-1945; the expulsion of Slovenia's ethnic German population in 1945 marks the end of a long, shared history of these two people and demonstrates the perception that the pro-Nazi, Pan-German identity among some Germans in Slovenia was stronger than other varieties.

Chapter One – Adjusting to the New Kingdom, 1918-1924

The end of World War I saw the formation of a new state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, emerge out of the crumbling Habsburg Empire. In the aftermath of the war, Slovenia's stability depended in large part upon placating and peacefully integrating its German-speaking minority. For the first several years of life in the new Slovenia, Germans had their rights and cultural institutions restricted. How did they react to these policies? What was the nature of this reaction? How did they view the new Slovenia, and how would this factor into how they integrated into Slovene society as a distinct ethnic minority? This chapter will address these issues.

On November 11, 1918, the same day of the ceasefire that ended the First World War and only a short while after the Austrian Empire had effectively dissolved,²⁶ the Club of Slovene Professors met in Ljubljana to recommend to the newly-formed Slovene regional government that the German-language *Gymnasien* (secondary schools) in Ljubljana, Gottschee/Kočevje, Pettau/Ptuj, and Görz/Gorica should be closed down, as they were understood to be “establishments of Germanization.” In addition, the Club of Slovene Professors also recommended that the *Gymnasium* in Cilli/Celje should be converted into a Slovene institution and that German-language parallel classes should only be established if a certain amount of students who were not proficient enough with the Slovene language had registered.²⁷

²⁶ For more on the collapse of the Austrian Empire, see Gordon Brook-Shepherd, *The Austrians: A Thousand-Year Odyssey* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2002), 199-229.

²⁷ *Deutsche Wacht* (hereafter to be signified by “DW”), “Die Zukunft unserer Mittelschulen”, November 16, 1918.

At the same time that these German-language schools and classes were shut down and transformed into Slovene-language ones, the “slovenization” of those parts of society previously dominated by German-speakers also commenced. The director of the *Landesgymnasium* in Pettau/Ptuj, Dr. Karl Schöbinger, was replaced by another professor by the name of Father Bajda on order of the Slovene national assembly.²⁸ The Pettau/Ptuj city council, previously composed overwhelmingly of Germans, was dissolved in the name of the Ljubljana national government.²⁹ Meanwhile, the district attorney, civil lawyers, and other functionaries in the city of Marburg/Maribor were removed from their positions by the Yugoslav government for having been sworn in by the German-Austrian state.³⁰

The government in Ljubljana removed ethnic Germans from the Post and Telegraph Office in Cilli/Celje,³¹ as well as the German district school inspector in Marburg/Maribor.³² The German *Volksschule* (primary school) in Kartschowin/Krčevina was transferred to a Slovene school despite there being more German-speakers in the district than Slovenes, a fact noted by the German-language newspaper *Deutsche*

²⁸ DW, “Um Landesgymnasium in Pettau”, December 7, 1918.

²⁹ DW, “Der Pettauer Gemeinderat aufgelöst”, December 7, 1918.

³⁰ DW, “Die Slowenisierung des Gerichtswesens”, December 7, 1918.

³¹ DW, “Slowenisierung des Postamtes Cillis”, December 13, 1918.

³² DW, “Slowenisierung in Schulwesen”, December 13, 1918.

Wacht.³³ In Marburg/Maribor, the district court was ordered to no longer plead cases in the German language.³⁴

The “slovenization” of the southern half of the former imperial Austrian crownland of Styria represented a complete reversal of power relations in the area, seeming to happen overnight. The symbolic transformation for German-speakers in Slovenia from privileged majority in a multi-ethnic state to perceived second-class minority in a nation-state became a lived reality as they were stripped of their prestigious, well-paid positions and contended with a new context in which the German language and culture no longer dominated society.³⁵

The initial reaction of Slovenia's German community to these developments was political. On November 12, 1918, the city council of German-majority Marburg/Maribor convened to discuss the occasions of both the newly-proclaimed German Republic and the Republic of German-Austria. The council, with “great joy” and “full-throated” agreement with both Austria's desire to connect with Germany (*Anschluss*), declared that

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ DW, “Die Deutsche Sprache den Rechtsanwälten Verboten?”, December 13, 1918.

³⁵ The Habsburg crownland of Styria counted, in 1910, one million Germans and 400,000 Slovenes. The part of Styria that became part of Yugoslavia completely reversed this demographic ratio. Martin Moll, “The German-Slovene Language and State Border in Southern Austria: from Nationalist Quarrels to Friendly Co-Existence (19th to 21st Centuries)”, in Steven G. Ellis and Lud'a Klusáková, eds., *Imagining Frontiers, Contesting Identities* (Pisa, Italy: Pisa University Press, 2007), 207. Indeed, Education Minister Pribitchevitch “began his policy of suppression of all these institutions [German schools] beginning in Slovenia. The parents were informed that a Slavonic state could not tolerate German ideals and language continuing to prevail in families which had under the previous regime been ‘forced to become Germans’.” John Dyneley Prince to Frank B. Kellogg, January 25, 1927. United States National Archives (hereafter to be signified by “NARA”), Record Group 59 (Records of the Department of State). “Slovenization” also impacted German cultural institutions, such as the theater. 1919 saw theaters that had been run by German cultural associations in Ljubljana, Marburg/Maribor, Pettau/Ptuj, and Cilli/Celje transformed into Slovene ones. As a result, the ethnic German employees – musicians, electricians, directors, etc., - lost their jobs and the flow of money that had previously gone to “German hands” then went to Slovene ones. Reinhard Reimann, “Für echte Deutsche gibt es bei uns genügend Rechte”. *Die Slowenen und ihre Deutsche Minderheit 1918-1941*, in Harald Heppner, ed., *Slowenen und Deutsche im gemeinsamen Raum*, 139.

the German population of Marburg/Maribor “wholeheartedly...celebrates this...purposeful step” for “our liberated people”, now free from any “foreign pressure.” Furthermore, the council proclaimed that the Germans of Marburg/Maribor considered themselves to be an “organic, inseparable constituent part of the Republic of German-Austria”, and expected that Austria (and therefore Germany) would make sure that the “affiliation of our German city to the great body of our German Republic will be guaranteed forever.”³⁶

The turbulence and disruption of the war was, for some Germans, not enough to convince them that the Austrian Empire they had grown up in was never again going to exist. “The Czechs, Poles, and South Slavs [had] been preparing for years” for the dissolution of the Habsburg dynasty, while the Germans of the empire, whose failings of “birth and upbringing” were inherent to their race, were completely surprised by how events had unfolded after the end of the war.³⁷ Affiliation with the other ethnic Germans of the former Austrian Empire initially had a strong sway over Slovenia’s German-speaking community, as the emerging republic called German-Austria was an “ethnically-related” state, whose citizens “had over centuries united in necessity and death” and who shared a “common blood[,] language[, and] a common history.”³⁸

³⁶ DW, “Eine Kundgebung der Stadt Marburg”, November 16, 1918. At the time, German-Austria claimed, as part of the principle of self-determination, to be a part of the German Reich. Affiliating Lower Styria and other parts of the linguistic borderland areas of Austria and Slovenia with a “Greater Germany” was one way that nationalist activists attempted to portray the region as naturally German. These activists especially focused on the rural landscape, sometimes as a means of attracting German-speaking settlers to the area so as to maintain the dominance of the German culture. See Pieter Judson’s article “Land of Sun and Vineyards: Settlers, Tourists, and the National Imagination on the Southern Language Frontier”, in Blackbourn and Retallack, *Localism, Landscape, and Ambiguities of Place*, 236-258. See also Julia Schmid, “Im Geiste Bismarcks zu nationaler Einheit. Die deutschnationale Erfahrungsgemeinschaft in Österreich und dem Deutschen Reich zwischen 1890 und 1914”, in Haslinger, *Schutzvereine in Ostmitteleuropa*, 28-41.

³⁷ MZ, “Die Wirkung Alter Sünden”, November 21, 1918.

³⁸ MZ, “Keinen Zerfall!”, November 26, 1918.

The declaration by the Marburg/Maribor city council demonstrates a political as well as cultural affiliation with the German nation-states of Austria and Germany. For Austria's German-speaking population, formation of a separate political entity meant “liberation” from having to contend with the Habsburg Empire's other large ethnic groups, Slavs and Magyars, who had for decades clashed with Germans over political, cultural, and societal matters.³⁹ But there was more than just language and a shared history that connected Slovenia's Germans with German-Austria or the new German Republic. Being an “organic” part of the German *Volk* denotes that it is *blood* and not just *language* that makes one German, whether one lives in Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, or any other part of Europe.

For a particular strand of ethnic German identity, language was intimately connected with culture. For some, the German language itself had a distinctive essence that was inseparable from the German culture; by its very nature, the German language was superior, advanced, aggressive, and otherwise contained those same characteristics that the German culture possessed. Thus, by learning the German language, one “became” German and accrued all the benefits that came with “belonging” to a “superior” nation and culture, while the opposite would occur were one to lose the German language or “join” an “inferior” culture.⁴⁰

³⁹ See Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1526-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 422-451.

⁴⁰ This blending of language and culture in German nationalism is what Andreas Gardt calls *Sprachnationalismus* and *Sprachpatriotismus*. Andreas Gardt, “Sprachnationalismus zwischen 1850 und 1945”, in Andreas Gardt, ed., *Nation und Sprache: Die Diskussion ihres Verhältnisses in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 247-248. For more, see *Ibid.*, 169-198 and 247-272.

By declaring their “inseparability” from the German people in neighboring German-Austria and Germany, the Marburg/Maribor city council believed they were speaking on behalf of the rest of Slovenia's German-speaking population, and were therefore making a political declaration by means of a cultural one. For, in declaring themselves indissolubly German, the councilors were thereby declaring that they would and could never culturally lose their German identity even if, politically, they became part of Slovenia and Yugoslavia. This was made true even for the city itself, which had a German-speaking majority at the time, but was expected to be guaranteed to belong to the spiritual body of Germandom for all time regardless of any potential demographic changes. Some Germans acted with their feet on this point, actively moving from their homes in Slovenia to German-Austria to gain that country's citizenship.⁴¹

Violent Struggles for Control and the *Marburger Blutsonntag*

In the immediate post-ceasefire period, however, Germans and Slovenes in the area took more than just political action – there were also violent confrontations between armed groups of men, sometimes composed of enlisted soldiers, who were fighting to gain control over certain areas for their respective ethnic nations.⁴² On November 16, 1918, the German-controlled Marburg/Maribor city council called upon all men between

⁴¹ DW, “Wie Werde Ich Deutschösterreichischer Staatsbürger?”, January 18, 1919.

⁴² Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 112. Violent clashes over borderlands was not unique to Austria and Yugoslavia, however. Armed militias battled in the Baltic, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Ukraine and elsewhere in East and Central Europe, leaving behind a trail of death and destruction. See Prusin, *The Lands Between*, 72-97.

the ages of 18 and 50 who were “capable of using a weapon” to, as part of their “duty”, enter the city’s *Schutzwehr*, or armed militia.⁴³ While the Serb-dominated Yugoslav delegation conferred over peace negotiations in Paris, Slovene and Serb troops advanced as far as Klagenfurt, attempting to gain territorial leverage over competing Austrian claims of the ethnically-mixed borderland between Slovenia and Austria. The territorial debate would eventually make its way to the negotiations in Paris, and would be decided by plebiscite.⁴⁴

For Slovenia's German community, the first several months of life after the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was proclaimed on December 1, 1918 carried on much as it had in the period immediately following the end of the war. In February 1919, the Yugoslav government ended the teaching of the German language as a requirement for all primary and secondary schools in the entire kingdom, making it an elective from the fourth grade on at these schools only under the condition that parents asked for it and the class had more than 15 students. For minority schools throughout the kingdom, including German ones, knowledge of the “state language” of Slovene was made a requirement in order to teach.⁴⁵

⁴³ DW, “Marburger Schutzwehr”, November 16, 1918.

⁴⁴ Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 112-113. For an exhaustive look into the demographic details of the borderlands in Styria and Carinthia, see Suppan, *Jugoslawien und Österreich*, 470-493. While German-Austria desperately wished to maintain control over Lower Styria, including Marburg/Maribor, in early 1919 their army was depleted and exhausted after years of grinding war. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 234.

⁴⁵ DW, “Das Deutsche aus den Schulen Beseitigt”, February 1, 1919. It was also “forbidden to all Germans in Yugoslavia to import any German teachers from abroad, and, since there (was) no German school for the training of teachers in (Yugoslavia)...the condition of German education” was dire indeed. John Dyneley Prince to Frank B. Kellogg, January 25, 1927. NARA, RG-59.

By November 1, 1918, weeks before the end of the war, Slovene nationalist Major Rudolf Maister had led Slovene militias to seize the German-majority cities of Marburg/Maribor, Cilli/Celje, and Pettau/Ptuj.⁴⁶ On January 27, 1919, a demonstration of several hundred German-speakers took place in Marburg/Maribor, at a time when the surrounding Styrian countryside was occupied by Yugoslav troops under now-General Maister. The protest, which occurred on the same day that an American delegation led by Sherman Miles was received by General Maister, was violently broken up when the Yugoslav troops opened fire on the ethnic Germans; 8 civilians were killed and 20 wounded.⁴⁷

It is difficult to understand the exact impact of what came to be called “Marburg’s Bloody Sunday” upon the German community, as there was still a censor in effect upon the German-language press. As such, the *Deutsche Wacht*’s report on the “bloody demonstration” was placed on the last page of the February 1 edition, just before the advertisements. The report claimed that there had been 10,000 protestors at the demonstration, with the police having fired 50 shots, killing and wounding many – “including women and children”, as the *Deutsche Wacht* emphasized. It is clear that, had the censor not been in place, the German-language press would have reacted much more angrily than they were able to do, but the focus on the “women and children” who were shot upon and killed indicates the German view of the situation: the demonstrators were legally and peacefully exercising their democratic rights as citizens and were thus

⁴⁶ Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 236.

⁴⁷ Suppan, *Jugoslawien und Österreich*, 530. General Maister had, in addition to occupying German-majority cities by force, had also fired ethnic German railway workers on strike and replaced them with ethnic Slovenes, fired German public servants, requisitioned their homes, and even taken some captive. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 237. For his part, the American Miles had difficulty distinguishing between Germans and Slovenes in the area, as so many residents were bilingual. *Ibid.*

illegally and brutally shot upon by nationalist Slovene government forces.⁴⁸ German-Austria officially protested, calling out the Yugoslav occupation of “German settlement areas” and describing the event as resulting from acts of “perpetration” by the Slovenes in Marburg as against an “until now free people.”⁴⁹

More Germans were removed from administration posts at the district court⁵⁰ and in primary and secondary schools in Cilli/Celje.⁵¹ In May, all street signs in Cilli/Celje not written in Slovene were ordered to be so, thus changing well-known and familiar landmarks and meeting places in the city for monolingual German-speakers into strange and confusing ones.⁵² Barely two weeks after German parallel classes were reduced while Slovene ones were increased at primary and secondary schools in Cilli/Celje in late February, 1919,⁵³ the Slovene regional government abolished altogether German-language parallel classes at the German secondary school in Cilli/Celje due to “insufficient students.” The *Deutsche Wacht* indignantly reported how German students were suggested to attend German *Gymnasien* in Pettau/Ptuj or Marburg/Maribor, both more than 30 miles away.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ DW, “Blutige Demonstrationen in Marburg”, February 1, 1919.

⁴⁹ DW, “Ein Deutschösterreichische Protest”, February 1, 1919.

⁵⁰ DW, “Enthebungen in Justizdienste”, February 8, 1919.

⁵¹ DW, “Enthebungen bei den Cillier Volks- und Bürgerschulen”, February 22, 1919.

⁵² DW, “Neue Straßenbenennung in Cilli”, May 24, 1919.

⁵³ DW, “Veränderung an den Volks- und Bürgerlichen Schulen in Cilli”, February 22, 1919.

⁵⁴ DW, “Auflassung des Deutschen Gymnasiums in Cilli”, March 8, 1919.

The reaction of the *Deutsche Wacht* to the closing of this *Staatsgymnasium* in Cilli/Celje, the second-oldest secondary school in the kingdom, demonstrates the extent to which Slovenia's German community were alarmed at the social policies that were impacting them and so rapidly changing their lives. Noting that the presence of the censor made it “naturally impossible to appreciate” the “full meaning” of “this heavy blow to Cilli/Celje's Germandom”, the *Deutsche Wacht* deplored the fact that the “closing of the school” would now make “poor German students and their parents” the “hardest hit”, surely resulting in “many existences” falling victim to this “reprimand.” For the *Deutsche Wacht*, the dissolution of German parallel classes at the city's *Staatsgymnasium* was, just like the removal of German civil servants, nothing more than a “purification measure”, whose goal was to “accelerate” the “eradication” of Slovenia's Germandom. “The Styrian lowlands have”, angrily declared the *Deutsche Wacht*, “lost a time-honored cultural site, at which distinguished scholars had been active: This institution had, during its more than one-hundred-fifty-year existence, kept the intellectual standard [of the city] at the most prominent heights.”⁵⁵

As Slovenia's German minority group witnessed its cultural community, shown here in the example of a school, decline and be removed from public life, it struggled to understand *why* this was being done. The *Deutsche Wacht's* editorial reflects one way that the German minority viewed the Slovene majority and its government's actions. Mentioning the censor on the press in combination with the word “reprimand”, it is clear that for some Germans, the Slovene majority was not acting out of any rational pursuit of

⁵⁵ Ibid.

good public policy but rather due to an irrational desire to conduct revenge or retribution upon the minority community for sins committed some time previously.⁵⁶ The perceived “eradication” of Slovenia's Germandom through these types of “purification measures” was, for certain Germans, more than just the loss of cultural institutions and symbols – the fear was also that the physical and spiritual existence of Slovenia's Germandom itself would be erased through the actions of a vengeful, tyrannical Slovene-majority government.

The interpretation of the Slovene majority's actions as constituting a purposeful attempt to completely remove any trace of Germans' existence from the region was one way through which some German minorities saw their world in this situation as part of a culture war. This war, in which no military weapons were fired or physical deaths were witnessed, was instead fought by two cultures and peoples whose spiritual wills battled against each other, through the use of political power, to gain the upper hand and dominate society in Lower Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Germans and Slovenes had had a contentious previous several decades, marked by rising ethnic tension and battles over the region's public life in terms of culture, society, and politics. See Moll, *Kein Burgfrieden*, 46-80. Indeed, a large reason behind the Slovene government's minority social policy was out of “fear of further indignities through the previous alleged ‘*Herrschervolk*’ (ruling class, i.e., Germans)” that had occurred during the First World War. Nećak, *Die “Deutschen” in Slowenien*, 11.

⁵⁷ This “culture war” perspective was enhanced by the idea of fighting over “the soul of every individual”; that is, a Slovene could be “won over” to “become” German and vice-versa. Such a view was held not only by nationalist activists but by the political elites, who felt that there could be no reconciliation between the two ethnic groups. At the level of daily life, however, there was still space for coexistence and cooperation, at least until 1914. Janez Cvirn, “Deutsche und Slowenen in der Untersteiermark: Zwischen Kooperation und Konfrontation”, in Heppner, ed., *Slowenen und Deutsche im gemeinsamen Raum*, 111-112. In the nineteenth century, German nationalist activists and their allies in the German-language media “framed daily life in the region in terms of ongoing battles among nations. They attributed local incidents of violence to nationalist animosities and portrayed the local world in terms of nationalist conflict.” Pieter Judson, “Changing Meanings of ‘German’ in Habsburg Central Europe”, in Ingrao and Szabo, *The Germans and the East*, 109.

A culture war being fought between Germans and Slovenes was just one way the German minority understood its situation, however. The last section of the editorial in the *Deutsche Wacht* betrays the way in which this traditionally-nationalist German identity was actually in tension with and contested by other types of German nationalisms and identities. Not only did the German presence in Slovenia have a long history, since the school had been open for over 150 years, but it was a prestigious one, and this prestige had been brought and developed through Germans.

The “Styrian lowlands”, inclusive of both Slovene- and German-speakers, however, had lost an important cultural site - *not* simply Slovenia's German community. A sense of pride among the Germans in cultural accomplishment can be seen in the *Staatsgymnasium* in Cilli/Celje. These German accomplishments reflect well upon the German community in Slovenia, but also upon the region as a whole. Some Germans in Slovenia thus felt that they had brought culture and prestige to the region, in a type of paternalistic way, but some as well felt that by utilizing these unique skills and institutions of the German minority, the minority community itself could positively contribute to Slovene and Yugoslav society. Such pride and participation would help every member of society, Slovene and German alike, but this participation was being hindered by the small nationalist minority of Slovenes who ran an overbearing, irrational government.

The *Deutsche Wacht* turns into the *Cillier Zeitung*

The pride felt by the Germans in Slovenia can be seen in the last edition of the *Deutsche Wacht* in late May, 1919, as it was ordered by the government to change its name.⁵⁸ Recognizing that the newspaper's name signified an “outward symbol” from “a different time”, the *Deutsche Wacht* gave service to the time when they “lay on the main artery of a great empire”, whose “thousand strings had not yet broken with our previous homeland (*Stammland*)” and when the paper was able to “accompany much progress and cultural achievements” with its voice. The paper looked back on a time when it “came forward step by step in industry and trade, that produced competent tradesmen in combination with a general rise of good and fair labor”; a time when one could tell others that they “live, in natural complement, in peace and friendship”; a time when one could “proudly declare” that schools “became better and better”, that after the “second largest city school and the new secondary school were finished”, Cilli/Celje became the renowned, premier city for schools in all Styria.⁵⁹

The past, present, and future are all included in the *Deutsche Wacht*'s farewell. Recognizing the explicitly ethnocentric and German nationalist overtones of the name *Deutsche Wacht* (German Watch), the paper accepts that the time when those themes were more important has long passed. A reminiscent look back on the time when Slovenia's Germandom enjoyed being part of a privileged caste and helped to socially, culturally, and economically cultivate a massive empire nonetheless gives way to an

⁵⁸ DW, “Zum Letztenmale ‘Deutsche Wacht’”, May 10, 1919.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

acknowledgment that times had changed, and the “old” homeland of Austria had presently been replaced by the “new” one of Yugoslavia and Slovenia.

The *Deutsche Wacht*'s fondness for the time when business was booming, schools were the envy of the region, and Slovenes and Germans lived in ethnic harmony represents simultaneously a memory, a critique of the present, and a hopeful optimism for a better tomorrow. A description of pre-1918 Slovenia as a time of “peace and friendship” indicates that not all Germans either in the past or present viewed Slovenia's society in terms of a cultural war or battle of nations.

The final edition of the *Deutsche Wacht* displays the contrasting reactions and identities found among Slovenia's German minority community. The typical German nationalist can feel pride at having been an important cog in the wheel of a grand empire, while also being responsible for making the economy and society thrive through business acumen and superior cultural education. Other Germans can reminisce of times past when ethnicity and language were not stressed so vehemently and residents of Styria were simply Styrians, not narrowly Slovenes or Germans. Still others, some who were strongly aware of their German identity and some who were less so, can be unhappy about the particular anti-German policies being implemented but still accept the political fact of the South Slav Kingdom and hope for an improvement in the future. Unable to appeal to simply one of these identities and nationalisms, the *Deutsche Wacht* attempts to please all of them, and in the process demonstrates their contested natures.

The “Slovenization” of German Cultural Institutions

As time went on, the social, political, and cultural situation of Slovenia's Germans did not much improve. “Slovenization” measures such as removing German civil servants, teachers, and bureaucrats resulted in the immediate economic impoverishment of 30,000 people, most of whom then left the country.⁶⁰ Such a loss not only substantially reduced the sheer numbers of ethnic Germans in Slovenia, but also meant a massive reduction in linguistic, social, and cultural terms. Cultural associations became impossible to form without legal approval from Slovene government authorities, while gatherings in closed rooms were only allowed after an earlier request to the political authorities had been approved.⁶¹

The *Cillier Zeitung* ran an ad in late May, 1919, for an “extraordinary” general assembly at the *Deutsches Haus* in Cilli/Celje.⁶² The *Deutsches Haus* had long been a symbolic and physical representation of the German culture, presence, and for Slovene nationalists, domination, in the city.⁶³ The cultural association affiliated with the *Deutsches Haus* urgently reminded its readers in the advertisement that “attendance from 30 members” was necessary to have a quorum, and if this requirement were not fulfilled, then a second meeting would take place half an hour later which would not be held to the

⁶⁰ Those who emigrated mostly went to German-Austria. Mitja Ferenc and Božo Repe, “Die Deutsche Minderheit in Slowenien in der Zwischenkriegszeit”, in Nećak, Jesih, Repe, Škrilec, and Vodopivec, eds., *Slovenisch-österreichische Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, 165.

⁶¹ *Cillier Zeitung* (hereafter to be designated by “CZ”), “Ausnahmestand in Slowenien”, May 31, 1919.

⁶² CZ, “Verein Deutsches Haus in Cilli”, May 31, 1919.

⁶³ The reason for Slovene dislike of the *Deutsches Haus* stemmed from its funding source: German nationalist organizations like the *Südmark*. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 241.

same 30-member standard for decisions made.⁶⁴ The “extraordinary” urgency with which the *Cillier Zeitung* urged members of the *Deutsches Haus* to attend the meeting was due to the impending expropriation of this German cultural site by the Slovene government on grounds that it was no longer abiding by a law recently put in place that stated that cultural associations must have Slovene representation in them.⁶⁵

Unfortunately for the German-speaking supporters of the *Deutsches Haus*, their best legal efforts were not enough to overcome those of the Slovene majority. On September 20, the *Verein Deutsches Haus* in Cilli/Celje was dissolved by the regional government. “Rarely before”, lamented the *Cillier Zeitung* in response, “has a governmental measure induced such a deeply-felt enragement.”⁶⁶ The *Deutsches Haus*, which evoked such strong reactions among certain segments of the Slovene majority for its perceived representation of German socio-cultural dominance, was, at least in the changed context of a Slovene-majority state, “not a political club, but rather a purely social one” for Cilli/Celje’s German population.⁶⁷ From the point of view of the Germans who used the *Deutsches Haus* as a place of social gathering and relaxation among friends, the “slovenization” of the building was a “type of decree” that “must arouse the highest level of nervousness and bitterness.” Such actions by the “members of the

⁶⁴ CZ, “Verein Deutsches Haus in Cilli”, May 31, 1919.

⁶⁵ The *Deutsches Haus* would have fallen under the ownership of the Austro-German nationalist organization *Südmark* had its legal process of being sold been successfully implemented. Arnold Suppan, “Zur Lage der Deutschen in Slowenien zwischen 1918 und 1938: Demographie, Recht, Gesellschaft, Politik”, in Rumpler and Suppan, eds., *Geschichte der Deutschen im Bereich des Heutigen Slowenien*, 185-186.

⁶⁶ CZ, “Die Auflösung des Vereines Deutsches Haus Cilli”, September 20, 1919.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Ljubljana government...stand in glaring opposition to [the] freedom, justice, and equality of all nations”, and would therefore “destroy the barely-spun threads of understanding and reconciliation.”⁶⁸

Such actions against German cultural associations, notably with the *Deutsches Haus* in Cilli/Celje, were received with outrage by some Germans in part due to their dubious legality in regards to the international treaties that Yugoslavia had signed.⁶⁹ “According to Act 49 of the Peace Treaty”, intoned the *Cillier Zeitung*, “the property of Austrian documents in former imperial lands cannot be part of sequestration or liquidation.”⁷⁰ For the Germans of this perspective, these illegal expropriations of German cultural property were the actions of a disorderly, unorganized, and even anti-democratic state, without any clear mechanisms of hindering it, that threatened the socio-cultural existence of Germans in Slovenia. Without being able to politically voice their opinions, these Germans instead sustained resentment and fear alike at what they viewed as an irrational, vengeful Slovene nationalist majority government.

But the transformation of the *Deutsches Haus* into the *Celjski Dom* signified more than just an illegal act that went against international law and the spirit of liberal democratic freedoms. A strand of outraged German reaction to the attacks on German cultural associations was tied up as well in the German affiliation for the *Heimat* that they

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ As a condition for accepting their territorial additions, and despite their protests, the Yugoslav delegation signed treaties at the Paris peace conference that were designed to give ethnic minorities cultural protection. Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2001), 487. There was a fear among some Yugoslav diplomats that the minority treaties would “enable foreign power[s] to intervene in [the] internal affairs of the country for political reasons.” Telegram from Green to Department of State, September 17, 1919. NARA, RG-59.

⁷⁰ CZ, “Was Wir Denken und Fühlen”, October 5, 1919.

felt so strongly about. This regional identity, as opposed to a more Pan-Germanist one, had certain tensions and nuances that were brought out in the case of the *Deutsches Haus*.

That the *Deutsches Haus* was, for some Germans, being unfairly characterized as a “meeting place for any person who had years ago thrown stones at Slovene guests”, was an “invention” and “distortion” of the true nature and history of the German presence in Cilli/Celje. The *Deutsches Haus* was a “domestic club...whose members are natives” of the South Slav kingdom.⁷¹ While indignantly refuting the claim that the Slovene lands had been and were now only for ethnic Slovenes, the *Cillier Zeitung* also exposes that this belief was actually controversial in the German community. “Since the...motherland...has fallen, we have soberly learned to think and without contradiction fit ourselves into the new national order.” Despite having “declared that we want to be loyal citizens of the new state”, the German minority nonetheless felt that it had been “treated unworthy and illegal, unworthy of the culture of the ruling nations” of Yugoslavia.

While appealing to the vanity of Slovene and Slavic nationalism with regards to their own cultures, the *Cillier Zeitung* then states that “so long as national chauvinism” reigns, then “the trust and love of the Germans [can]not grasp stronger roots to the new fatherland.” In the same breath, however, as deploring ethnocentric-inspired policy, the article admits that the Germans of Slovenia “do not want to go back to the old issues”,

⁷¹ Ibid.

and therefore “think that it is better, in light of these recent events, to leave the past in peace.”⁷²

The multifaceted German reaction to the closing of the *Deutsches Haus* by the Slovene government betrays the different ways in which the various German identities and nationalisms conflicted with each other as the minority community attempted to maintain cultural unity while adjusting to its new socio-political reality of inclusion in the Yugoslav state. A Pan-German nationalist would have viewed the Slovene takeover of the *Deutsches Haus* as the illegal action of a tyrannical, culturally-inferior ethnic Slovene government bent on exacting retribution on the German community as part of a chauvinist desire to completely erase Slovenia’s Germandom.

Other Germans, less strongly-inclined to associate themselves with the notion of European-wide Germanic cultural superiority, saw the loss of the *Deutsches Haus* as an unfair and lamentable end to an important part of the region’s history, as German-speakers and the German culture had contributed in large part to the culture of the area. For these Germans, the German language and identity was equally as important as the Slovene one, but not in such a paternalistic way that the more Pan-German nationalist perception was. The German regional identity was a type of German nationalism, unlike the fervently Pan-Germanic nationalism, that was proud of the cultural achievements of the past and sought to contribute to contemporary Slovenia in a way that respected its cultural contributions and unique characteristics.

⁷² Ibid.

The closure of German-language schools and classes represented, from the German perspective, a dire and serious threat to the continued existence of the German culture in Slovenia.

Despite such social policies overwhelmingly restricting and taking away certain former rights and privileges of the Germans, the German community reacted in multiple ways. One reaction to these policies is what can be considered German nationalist or Pan-German,⁷³ whereby the German-speaking population of Yugoslavia constituted an organic component of the greater German *Volk* and therefore should be politically as well as culturally included within German-Austria or the Weimar Republic while excluding itself from the ethnic South Slavic state of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. For Germans of this worldview, the German culture was “highly-developed”, the Germans themselves capable of “sustaining a state” whose “cooperation the state cannot permanently do without.”⁷⁴

⁷³ The German Reich’s Pan-German League, founded in 1891, had for its goals the uniting of all Germans in the world into one nation-state, to assure German dominance in Central and Eastern Europe, and maintenance of Germany as a great world power. Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East*, 116. Pan-Germanism in the Austrian Empire was different, as Julie Thorpe argues: “Pan-Germanism might better be understood as an identity matrix in which various camps, movements, and parties followed their own political and cultural agendas as they sought to orientate their multiple paths within a common national framework.” Austrian Pan-German nationalists who, after 1848 advocated for a *grossdeutsche* solution based on ethno-centric beliefs, aimed at the “subordination of non-Germans to Germans in a German state”; this contrasted with the *kleindeutsche* solution that was based on civic arguments for securing German territorial and political rather than ethnic unity. Georg von Schönerer led a movement of young Austrian liberal nationalists who advocated for a union of German-Austria with the German Reich, culminating in the Linz Programme in 1882. Pan-Germanism in Austria, argues Thorpe, was not so black and white as radicals like Schönerer wished. The traditional “camps” in Austria – Christian Socials and Social Democrats – “are best understood as contestants of Pan-German identity whose nationalism competed with and often complemented that of Catholics and socialists.” Pan-German nationalism in Styria before the Great War were “fuelled by local resentment towards Slovenian-speakers”, where local “German-language newspapers portrayed ethnic tensions in other parts of the empire as a threat to German-speakers of Styria.” See Julie Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist state, 1933-1938* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2011), 16-38.

⁷⁴ CZ, “Schutz den Minderheiten”, September 20, 1919.

Slovenia's Germans and the Yugoslav Constitution

Another reaction, similar in some ways but crucially different in others, can be seen on the occasion of the crown prince Alexander I's visit in June of 1920 to Cilli/Celje. Calling him the “new Regent of our *Heimat* (homeland)”, the *Cillier Zeitung* declared that “almost everything” the city's “high guest” would look at on his visit “attests to the past, attests to centuries of labor and accomplishments of the Germans in the cities of this region.” The paper went on to describe how

these undestroyed features of previous efforts and sorrows and of prior joy of developing [the] well-being of the local community, these [form] the background out of which we step...[Upon the prince's visit] everyone will turn their gaze on us...in order to see what we do and say...No accusation can make us guilty of being troublesome, and no argument can accuse us of being unwilling. [It] is unswervingly certain, however, that we want to remain German in our ways and our culture...As our cities stand on Yugoslav ground, so stand German people with their homes and with their labor as well on the same ground...There will also be there all those with their hearts, if justice returns to them: and we all expect justice from the new dynastic house.⁷⁵

What do Slovenia's Germans mean by “justice”? “The non-Slavic people of this kingdom”, states the *Cillier Zeitung*, “have been repeatedly promised justice by high and unaccountable positions”, by which they expected complete “protection for our ethnic (*völkisch*) life and for our labors.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ CZ, “Zum Besuch des Thronfolger-Regenten Alexander”, June 27, 1920.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

In other words, Slovenia's ethnic German minorities wanted the local and federal government to fulfill the international minority treaties they had signed that should have been protecting the German language, German cultural associations, and continued usage in schools. Justice, for these minorities, was not the restoration to their previous positions of privilege and societal dominance. Rather, it meant equality with the Slovene majority in social, political, and cultural life. The component regions of Slovenia – Carinthia, Carniola, and Lower Styria – had been developed and progressed due to the efforts of Germans, who considered it their homeland as much as the Slovene majority who had benefited from their labors did. Without justice - that is, without full, legal and cultural equality - then Slovenia's Germans could never fully integrate into the society of their new country. But they were ready and willing to do so, if only given those same rights they felt that they deserved but were being purposefully kept from them.

Slovenia's ethnic Germans' desire for equality before the law was based not only in a reading of the international treaties that Yugoslavia had signed, but also in the very legislation and constitutions that the Yugoslav state itself wrote. When a rumor that the Slovene regional government was going to close German middle schools as a reaction to the exclusion of Slovene students from Austrian *Hochschulen* in Graz and Vienna, the German community responded with the "greatest unease."⁷⁷ "We would have considered such a measure...impossible", cried the *Deutsche Wacht* with alarm. The paper argued that the authorities' actions in Austria were against "*Staatsfremde*", not German-Austrian citizens; the closing of German schools in Slovenia, however, would be against citizens of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Such school closings "must be impossible", wrote the

⁷⁷ DW, "Schließung der Deutschen Mittelschulen in Slowenien?", February 15, 1919.

Deutsche Wacht, since the constitution of January 30 guaranteed all citizens of Yugoslavia equality before the law.⁷⁸ The closing of these German middle schools would “threaten the existence of thousands of local Yugoslav citizens.”⁷⁹

German dedication to the principles of the Yugoslav constitution held important ramifications in three ways. First, in claiming that the Slovene government was acting against the express rights enshrined in the constitution owed to them as Yugoslav citizens, the German minority was thus calling out the Slovene majority government as an illegal, unconstitutional, and therefore undemocratic institution. Secondly, the inverse of the Slovene majority acting against the constitution was that the Germans were alleging that they themselves were model, law-abiding, and loyal Yugoslav citizens who deserved to be treated the same way that the Serbs, Croats, or Slovenes themselves did. But the Germans were unknowingly doing more than just juxtaposing their own perceived justified, law-abiding stance as opposed to the unfair, illegal Slovene one; by endorsing the German-Austrian view of that country’s ethnic Slovene minority as being *Staatsfremden*, Slovenia’s own ethnic German minority were displaying their own hypocrisy when it came to a situation in which it benefited them to be hypocritical. If Austria’s Slovenes were not true citizens by virtue of their Slavic ethnicity, then what would stop Yugoslavia’s Slovene population from making the same conclusion about their own German minority?

⁷⁸ The Yugoslav constitution of January 30, 1919 was a temporary measure, based off of the 1903 Serbian constitution, and established a cabinet of ministers composed of 10 Serbs, 9 from previous Habsburg lands, and one from Montenegro. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 110.

⁷⁹ DW, “Schließung der Deutschen Mittelschulen in Slowenien?“, February 15, 1919.

Such a reaction by the German community reflected the uncertainty they faced in adapting to their new socio-political context as a national minority. In dismissing Slovene claims of citizenship in Austria while also endorsing their own claims in Yugoslavia, Slovenia's Germans were trying to have it both ways. For the German nationalist in Slovenia who held a paternalistic and possibly racist opinion of Slovenes as being inferior to the German race, designating Austria's Slovene minority as *Staatsfremden* was simply a matter of course, an obvious reality not worth quibbling over. But there is another type of German nationalism at work in this situation, the type of nationalism that took pride in an age-old German myth of a "civilizing mission" in the East, where the German presence brings law, order, and cleanliness to a backwards and dirty place.⁸⁰ The conservative nationalism on the one hand, and the more legalistic nationalism on the other, demonstrates a certain tension between two strands of German identity that were at odds in the minority's transition from majority in Slovenia.

The minority treaties signed but not enforced by Yugoslavia caused outrage among Germans, who viewed this as the height of hypocrisy. "We are allowed to and want to finally appreciate what [freedom] can have in store for our lives... This past November the first government had spoke of equal rights and freedoms for all citizens and nations and then something entirely different came about", raged the *Cillier Zeitung*.⁸¹ The strong German belief in the constitution meant that they viewed the

⁸⁰ See Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East*, 1-11. This German view of Eastern Europe had taken on a new twist after Germany and Austria's defeat in World War One, with an increased sense of anxiety over territorial boundaries and order in the East. Ibid., 152.

⁸¹ CZ, "Wir brauchen Freiheit, viel Freiheit!", August 23, 1919.

Slovene government's non-enforcement of its legal obligations as cynical and self-serving. In contrast with the South Slavic peoples of the country, Yugoslavia's

citizens of the German tongue, at least in Slovenia, are going without national freedom and equality. Our communities and public corporation are partly broken up, partly restricted in their rights...[Our] commitment to the German nation is subject to government examination; mixed-language married couples must forgo the natural right to decide the nationality of their children...The equality of German citizens was repeatedly [and] celebratorily announced by the government but depends on bureaucrats...[There are] double standards...in approving middle schools and technical schools [and] for the construction of [German] school departments.⁸²

Germans' "natural rights" and alleged equality as Yugoslav citizens are, in this depiction, being dictated and perverted by a national government that is purposefully attempting to turn them into Slovenes. No longer can Germans decide for themselves or their children that they are German, but this power resides solely in the hands of the Slovene majority government.

The view of the regional government in Ljubljana as being run by a minority of rabid Slovene nationalists was, for some Germans, evidence that the Slovene "national character" was so different from that of the Germanic one that it was inevitable for the state to be an undemocratic, disorderly mess.⁸³ The opinion that the Slavic national character meant that they could never hope to have an organized, well-run government or society only gained credence from the nature of Yugoslav politics, which were riven by ethnic conflicts between Serbs and Croats.⁸⁴ On the same day that the *Cillier Zeitung* ran

⁸² CZ, "Die Freiheit im SHS-Staat", December 27, 1919.

⁸³ DW, "Gegen die Laibacher Zentralisten", March 15, 1919.

⁸⁴ CZ, "Das Ende der Koalitionsregierung", July 5, 1919.

a one-column article on the sinking of the German fleet,⁸⁵ they also ran a total of five other articles of varying length on current domestic political events,⁸⁶ which were quite hectic at the time.⁸⁷

German Desire for Inclusion in Yugoslav and Slovene Society

Germans' negative reactions to "slovenization" measures, such as schools closing, monolingual-Slovene tax forms,⁸⁸ or the introduction of "Slavic" liturgy into church services,⁸⁹ were grounded in part out of a fear of losing their Germanic identity. The closing of German-language schools and parallel courses meant that it was becoming harder, and might someday be impossible, for Germans to educate their children in their native language.⁹⁰ If the German language were removed from schools, public

⁸⁵ CZ, "Die Versenkung der Deutschen Flotte", July 5, 1919.

⁸⁶ See CZ, "Ministerkrisis", "Föderalismus", "Das Ende der Koalitionsregierung", "Nationalversammlung in Belgrad", and "Ministerkrise in Belgrad", all from July 5, 1919.

⁸⁷ The kingdom's two largest ethnic nationalities, Serbs and Croats, had largely different ideas about the fundamental nature of the Yugoslav state. The Serb tendency towards a centralized federal government often clashed with the Croatian desire for more autonomy, resulting in a rather fractious political life. See Djokić, ed., *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea*. Despite publicly implying that all South Slavs were in fact simply branches of one tribe, Yugoslavia's very real ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences caused constant political instability throughout the interwar period. Its governing system of proportional representation exhibited these differences quite well, leading to disillusionment with democracy. Such disillusionment would play a major role in leading to the rise of fascist parties and dictatorships in Southern and Eastern Europe. See Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 17-18.

⁸⁸ CZ, "Die Sprachenfrage", February 16, 1922.

⁸⁹ DW, "Die Slawische Gottesdienstsprache und die Deutschen Gemeinden", April 26, 1919. Private Catholic schools, which had many German students, could no longer teach in German, but only Slovene. Anton Scherer, "Die Deutschen in der Untersteiermark, in Ober-Krain, und in der Gottschee", in Ernst Hochberger, Anton Scherer, and Friedrich Spiegel-Schmidt, *Die Deutschen zwischen Karpaten und Krain* (Munich: Langen Müller, 1994), 126.

⁹⁰ DW, "Der Kampf gegen die Deutsche Gymnasialjugend", April 26, 1919.

administration, and even religion, how would they retain their identity, let alone their nationality?⁹¹ Learning the Slovene language, now that the region was governed by a Slavic majority, could be seen as necessary and beneficial to inclusion in the state and society, but not at the expense of their own mother tongue. Equating German culture and identity with the German language highlights the essential primacy of language to nationality in Slovenia. While some German-speakers may have Slavic names or intermarry with ethnic Slovenes, if they spoke German, affiliated with German cultural organizations, and considered themselves Germans, then that is what made them, in their own eyes and in others', German. In this way, the legislated decline and removal of the German language from the Slovene public sphere was also a legislated decline and removal of the German culture, history, and spirit in Slovenia. In short, German-speakers in Slovenia interpreted social policies affecting their native language as an attack on their physical and cultural existence.

While Germans held a sincere fear of losing their language, culture, and possibly even their very ethnic character, some of them nonetheless came to gradually accept their political inclusion in Yugoslavia and wished to complement that fact by becoming socially included as well. The *Deutsche Wacht* reported that, in celebrating May Day in 1919, Germans and Slovenes participated together “without signs of hostility”, a fact that was “glossed over” by the “radical” Slovene press.⁹² Such friendly relations between the two major ethnic groups in Slovenia represented an open rebuttal of the “ruthless nationalist policy” that had imposed “deprivation and menace” upon the German

⁹¹ DW, “Die Slawische Gottesdienstsprache und die Deutschen Gemeinden”, April 26, 1919.

⁹² DW, “Die Maifeier”, May 3, 1919.

minority community.⁹³ Clearly distinguished in this celebration of inter-ethnic peace and cooperation is the separation between the Slovene government and the Slovene people. The German and Slovene peoples came together to celebrate this holiday, displaying how a majority of the two groups can work in tandem to provide a peaceful, stable society without antagonizing each other. In contrast, the “radical” Slovene press, in combination with the Slovene government which had produced “ruthless nationalist” policies, constituted a minority of ultra-chauvinist ethnic Slovenes who desired nothing more than to remove the German presence altogether from Slovenia.

Desire for inclusion in Slovene and Yugoslav society came rather gradually, however. The *Cillier Zeitung* wished the king well on his birthday in 1919, declaring that “we Germans do not wish to stay resentful” on the sidelines of Yugoslav society, but that the “suffering of the recent period” had made them “fill up” with “anxiety over our future.”⁹⁴ Such anxiety was due to being “eliminated” from a society in which Germans had previously “pursued their historical mission” and “played the dominant role” with their numbers and culture. In the same breath as lamenting their fall from the heights of societal and cultural dominance, however, the paper appealed to the king’s “love of justice” for addressing the “suffering that [the Germans] sustained and continue to sustain”⁹⁵ and noted that the birthday celebrations on buildings in Cilli/Celje were “rich” with the Yugoslav national colors.⁹⁶

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ CZ, “Zum Geburtstages des Königs”, July 12, 1919.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ CZ, “Die Geburtstagsfeier des Königs”, July 19, 1919.

This appeal to King Peter I displays the contested and confused nature of German identity as the community adapted to its new life in Yugoslav Slovenia. Mentioning the “historical mission” of the Germans who had “played the dominant role” is at once lamenting those days gone by where the German minority had enjoyed such an overwhelmingly privileged position *vis à vis* the Slovene majority, while at the same time expressing regret over their previous societal role that came at the expense of ethnic Slovenes. Juxtaposing complaints of suffering with celebrating Yugoslavia shows how conflicted the German community was. On the one hand, the Germans’ anger and resentment is seen in how they perceive themselves to have been treated, while, on the other, a hand is extended in good faith to want to be included in the new Yugoslav society and enjoy and contribute to the benefits that would correspond to this inclusion. Both tendencies – anger and resentment on one side, with a desire for inclusion, contribution, and cooperation on the other – were well-represented among the German minority in Slovenia, and both strands struggled to overwhelm the other and become dominant.

On September 10, 1919, the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye was signed, which finalized the post-war borders of the Republic of German-Austria.⁹⁷ The German reaction in Slovenia was decidedly mixed. Sadly acknowledging that “a time-honored, glorious past” had ended, the *Cillier Zeitung* remarked that a new “chapter in the checkered history of the city” had thus begun. In contrast to the *Marburger Zeitung*, which had refused to express an allegiance of loyalty to the Yugoslav state in reaction to the treaty, the *Cillier Zeitung* bluntly stated the options facing Slovenia’s Germans: They could

⁹⁷ MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 256.

either refuse to recognize the Entente's decision and fight it; return to a position of neutrality; or accept the decision and come to terms with reality.⁹⁸ "Which way is the best [for the Germans]?" rhetorically asked the paper, before answering its own question: "We think the first option is wrong, as well as the second one. We think, in the interest of Germandom, that the last [option] is the only correct and possible one."⁹⁹

For the *Cillier Zeitung*, the decision to fully accept the Entente's decision and pledge loyalty to Yugoslavia was the only feasible way for the German minority in Slovenia to achieve its desire of full legal equality:

Only when we consider ourselves full-fledged citizens, when we wholeheartedly accept the Entente's decision, not with joy but honestly and loyally, then we will also be able to ask that we will be legally accorded and factually allocated all rights [owed] as German citizens.¹⁰⁰

Though the decision to fully accept the political reality of being a national minority in Yugoslavia was not the ideal situation for Slovenia's Germans, it was, given their situation, the only feasible one. If, the *Cillier Zeitung* reasoned, Yugoslavia's German element refused to accept this political reality, they would be giving the kingdom's majority a "terrible weapon" to use against the Germans, who were for many Yugoslavs "already a thorn in the eye."¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ CZ, "Das Bekenntnis zum Staate", September 13, 1919.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

The *Cillier Zeitung*'s pledge of allegiance to the Yugoslav state sought not only to placate skeptical Slovene authorities,¹⁰² but also uncertain and agitated ethnic Germans. After clearly spelling out the negative consequences further resistance to the Yugoslav state would accrue, the paper goes on to reassure that part of its German readership that might have been exceptionally unwilling to heed its advice. "We Germans are an orderly element, whose calling was always to build up, not to destroy," it stated, appealing to the more nationalist pride of the region's German-speaking population. Trying to walk the line between drawing the ire of the Yugoslav authorities and soothing its German readership, the *Cillier Zeitung* concluded:

Granted, this is not a sky-high, jubilatory commitment to the state...No one can today demand or expect that from us...but it is honorable and without reserve. It is not dictated out of love, but developed out of political insight and rationality...Our state can earn easily and at one blow the trust, even the love of all its German citizens, if it does not thereupon lay out to de-nationalize us...We want to remain Germans and demand that the state respects this about our will.¹⁰³

Claiming to speak for the "overwhelming majority of the German population", the *Cillier Zeitung* reflects the circumstances facing the Germans of Slovenia in the Fall of 1919. German-Austria and the German Republic had both been defeated in the Great War and signed peace treaties as the losing sides, unable to dictate their will. Despite their preference for becoming Austrian or German citizens, the German-speaking population of Slovenia had become Yugoslav ones. The reassurance that the Germans would not

¹⁰² The editorial claimed that this statement of loyalty was the "will of the overwhelming majority of the German population." Ibid. Despite this pledge by Slovenia's Germans, the Slovene majority would not necessarily be willing to fully accept it at face value. As explained to H. Percival Dodge, United States Ambassador to Yugoslavia: "While in America a Teuton or Magyar considers himself an American as soon as he becomes naturalized as such, in Jugoslavia [sic] and many of the newly constructed states, race is considered first and an often involuntarily acquired citizenship comes second, the Teuton considering himself a German or Austrian having little interest in his new citizenship, and often having little interest in the local official language." Alfred R. Thomson to H. Percival Dodge, August 15, 1922. NARA, RG-59.

¹⁰³ CZ, "Das Bekenntnis zum Staate", September 13, 1919.

have to be happy or excited about this fact demonstrates the strong desire to maintain, as well as an equally as strong fear of losing, their German identity. The claim that the Germans calling had “always” been to “build up, not to destroy” was a way of showing to the Yugoslav authorities that Slovenia’s German minority was willing and able to contribute to the well-being of the new kingdom. But it was also a subtle paean to the nationalist German attitude that saw its history in Slovenia as one of societal and cultural progress come about only through the work, attitude, and culture of Germans.

The Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye held, for Slovenia’s German-speaking minority, several clauses and articles that would be legally-binding and thus help improve their socio-political situation. The part of Article 7 of the treaty that stated that all citizens were equal before the law, meant, the *Cillier Zeitung* stressed, that Germans were allowed to be politically active. German-speakers also took especial note of the treaty’s mention of the free use of language in public and private, as well as the right to “take care of” their German culture by assembling cultural associations.¹⁰⁴

Article 8 of the Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye declared that the minorities of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes had the same rights as others; that is, the right to create their own humanitarian organizations, clubs, and facilities for the support of their fellow “ethnic comrades.” Finally, the *Cillier Zeitung* breathlessly reported, Article 8 allowed the establishment and maintenance of minority private schools, with the purpose of “maintaining” their *Volkstum* “unhindered.” A sticking point for some Germans was in the fine print of the treaty’s clauses on education – Article 8 said that the federal, regional, and municipal government must pay for German humanitarian clubs, facilities,

¹⁰⁴ CZ, “Der Minderheitsschutz Vertrag von St. Germain-en-Laye”, October 6, 1921.

private schools, and other public organizations.¹⁰⁵ The gap between what the treaty promised Slovenia's German minority community and what was likely to be enforced was not lost on the *Cillier Zeitung*, which wryly noted that "it seemed before that the entire Slovene public lacked any notion of (its) international commitments."¹⁰⁶

German Identity in Transition from Multinational Empire to South Slavic Kingdom

German identity during the first several years after the end of the First World War was heavily impacted by external events and social policies that were out of their control. The position of the Germans of Slovenia was "not easy", being "huddled together" in a narrow area and, with German-Austria and the Weimar Republic concerned with their own internal affairs,¹⁰⁷ utterly dependent upon their own power and resources.¹⁰⁸ This notion of being left to fend for themselves, with neither Germany, nor Austria, nor the League of Nations willing to substantively help improve their political situation, served to further heighten a certain strand of nationalism among some ethnic Germans in Slovenia.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Things like runaway inflation and domestic political turmoil were occupying the Weimar German authorities at the time. Anthony Komjathy and Rebecca Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 5. See also Ludwig Zimmermann, *Deutsche Aussenpolitik in der Ära der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Musterschmidt Verlag, 1958), 329-352. For more on Weimar Germany and the *Auslandsdeutsche*, see John Hiden, *The Weimar Republic and the Problem of the Auslandsdeutsche*, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (April 1977), 273-289.

¹⁰⁸ CZ, "Das Deutsche Element in Slowenien", January 3, 1920.

Despite being surrounded by a “loathsome and nasty” Slovene majority, whose “national exuberance” was merely a “maneuver” to punish the local German population, these Germans could yet feel pride; pride that “the Germans in the old Austria achieved cultural and economic value that reached all the people of the monarchy”, that “German culture” had turned the schools in the Slovene lands into prestigious, sought-after institutions and made all of the region’s cities and villages “clean and modern.”¹⁰⁹

In this way, the social policies that impacted the German minorities were a way of singling them out for their unique contributions and cultural worth to the region; the Slovene nationalists who ran the government were merely jealous and vindictive. This reaction to these social policies – policies that restricted the right to vote, to assemble, to use the German language in public – also helped to pick up German-speakers’ spirits as they contemplated their situation through nationalist-tinged lens.

The transition from ethnic majority to ethnic minority had been difficult to endure and adjust to. The impact of social policies that steadily eroded German-speakers’ political rights, public presence, and language and culture, began to add up. Initial reactions of some Germans to the new Yugoslavia of outrage and hostility in 1918 and 1919 gave way to bitterness, resentment, and finally weariness for others by 1920. “You must be blind, deaf, and without judgment”, raged the *Marburger Zeitung*, “if you do not want to admit that our public life and all that is associated with it, is suffering from a deep and dangerous sickness.”¹¹⁰ The effect of all these social policies on the German

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ MZ, “Stammesempfindlichkeiten”, October 3, 1920.

minority meant that, by 1921, German-speakers in Slovenia had barely any political rights.¹¹¹

The *Marburger Zeitung* is, with this editorial, lashing out at its German-speaking readership and attempting to maintain the level of emotion that had first arisen in the aftermath of the end of the Great War. The paper's excoriation of its German-speaking readership suggests that a substantial amount of Germans had either become too weary of or were genuinely indifferent to the impact of the Slovene regional government's social policies on their cultural presence. For the *Marburger Zeitung*, as well as those who agreed with its editorial stance, the "sickness" that was affecting German culture in Slovenia was the result of a concerted, purposeful effort. But in lashing out at those German-speakers who did not view their situation in this way, the paper also highlights the identity and cultural divisions among Slovenia's German minority community – divisions between conservative nationalists, moderate nationalists, and a type of "every-day" German who merely wanted to live their life and was either not aware of or did not care enough about the politics of the time.

In October of 1920, the League of Nations-mandated plebiscite was held in Carinthia to determine the official borders between Yugoslavia and Austria. The designated "Zone A" south of the Drava river resulted in a decision to remain part of Austria, with tens of thousands of self-identified Slovenes voting for the same choice as Germans.¹¹² The reaction of the *Cillier Zeitung* is a window into the conflicted nature of German identity. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the paper's initial response was one of

¹¹¹ Ferenc and Repe, "Die Deutsche Minderheit in Slowenien in der Zwischenkriegzeit", 165.

¹¹² Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 113.

empathy: “The Slovenes”, somberly stated the *Cillier Zeitung*, “have lost a not-insignificant amount of ethnic brothers” due to the plebiscite. “Through this,” the paper continued, “the fate of the Slovene nation has become more similar to that of the German *Volk*.” Slovenes were, according to this perspective, similar to those ethnic Germans who lived “under foreign dominance” and among “enemies of the Germans” – that is, in Alsace, Bohemia, Poland, and elsewhere – and had to “as citizens struggle for their most primitive rights.”¹¹³ The paper concluded its article by happily noting that “some public opinions in Slovenia” had begun to voice the idea that the “local Germans should not be treated overly poorly.”¹¹⁴

Multiple strands of German identity can be seen in the *Cillier Zeitung*’s reaction to the Carinthian plebiscite. Its empathetic response to the plight of those ethnic Slovenes cut off from their homeland implies that some Germans, knowing what it was like to be geographically separated from those who were considered national comrades, understood the sorrow that other Slovenes felt at the result. It also indicates the extent to which some Germans’ identities were not completely tied up in their German-ness; those German-speakers who perhaps were bilingual, had an ethnic-Slovene relative, or simply lacked the nationalist “awareness” that other German-speakers felt so strongly about.

At the same time, the *Cillier Zeitung*’s mentioning of those other places in Europe outside of the Reich where ethnic Germans were located in large numbers served as a reminder to those in Slovenia that the German *Volk* had also been unfairly separated. The difference between the Germans and Slovenes was, despite the paper’s initial claim of

¹¹³ CZ, “Die Kärntner Abstimmung”, October 17, 1920.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

similarity, that the Slovenes who had chosen to stay in Austria had been able to exercise their right for self-determination, while the Germans living outside of the Weimar Republic had not been given that opportunity. As such, those Germans still lived under “foreign dominance” by “enemies” of the German people – and that included the ethnic Germans of Slovenia. Mentioning Bohemia, Alsace, and Poland was as much a reminder as it was a reprimand to those German-speakers in Slovenia that felt something other than nationalist joy at having “won” the plebiscite in favor of Germanism.

The issue of neighboring Austria’s treatment of the ethnic Slovene minority residing there had an impact upon Slovenia’s treatment of its German minority.¹¹⁵ For Slovenia’s Germans, being unable to influence the policies that impacted their lives, Carinthia’s Slovene minority presented a situation where mutual, beneficial treatment for the minority groups on both sides of the border could be pursued.¹¹⁶ Lamenting that previous articles on the condition of Austria’s Slovene minority had been “at best unread” by the Slovene press, the *Cillier Zeitung* expressed a sense of injustice on the part of its German readership by noting how good their Slovene minority counterparts

¹¹⁵ Arnold Suppan calls this “bilateral foreign policy”, in which social policies impacting Austria’s ethnic Slovene minority tried to be reciprocated by the Yugoslav government on their own ethnic German minority in the borderland between the two countries. These reciprocal policies had both positive and negative impacts on their respective minorities; both Slovene national activists in Slovenia and German national activists in Austria sought to exaggerate reports of the other country’s ethnic minority in order to foment irredentism. Neither the Austrian or Yugoslav/Slovenian government much trusted the other in the 1920s, however, and little concrete policies were implemented on either side. See Arnold Suppan, “According to the Principle of Reciprocity: the Minorities in Yugoslav-Austrian Relations, 1918-1938”, in Paul Smith, ed., *Ethnic Groups in International Relations* (Dartmouth: New York University Press, 1991), 235-274. Ostensibly, however, reciprocal concessions in borderland conflicts should lead to their settlement. See Stefan Wolff, *Disputed Territories: The Transnational Dynamics of Ethnic Conflict Settlement* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 34-38.

¹¹⁶ Another motivating factor in this situation was the fact that the Yugoslav government had often “declared an improvement to the situation of the Slovene Germans (was) not possible so long as the Carinthian Slovenes did not receive more generous minority rights.” Reimann, “Für echte Deutsche gibt es bei uns genügend Rechte”, 144. Indeed, the Slovene minority in Carinthia played a “decisive role” in the way the Slovene regional government treated its German minority. Nečak, *Die “Deutschen” in Slowenien*, 12.

had it: “In the bilingual part of [Austrian] Carinthia, there exist 85 bilingual schools in which the first grade is exclusively Slovene. The population is overwhelmingly in agreement with this system of bilingual schools because the knowledge of both regional languages is a necessity.”¹¹⁷ The paper went on to detail how the Austrian government had established “purely Slovene schools” in areas where solely Slovenes lived and that there were a further 42 Slovene advanced training school associations.¹¹⁸

For some Germans, the difference in treatment between the two countries of their respective minorities was so obvious that it was almost a cruel joke that the Slovene press could claim otherwise. The “Carinthian Slovenes have full rights” as proscribed them by the minorities treaties, incredulously pointed out the *Cillier Zeitung*, before claiming that the “Germans in Yugoslavia would be completely happy to have the same!”¹¹⁹ From this perspective, that the German-speaking majority in Austria treated its Slovene-speaking minority according to the international treaties it had signed – opening Slovene-language schools and allowing Slovene cultural associations – was not simply a reflection of the lack of similar pro-minority policies coming out of Slovenia, but was also a testament to the national character of Germans; where Germans had political power, rights were upheld, democracy flourished, and order reigned. For Slovenia’s German-speakers who ascribed to this view, Austria’s treatment of its Slovene minority had only to be compared with what they had experienced under Slovene-majority rule to be confirmed.

¹¹⁷ CZ, “Die Lage der Slowenen in Kärnten”, January 31, 1924.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Slovenia's Germans continued to seek the fulfillment of the promise of equality before the law, though they did not have the political power to achieve this without reliance upon either the federal Yugoslav authorities or outside entities such as the League of Nations. King Alexander had declared that all citizens, regardless of ethnicity or religion, to have "guaranteed, equal rights for ever" – a statement that the Germans of Slovenia accepted with "trust and confidence."¹²⁰ German-speakers tried to bring the king's attention to their situation by appealing to his sense of non-sectarian Yugoslav unity. "The unfair treatment that German citizens in the S-H-S Kingdom receive... must be astonishing to anyone who looks with clear eyes", opined the *Cillier Zeitung*. "We German citizens in this area have the same duties and should enjoy the same rights" as everyone else. Slovenia's Germans "pay our taxes and fulfill our military duties at least as well as our Slavic neighbors", but nonetheless felt aggrieved when it came to school education policy, cultural associations, press freedom, and state hiring.

The *Cillier Zeitung*'s previous "cordial reception of the heir to the throne" should not, however, have been taken as a "sign that we have accepted our current situation", as the "leading Slovene press seems to have taken" it. "We participated so fully with the heir's visit," explained the paper, "because our ruler and his German subjects... set complete trust in the capability and reliability of the German citizens in this kingdom."¹²¹ Germans wanted to be treated the same as their South Slavic co-citizens, and they wanted to utilize their unique skills to help contribute to their new society. By speaking directly to the king, and making frequent deferential references to themselves as citizens and

¹²⁰ CZ, "Gleichberechtigung", September 19, 1920.

¹²¹ Ibid.

subjects, the German-speaking community was attempting to show their desire for inclusion in Yugoslavia, while at the same time making it clear that they still considered themselves to be separate, with some even feeling superior. That the *Cillier Zeitung* would address the king directly and not the local regional government displays the desperation and frank concern that the German minority in Slovenia felt at the perceived erosion of their culture.

The Legacy of the Habsburg Empire in the New Slovenia

German identity was, however, as well largely shaped by the nature of the history of society and culture in the Slovene lands. A *Cillier Zeitung* article from February 1, 1920, bristled at the accusation that ethnic Slovenes who intermarried with Germans, or who had a Slavic name and spoke predominantly German, were “apostates.”¹²² “We consider it to be the most original right for mixed-language parents to decide for themselves the nationality of their children...(and) in the Slovenian language area, mixed-marriages have taken place for ages!”¹²³

The paper explained, “It will not cross any German’s mind to designate a Slovene who carries a German name an ‘apostate’, as long as he represents the Slovenian culture.” Under the Habsburg monarchy, “assimilation was not rare”, but the “worst elements were not it who attached themselves to the German cultural sphere in order to partake in the goods of the German culture.” From a certain German nationalist perspective, when a

¹²² CZ, “Renegaten”, February 1, 1920.

¹²³ Ibid.

Slovene joined the German cultural sphere, this did not make them an “apostate” from the Slovene cultural sphere, but rather was merely the completion of ascension to a “higher culture.”¹²⁴ “We are convinced,” concluded the *Cillier Zeitung*, “that there are many understanding and quiet-thinking men under the Slovenes who advocate that the German culture here, as an earlier example and model, should not be chased away but on the contrary, maintained and promoted.”¹²⁵

Slovene claims of apostasy on those who “joined” the Germans and the subsequent response of the Germans show much about German identity, society, and culture in Slovenia. Historically, marriages between Germans and Slovenes occurred with enough frequency for nationalists among both ethnicities to try to exploit these events and “win” the war of cultures. For many Germans in Slovenia, intermarriage was simply a matter of spending the rest of their life with the person they loved. But for some nationalists, this was an occasion to “increase” the number of Germans in Slovenia while “decreasing” the number of Slovenes, who in any case should be happy about this loss since Slovenes who “joined” the German culture were advancing their own. While this historical trend continued in post-Versailles Slovenia, the Slovene majority who ran the government were no longer inclined to accept the interpretation that their culture was inferior to the Germans’.

Despite the nationalist overtones of the *Cillier Zeitung*’s editorial, there existed multiple German identities in Slovenia in the first several years after the end of the Great War. Most Germans and Slovenes in mixed-language marriages did not view themselves

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

as part of the culture war being waged between the two ethnic groups, but the fact that others did interpret their society in this way meant that they were stuck between a rock and a hard place. What did it mean for mixed-marriages when Slovenes called you an apostate and Germans declared the victory of a higher culture? With whom did they identify? What was their identity? Some considered themselves Carinthians (or Styrians, or Carniolans) who happened to speak German or Slovene. Others could not be moved to care about the nationalist narratives that other Slovenes or Germans were pushing on them.

The historical interaction between Germans and Slovenes in the old Austria-Hungary made it difficult for some Slovenes and Germans to come together in the new Yugoslavia. The Slovene-language newspaper *Jugoslavija* wrote about how “the war is over...and Austria is fallen (but) the Austrian aristocracy remains; there are so many nobles that they are taking Slovene women.”¹²⁶ For German nationalists in Slovenia, this kind of article in a Slavic paper only served to heighten their sense that the Slovene government’s minority policies were designed with vengeance in mind.

Part of this history had been a strong affiliation with the Austrian Empire’s Germanic character, and the contemporary Republic of Austria held much sway for some Germans in Slovenia. The *Marburger Zeitung*, for example, in one early 1920 edition dedicated three articles on the same page to stories concerning Austria, more than any other single subject.¹²⁷ Some Germans lamented the times when the “white-blue-red [of

¹²⁶ CZ, “Der Krieg ist Beendet”, April 8, 1920.

¹²⁷ MZ, “Die Zirkus-Briefe”, January 15, 1920. See also MZ, “Ein Kondolationsbesuch bei Dr. Renner”, January 15, 1920, and “Die Verfassungsfrage in Österreich”, January 15, 1920.

Carniola] and black-red-gold [of the Austrian Empire] were symbols of greater national festivities and were harmless differences in opinion.”¹²⁸

Germans resented what they viewed as the hypocritical stance taken by the Slovene government toward their minority’s opinions of Austria and Yugoslavia. “We can demand of the Germans,” sarcastically intoned the *Cillier Zeitung* after some German houses were criticized for not displaying the Yugoslav flag on a national holiday, “that they become peaceful citizens in our state[;] we may not force them, however, to be enthusiastic about it and to manifest for it.”¹²⁹ On May 27, 1921, a new German-South Slavic association met in Prague. The *Cillier Zeitung* noted that the “Slovenes have naturally come into closer contact with the German culture through their earlier belonging to the Habsburg Empire...The Slovenes, who have lived an entire millennium in the German cultural sphere, have grown most tightly with it together.”¹³⁰

Not all Germans saw their historical role from the perspective of a Pan-German or nationalist viewpoint, however. Rejecting the Pan-German idea of a culture war between Slavs and Germans, many German-speakers in Slovenia sympathized with those Slavic groups who were also minorities in countries outside of their ancestral homeland.¹³¹ The “hate” that some Slovenes had for Germans was, for some, nothing more than a “pure

¹²⁸ CZ, “Nationalfarben und Anders”, June 27, 1920.

¹²⁹ CZ, “Die Staatsfeiertage und die Deutschen”, July 9, 1922.

¹³⁰ CZ, “Deutsch-Südslawische Gesellschaft”, June 12, 1921.

¹³¹ CZ, “Das Kapitel Deutschtum”, July 23, 1922.

fantasy”, egged on by the “German-hating French” and a “European worldview of nationalism” that produced “fear of other nations.”¹³²

German Political and Cultural Developments

An electoral law enacted just a few months before the first Yugoslav federal election in 1920 took away voting rights for any citizen that had declared for a foreign country at the Paris peace treaties, a stipulation that disproportionately affected Slovenia's German population.¹³³ The stripping of Germans' voting rights led the *Cillier Zeitung* to wonder if it “had occurred to anyone in the old Austria” to take the right to vote away from “citizens of a different nationality or even an entire nation?” With bitter irony, the paper commented that it had “recently been denied us to constitute ourselves as a nation”, but that “it appears that we are considered a nation, so long as our exclusion from the right to vote comes into question.”¹³⁴

Partly in order to redress the political weakness of the German minority in Yugoslavia, a new German cultural association called the *Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund* (Swabian-German Cultural Alliance, SDKB) formed with the goal of uniting

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Many German-speakers in Slovenia had declared for German-Austria, which at the peace conference claimed Lower Styria and Carinthia for its own. Suppan, “Zur Lage der Deutschen in Slowenien zwischen 1918 und 1938”, 184.

¹³⁴ CZ, “Unser Wahlrecht”, March 25, 1920. The German minority in Yugoslavia was not accorded group rights, only individual rights. As such, minority rights were formulated in the framework of obligations of the state to all its inhabitants. Suppan, “Zur Lage der Deutschen in Slowenien zwischen 1918 und 1938”, 176.

all German-speaking citizens of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.¹³⁵ The German reaction to this in Slovenia was extremely positive. The formation of the SDKB, which “should guarantee protection and shelter for all Germans in Yugoslavia,” gave the Germans of Slovenia a “gleam of light in the dark of our grief” that “warmed and animated” their hopes.¹³⁶ The *Kulturbund* was, for Slovenia’s German minority community, the “first visible sign that we Germans in Slovenia also have citizenship”, as well as giving them the power to “develop our national characteristics and culture without being hindered from above or below.”¹³⁷

The formation of the *Kulturbund* was a symbol of a unified German identity in Yugoslavia, which had heretofore not existed. It represented a newfound socio-political power for Slovenia’s German minority, who were hopeful that it could help stem the tide of perceived erosion of German culture through actions from the Slovene national government that, for example, eliminated all municipal advisory boards in Cilli/Celje except for culture and education, thereby taking sole control over education from the city’s magistrate.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ CZ, “Genehmigung der Satzungen des Schwäbisch-Deutschen Kulturbundes”, May 30, 1920. For more on the founding of the *Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund*, see Rasimus, *Als Fremde im Vaterland*, 16-20. A report from the American legation in Belgrade to the Secretary of State noted that the *Kulturbund* was founded “in order to counteract this violent and arbitrary educational policy on the part of their rulers” and “in an endeavor to protect themselves.” John Dyneley Prince to Frank B. Kellogg, January 25, 1927. NARA, RG-59.

¹³⁶ CZ, “Zur Gründenden Hauptversammlung des Schwäbisch-Deutschen Kulturbundes”, June 20, 1920.

¹³⁷ CZ, “Konsolidierung”, July 14, 1921.

¹³⁸ CZ, “Die Autonomie von Cilli und Pettau”, August 8, 1920.

But the *Kulturbund*'s power to influence social policy was decidedly limited.¹³⁹ Slovenia's Germans, who constituted a "considerable percentage" of the region's cities, felt that those same cities projected a decidedly monolingual image, and were forced to watch as German-language signs were removed by officials from the street and private businesses and replaced with monolingual Slovene ones. In practice, this meant that German cultural associations and other social clubs could not post information about their organizations in public in the primary language of the club itself. The public removal of the German language gave rise to a fear that German literature would join the German culture in being "eradicated" from Slovenia.¹⁴⁰

German Views of Slovenia and Yugoslavia

German identity was also shaped by views of Slovenia and Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia's failure to "completely approve" of the Treaty of St. Germain was compared with the example of Czechoslovakia, who, in the eyes of some Slovene German-speakers, treated their German minority better: "There are no restrictions allowed against the free use of a preferred language on the side of any Czechoslovak minority, be it in private aspects, be it in the religious sphere, the press, publications of any kind, or in public

¹³⁹ For one, its links with the Weimar Republic's *Deutsche Auslandsinstitut* and *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* helped to "create difficulties" with the Yugoslav authorities. Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 126. The VDA, though a mainstream organization, nonetheless "portrayed foreign governments in a hostile light, as waging a continual war of cultural extermination against beleaguered Germans abroad." Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 40.

¹⁴⁰ CZ, "Fremdindustrie", June 20, 1920.

gatherings.”¹⁴¹ That Czechoslovakia’s German-speaking minority had their own complaints about the state of minority policy in that country¹⁴² does not diminish the substance of Slovenia’s Germans’ comparison; the perception of their own state of affairs in Slovenia as being worse than that of the Bohemian Germans highlights rather just how poorly Slovenia’s Germans thought they were being treated.

Due to the overwhelming reliance that the German minority had upon the enforcement of the obligations of the international minority treaties that should have protected their rights, Slovenia’s failure to live up to these expectations influenced as well how Germans viewed their new country. In April of 1921, the regional parliament in Austrian Styria called upon Yugoslavia to “protect the Germans” of that country. Lest the Slovene government object in response to the Austrians’ treatment of their own Slovene minority, the *Cillier Zeitung* issued a pre-emptive declaration: “We Germans in Slovenia have a vested interest in getting the protection of national minorities finally officially recognized by the state... We will certainly never hesitate to call for Slovenes in Austria to have the right to vote in Austria as long as this right is also not the case in our state.”¹⁴³ Going further on that point, however, the paper went on to say that

It is self-evident that the inadequacies in the enforcement of the internationally-guaranteed minority protection cannot be of long duration. Since the principles of equality of all citizens without difference of lineage and of the self-determination of every individual pertaining to his own nationality and that of his children must

¹⁴¹ CZ, “Internationaler Minderheitenschutz”, January 13, 1921.

¹⁴² Czechoslovakia’s German-speaking community, for example, resented the Czech implication that they were “settlers” and “colonists.” Smelser, *The Sudeten Problem*, 7. They also felt aggrieved at the promotion of the “Czechoslovak” nation above their own, despite their own history in the region being more closely-tied to the Czechs than the Slovaks and being, in fact, a larger proportion of the population than the Slovaks themselves. Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed*, 65-68.

¹⁴³ CZ, “Schutz der SHS-Deutschen”, April 18, 1921.

and will, over the course of time, in all democratic countries, and Yugoslavia as well as German-Austria will want to be recognized as such, achieve this breakthrough.¹⁴⁴

In attempting to be equally condemning of both German-Austria and Yugoslavia for not fulfilling their legal obligations inscribed in the international minorities treaties, the *Cillier Zeitung* nonetheless goes a step further in both emphasizing the Slovene failure to fulfill their obligations more so than the Austrian, as well as subtly opining that Yugoslavia is not and would never be a truly democratic state until it completely fulfilled its legal obligations of guaranteeing full equality for its German-speaking minority.

1921 – A New Census and a New Constitution

The census of 1921 was of exceptional importance to the Germans of Slovenia, and in fact further enhanced the view of Yugoslavia as undemocratic. Since a precedent had been set under the Habsburgs in conducting censuses that some had perceived to give disproportionate favor to the Austrian Empire's German-speakers,¹⁴⁵ Slovenia's Germans, now themselves a national minority, expected the census in the new Yugoslavia to be implemented in such a way as to diminish their own numbers.¹⁴⁶ This expectation was partially reinforced when, in February 1921, the "radical *Jugoslavija*" reported that "the German census agents had (used) the well-known Austrian methods to

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ The 1910 Austrian census had identified respondents' nationality by *Umgangssprache* (language of daily use), which was viewed as increasing the number of German-speakers since many non-Germans often spoke German at work while speaking their native language at home. Heimann, *The State that Failed*, 64. The empire's Czech population was the most persuaded of an underlying motive to inflate the number of Germans.

¹⁴⁶ CZ, "Volkszählung", January 27, 1921.

the Slavs' detriment and the Germans' advantage" in the Gottschee/Kočevje district. In response, local officials intervened and reappointed Slovene commissars. The *Jugoslavija* concluded that it was "sad, that even some Slovenes are so little self-conscious" that they "rashly accommodate any pressure and register themselves as German."¹⁴⁷

German complaints about the methods the census used were based on the major difference from the way in which censuses were conducted in Austria-Hungary; namely, that the Yugoslav census' designation of "mother tongue" rather than "language of daily use" unfairly diminished the number of Germans while disproportionately inflating that of the Slovenes. Stating that "10 years ago, Germans were majorities in cities" and that this German urban majority seemed "unshakeable", the *Cillier Zeitung* incredulously wondered how it was that, in that same time period, Marburg/Maribor could have gone from 22,000 Germans and 4,000 Slovenes in 1910 to 21,000 Slovenes and 6,500 Germans in 1921. The paper went on to accuse the Slovene and Yugoslav governments of replacing the "German census commissions" when "the numbers (didn't) go their way." The paper reasoned that the logical explanation for the vastly lower number of Germans in Slovenia was due to "government interference and revision."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ CZ, "Revision der Volkszählung in der Kočevjer Deutschen Sprachinsel", February 17, 1921. "In focusing so determinedly on the census results, both sides acted as if the census could have reflected an authentic, essential truth about national relations in South Styria...Both Slovene and German nationalists imagined the situation as follows: authentic members of one nation were coerced into reporting themselves falsely as members of another nation. Institutional pressure from sources...rounded out the explanation for why true members of one nation could have 'gone over' to another nation. Yet in the end the census did not measure national loyalty but language use, and enough inhabitants of the region seemed to have been conversant in both languages to switch sides, whatever their reasons." Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 137.

¹⁴⁸ CZ, "Ramsch", February 20, 1921.

While the use of “mother tongue” instead of “language of daily use” in the Yugoslav census undoubtedly had an impact upon the statistical population of Germans in Slovenia,¹⁴⁹ in all likelihood the largest single reason for the significant drop in the amount of Germans in Slovenia in 1921 from 1910 was due to the previous years’ mass removal of German-speakers from public and administrative positions.¹⁵⁰ Regardless of the reasons, however, for why Slovenia’s German population so drastically fell from its prewar numbers, the perception among some members of the German community was that this was overwhelmingly the result of a purposeful attempt by an undemocratic state to erase its German presence.¹⁵¹ Such a perception at a time when the new South Slav kingdom was just beginning its newly-established life meant that the important project of minority inclusion into society continued to struggle.

Despite the presence of international minority treaties meant to protect the cultural and linguistic existence of ethnic minorities, the 1921 Yugoslav constitution had a noticeable lack of explicit guarantees for minority protection.¹⁵² The 1921 constitution was partly well-received by Slovenia’s German community, who viewed it as an

¹⁴⁹ Karner, *Die Deutschsprachige Volksgruppe in Slowenien*, 31-32. Dušan Nećak argues that this is the primary reason for the “statistical” decline in the number of Germans in Slovenia. Nećak, *Die “Deutschen” in Slowenien*, 9.

¹⁵⁰ In a report to the United States Department of State, John Dyneley Prince wrote that in Slovenia “the Austrians counted 100,000 Germans, but the Yugoslavs reckon only 40,000 of these people.” He explained this “great discrepancy” as due to “the fact that many real Germans of this territory, who for commercial reasons are bilingual, now prefer, for obvious political causes, to count themselves as Slavs under the present regime, although they still continue to use the German language among themselves.” John Dyneley Prince to Frank B. Kellogg, January 25, 1927. NARA, RG-59.

¹⁵¹ This perception was reinforced by the Slovene government’s counting only “true Germans” as registered in the census; that is, only those who had a German first name *and* last name, children of “true” German parents, who had learned German as a first language, *and* had been “recognized by neighboring Slovenes as being German.” Reimann, “Für echte Deutsche gibt es bei uns genügend Rechte”, 143-144.

¹⁵² Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 125. The constitution actually contained no mention of the word “minority” at all. Ferenc and Repe, “Die Deutsche Minderheit in Slowenien in der Zwischenkriegszeit”, 164.

“historic” occasion to be celebrated with their “Slavic cohabitants.” But the lack of explicit minority protection guarantees worried them, as well as the fact that the constitution had not received the assent of a majority of representatives in parliament and that it had been “almost exclusively written by Serb-language representatives.” The “German element in Yugoslavia...through the taking away of voting rights, was not in a position to work together on the constitution.”¹⁵³

Some Germans in Slovenia felt that, despite the constitution’s flaws, there were opportunities to contribute in a unique way. Once their “existence of Germandom” in Yugoslavia was secured, Slovenia’s Germans would then be able to act as “agents in the service of our new Fatherland” to forge “relationships with the ethnic Germans outside the state” that would benefit both sides.¹⁵⁴ In this way, a new type of German identity began to take shape in Yugoslavia. This German identity had one foot firmly placed in the ancestral homeland of Germany and Austria, with the other in the new home in Yugoslavia and Slovenia. By embracing both German and Slavic Europe, Slovenia’s Germans were creating a new type of citizen and nationalist, one who was both law-abiding and respectful of Yugoslavia while also being proud of the accomplishments of the German culture.

¹⁵³ CZ, “Odium”, June 23, 1921.

¹⁵⁴ CZ, “Konsolidierung”, July 14, 1921.

Formation of the *Partei der Deutschen* and the Election of 1923

In early 1922, so that they would not have to simply accept the adverse changes affecting them that had been implemented over the course of 1921, the *Partei der Deutschen im Königreich der Serben, Kroaten und Slowenen* was founded. The *Partei der Deutschen* (PDD) was intended to give political voice to Yugoslavia's Germans in ways that the SDKB could not, without differentiating between religion, class, or province.¹⁵⁵ The aspect of religion was an important one, as many Germans in Slovenia, who were predominantly Catholic, viewed the leadership of the SDKB with suspicion, as they were perceived to be largely Protestant.¹⁵⁶ The PDD would also help to give a more realistic weight to the kingdom's German-speaking population, whose "economic and cultural significance" went "well beyond" their headcount.¹⁵⁷

The Slovene press reacted with "unfriendliness" and "suspicion" to the founding of the PDD.¹⁵⁸ To push back against this negative reaction, the *Cillier Zeitung* explained what the founding of the party could mean for Germans and Yugoslavia:

[The existence of the PDD] could appear sobering for the strife among the founding nations, what predestined our cultural and economic strength...The party could open the eyes of the founders [of Yugoslavia] and make them aware of the real, that is, the (country's) social needs...But that is just one side of our duty...We are also clearly bound to play a facilitator role in the spiritual, cultural, and economic (spheres) between our country and the highly-cultivated German states.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ CZ, "Wir und die Partei der Deutschen", February 9, 1922.

¹⁵⁶ Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 130.

¹⁵⁷ CZ, "Wir und die Partei der Deutschen", February 9, 1922.

¹⁵⁸ CZ, "Von der Deutschen Partei", February 12, 1922.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

The *Partei der Deutschen*, then, was to act as an intermediary agent to bring about resolution between both the kingdom's own conflicted factions and its German-speaking neighbors. As such, the PDD reflects the strand of German nationalism and identity that developed in response to the adaption to the Yugoslav state.

Despite the PDD's purpose of uniting Yugoslavia's German-speaking community behind a common political party, its founding also laid bare the differences in identity between Germans in Slovenia and those in the rest of the kingdom. The *Cillier Zeitung*, in a reply to alleged Slovene critics who said that the region's Germans should not join the new party because its interests and culture were different from those in the Banát and Bačka, stated that "coming together to solve economic problems helps everyone."¹⁶⁰ The PDD's emphasis on not differentiating based on class shows that, for many Germans in Slovenia, their identification with the upper class and wealthier lifestyles contrasted sharply with the more rural and agricultural identity of the rest of the kingdom's German-speakers.

The motto of the PDD was "*Staatstreu und Volkstreu*" (loyal to state and *Volk*), representing two different forms of German identity and nationalism in interwar Slovenia.¹⁶¹ The *Volkstreu* served to placate those German nationalists who considered themselves spiritually part of the living body of the German *Volk*, while the *Staatstreu* reassured those Germans who did not feel such ill-will towards Slovenia and wanted to contribute to their new state and get on with their life. At the same time, the motto

¹⁶⁰ CZ, "Zur Parteifrage", February 19, 1922.

¹⁶¹ CZ, "Rascher Ausbau", March 5, 1922.

reflects the newer, unique, more ambitious German identity being fashioned of intermediary agent in the country.

The political program of the PDD called for the “enforcement of the constitutionally-guaranteed basic rights”, including the “freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, freedom to assemble and form associations, academic freedom”, as well as a “correct and uninfluenced census.”¹⁶² As well, the PDD sought the “guaranteed right to politically organize” itself for the fulfillment of the Germans’ “special cultural, national, and economic duties as an institutional *Volkstum*.” Such a right would guarantee that “every citizen” would have the freedom to “determine for himself his own ethnic affiliation.”¹⁶³ The desire to declare for oneself one’s ethnic affiliation was a response to the so-called “name analysis”, which was an education policy in Slovenia that put students into Slovene-speaking schools if they had a Slovene name, regardless of whether they actually spoke Slovene or considered themselves ethnically Slovene.¹⁶⁴

The federal election of 1923 was the first time in Yugoslavia that Slovenia’s Germans were allowed to vote. As such, their exhilarated reaction shows how much it meant to them to have this fundamental right. The past four years had seen the Germans,

¹⁶² CZ, “Programm der Partei der Deutschen des Königreichs der Serben, Kroaten und Slowenen welches am ersten Parteitage in Hatzfeld am 17. Dezember Angenommen Wurde”, January 4, 1923.

¹⁶³ CZ, “Besonderer Teil”, January 4, 1923.

¹⁶⁴ Suppan, “Zur Lage der Deutschen in Slowenien zwischen 1918 und 1938”, 180. As John Dyneley Prince explained in a report sent to the State Department in Washington, D.C.: “...that is, wherever (the Yugoslav authorities) found family names which seemed to them to be Slavonic among German-speaking families, the children of such a family were compelled to go to the Slavonic schools. So far was this arbitrary policy carried out that even parents named Hoffman and Schultz were compelled to send their children to Serbian schools, if the school authorities considered that these names could have the slightest connection with apparently corresponding Serbian personal names... Upon the basis of such absurd and illegal alterations, the children of these people would be forced to go to a Serbian school.” John Dyneley Prince to Frank B. Kellogg, January 25, 1927. NARA, RG-59.

“apparently with success”, viewed as “irredentists” in Belgrade. “Our declarations of loyalty were described with derision as empty words, as lies.” Despite their relief over being allowed to exercise their democratic voting rights, Slovenia’s Germans nonetheless recognized that their impact on the country’s politics would be small.¹⁶⁵

The Germans of Slovenia, in response to the election, elected to form their own regional party called the *Deutsch-Wirtschaftliche Partei* (German-Economic Party). The new party, unique to Slovenia, would have more specifically local political aims. “We believe that every man is completely aware of the importance of this decision for his personal future, for the present and future of his child and his family, [and] for the present and future of all Germandom in this country.” Similar to the larger *Partei der Deutschen*, the *Deutsch-Wirtschaftliche Partei* sought to contribute to the “great works of development of our common South Slavic fatherland.” To avoid any ambiguity, the new party declared itself in no uncertain terms to be “loyal citizens.”¹⁶⁶ The *Cillier Zeitung* ran large-font ads, urging their readers to vote for the party,¹⁶⁷ thereby reinforcing the notion that the *Deutsch-Wirtschaftliche Partei* represented the political interests of the entirety of Slovenia’s German-speaking community just as the *Cillier Zeitung* represented the social and cultural expression of the entire minority group.

The election on March 18, 1923 resulted in gains for the (Serbian) Radicals and Croatian Republican Peasant Party, at the expense of the Yugoslav Democrats.¹⁶⁸ The

¹⁶⁵ CZ, “Zum Wahlkampf”, February 1, 1923.

¹⁶⁶ CZ, “Eigene Wahlwerber”, February 22, 1923.

¹⁶⁷ CZ, “Werfet Eure Kugeln in die 6. Kiste!”, March 8, 1923.

¹⁶⁸ Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 135.

Partei der Deutschen elected 8 members, with over 40,000 votes. The German community in Slovenia “achieved what we wanted to achieve: 6,000 men with voting power have proven to the world that the much-maligned...Germandom in beautiful Styria does, in fact, exist.”¹⁶⁹ While the *Cillier Zeitung* was jubilant about the 6,000 “men who did their duty” in the city, it had harsh words for those who “were too comfortable, who could not think through the importance of the matter” and did not vote or voted for another party: “We are confident that, at the next election, every man will fulfill his duty.”¹⁷⁰

In this way, the *Cillier Zeitung* represents one way in which German identity was tied to politics – good, patriotic Germans had the duty to vote for a German party that would serve to protect Slovenia’s German culture. But the obverse of this coin is that there were Germans who did not tie their German identity to the *Deutsch-Wirtschaftliche Partei* or the *Partei der Deutschen*; despite protestations to the contrary, some German-speakers who did not identify with the conservative nationalist worldview were unconvinced that voting for a Slavic party would harm Slovenia’s Germans.

The German community established the *Politisch-Wirtschaftlichen Verein der Deutschen Sloweniens* (Political-Economic Association of Germans in Slovenia) in the fall of 1923.¹⁷¹ The purpose of the new political association was the “elucidation of the Germans of Slovenia in political, national, and economic affairs and ensuring their ethnic and economic rights according to the principle ‘*Staatstreu* and *Volkstreu*.’” It was

¹⁶⁹ CZ, “Nach den Wahlen”, March 22, 1923.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ CZ, “Vom Politisch-Wirtschaftlichen Verein der Deutschen Sloweniens”, September 6, 1923.

expected that, with the formation of this new organization, that every German in Slovenia would fulfill their “duty” and become a member of the *Politisch-Wirtschaftliche Verein der Deutschen Sloweniens*. To reassure those who might have anticipated political reprisals for joining, the leadership claimed that “no one has anything to fear, since our slogan is ‘*Volkstreu* but also *Staatstreu*’.”¹⁷² By taking the motto “*Volkstreu* and *Staatstreu*”, the *Politisch-Wirtschaftliche Verein* was attempting to unite the disparate strands of German identity and nationalism in Slovenia in order to form a stronger political front for advocating on behalf of the German community’s minority rights.¹⁷³

Developments in Schools and the *Deutsches Haus*

On April 17, 1924, the SDKB was dissolved on recommendation by the Education Minister due to allegedly “overstepping the statutorily-defined” solely “cultural activity” prerequisite and for espousing political views. The dissolution caused “deep outrage” among the German community in Slovenia. “One is generally of the opinion that the government wanted to, in this brutal way, get back at the German delegates but at the same time keep the opportunity open to secure the support of the German delegates” by reinstating the club.¹⁷⁴ Such political machinations and, from their perspective, blatantly illegal maneuvers enhanced the view prevalent in some quarters of

¹⁷² CZ, “Tätigkeitsbericht des Politisch-Wirtschaftlichen Vereines der Deutschen in Slowenien”, October 4, 1923.

¹⁷³ The association could claim 3,000 members in Marburg/Maribor only six months after its establishment. Such political activity gave Slovene nationalists justification for doing more to diminish the German influence in society, as they were clearly flourishing if they could so quickly grow an organized political entity. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 243.

¹⁷⁴ CZ, “Auflösung des Schwäbisch-Deutschen Kulturbundes”, April 17, 1924.

Slovenia's German minority of the undemocratic and erratic nature of the Yugoslav government.

A proposed change in education policy brought up in the spring of 1924 caused a certain reaction among the German community in Slovenia,¹⁷⁵ whose educational situation remained different from those of other German-speakers in the kingdom.¹⁷⁶ The new law would end the teaching of the German language in elementary schools in Slovenia, and only be reinstated in "exceptional" cases where parents specifically requested it. For German parents, relying upon the "good mood" of the Education Minister for something that was guaranteed by the constitution was ominous, indeed.¹⁷⁷

German concerns about schools in Slovenia had, by the end of 1924, not relented. While German students and families had to endure their schools closing and loss of language, "Slovene families (did) not see fit to have their children stop learning German. Slovene fathers send their children to foreign German schools, while considering German-language songs 'provocation'."¹⁷⁸ For some German parents who had gone out of their way to show the Slovene government that "all our children will speak both languages", the decree by the Education Minister was unfair but "unsurprising" given the past several years' events. "The Slovene leaders have told the Serbs so many bad things about the evil Germans that the minister perhaps believes to have [done] a special favor

¹⁷⁵ CZ, "Der Volksschulgesetzentwurf", April 24, 1924.

¹⁷⁶ This is not to say that other German-speakers in Yugoslavia were satisfied with minority education policy. In Serbia in 1921, for example, regional and religious schools were expropriated and Serb-language teachers brought in, with the expropriated properties going uncompensated. Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 127-128.

¹⁷⁷ CZ, "Der Volksschulgesetzentwurf", April 24, 1924.

¹⁷⁸ CZ, "Die Deutsche Sprache in den Slowenischen Mittelschulen", December 25, 1924.

with the abrogation of the frowned-upon German language.”¹⁷⁹ The Germans of Slovenia were simply not politically powerful enough to influence their region’s education policy, and none of their actions were enough to change the minds of the, from their perspective, Slovene nationalists in the government.

The ongoing issue of the *Deutsches Haus* in Cilli/Celje caused some Germans’ views of the Slovene government as radical and anti-democratic to become entrenched. The “blind hatred of the opposing press and other public statements” concerning the *Deutsches Haus* infuriated some Germans, who resented claims that the *Deutsches Haus* was a “political business of German” nationalist activity. For these Germans, the expropriation of the *Deutsches Haus* was equivalent to a “legal title of theft and rape.”¹⁸⁰

For the Germans of Cilli/Celje, the *Deutsches Haus* represented more than just a gathering place for cultural activities, but was also “German cultural property” which could not be “(made) Slovenian” by a simple change of ownership.¹⁸¹ This view of the *Deutsches Haus* was incompatible, however, with the legal argument for German ownership of the property, as the *Cillier Zeitung* argued that “since the existence of the house, only the [city’s] men’s choir” used it as its office headquarters, and could in no way be considered a paramilitary organization (*Kampfverein*).¹⁸² While the *Deutsches*

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ CZ, “Zum Steuer der Wahrheit”, August 17, 1924.

¹⁸¹ CZ, “Eine Richtigsstellung”, September 14, 1924.

¹⁸² Ibid.

Haus may have, to the outsider, been merely a communal point for social gatherings, the corporation behind its funding was the German nationalist organization, the *Südmark*.¹⁸³

The issue of the *Deutsches Haus* and the dissolution of the SDKB were just one aspect of a perceived assault on German culture in 1924, which also suffered political setbacks in the Cilli/Celje municipal elections in the fall. Before the election, the Slovene newspaper *Nova Doba* expressed disbelief that the Germans would consider joining their local party with a Slovene one to form a coalition in the upcoming municipal election. The Germans, explained the *Cillier Zeitung*, “associate themselves as Germans because they are everywhere antagonized and discriminated against as Germans.”¹⁸⁴

The *Cillier Zeitung*’s adamant refutation of the idea that Germans could not vote for a Slavic party stands in clear contrast to their stance during the 1923 federal election, when they stated that Slavic parties could never truly represent German interests.¹⁸⁵ Such an about-face shows how flexible German identity could be – able to change depending on the circumstances, on when and how it could be useful. For Cilli/Celje’s German-speaking population, the municipal elections represented an opportunity to join with the

¹⁸³ Suppan, “Zur Lage der Deutschen in Slowenien zwischen 1918 und 1938”, 185-187. The *Südmark*’s original purpose, when it formed in the late nineteenth century, was to “buy up local property and to settle colonists who spoke one language in regions inhabited by speakers of another language”; the end result was supposed to have “claimed” or “taken over” an ethnically- and linguistically-mixed region for the German nation. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 17. Such “protection” of an “imagined borderland” for the nation was the purpose of these so-called *Schutzvereine*. For more, see Pieter Judson, “Die Schutzvereine und das Grenzland: Strategien zur Verwirklichung von *imagined borderlands*”, in Haslinger, ed., *Schutzvereine in Ostmitteleuropa*, 7-19. For more on the role of the *Südmark*, see Laurent Dedryvère, “Regionale und nationale Identität in deutschen Schutzvereinen Österreichs im Spiegel ihrer kulturellen Betätigungen von 1880 bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges: Das Beispiel des *Deutschen Schulvereins* und des *Vereins Südmark*”, in *Ibid.*, 42-52.

¹⁸⁴ CZ, “Zur Wahl”, September 28, 1924.

¹⁸⁵ CZ, “Eigene Wahlwerber”, February 22, 1923.

“Slovene parties, whose representatives are loyal (like) us”, a “new beginning of real cooperation.”¹⁸⁶

The municipal election ended in a victory for the opposition parties,¹⁸⁷ but Germans were still proud of being able exercise their right to vote, and to prove to the rest of Slovenia that they were more than the accusations that had been hurled at them.¹⁸⁸ But the election was also a microcosm of the political and social struggles that Slovenia’s Germans had endured since the foundation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. “To speak of a ‘free’ election in a free state of law would be absurd”, declared the *Cillier Zeitung*. Individual Germans and German-owned businesses had been “threatened with boycotts and immediate firings”, as well as “oral threats to destroy German property” if they voted the wrong way. For those Germans threatened in this way, the official election result could be “attributed only to the terror” that had reigned in the days and weeks leading up to the voters going to the polls.¹⁸⁹ Even after the years-long struggle to regain the right to vote, some German-speakers in Slovenia felt themselves, their culture, and their language under attack from a radical, anti-democratic, and perhaps even militant regime.

Germans felt pride in the accomplishments they had managed over the decades in Slovenia, and some of them believed these accomplishments were due to their inherent Germanic nature. Such a view would make it difficult to fully accept the new political

¹⁸⁶ CZ, “Vor den Gemeinderatswahlen in Celje”, September 28, 1924.

¹⁸⁷ There were 600 votes for the National Block, and 485 for the coalition of German and Slavic parties. CZ, “Nach der Wahl”, October 2, 1924.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

reality of being an ethnic minority in a state governed by those who until very recently had always been on the lower rungs of society and culture. Others, however, while still being proud of their German identity and dearly wishing to maintain that identity, reluctantly but purposefully accepted this new state of affairs and sought to utilize their unique skills for the common good and betterment of the kingdom. The key condition in both of these contested German identities and nationalisms was that the German minority be able to remain, in some significant way, German in culture. Slovenia may be their *Heimat*, but the German minorities there would not be forced to become Slovenes.

Chapter Two – Of Democracy and Dictatorship, 1925-1932

As the 1920s carried on into the 1930s, Slovenia's Germans remained conflicted. Some who had initially been resentful of their inclusion in Yugoslavia from the kingdom's beginnings in 1918 remained so, with the negative impact of social policies on the German language, educational system, and cultural associations only serving to maintain that resentment. Yet there still remained those Germans who, while acknowledging that the situation was still not ideal, felt that the best way to rectify the situation was through continued democratic appeals, and therefore maintained hope that this way forward would be successful. The end of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s saw the National Socialist German Workers' Party gain in popularity in Germany. This chapter will address how Slovenia's German-speaking community reacted to domestic and foreign political events, fascism and dictatorship in Europe, and the rise of the Nazis.

The *Cillier Zeitung* greeted the year 1925 with optimism, despite feeling that the "various powers that in the old year controlled...our fate are not changing, are not getting younger, are learning nothing! They know nothing of a new spirit and new ways." Despite this message of doom and gloom over the apparent intransigence of the Slovene majority towards its German minority, the paper continued that "...we drink to the new year because...we can't stop hoping for better, despite our knowledge."¹⁹⁰

With the previous years' experience behind them, and some still looking forward with hopes that their situation would improve, Slovenia's German community had to deal with the continuing legal struggle over the *Deutsches Haus* in Cilli/Celje. On January 5,

¹⁹⁰ CZ, "1925", January 1, 1925.

1925, the “Slovenes, with help from the courts and government bureaucrats, took over the *Deutsches Haus* in Celje. The greatest joy is prevalent in leading Slovene circles over this change in property.”¹⁹¹ That a certain segment of the Slovene population would have “the greatest joy” over this transfer in property reflects a view held by some Germans of the vindictive nationalists in the Slovene government. This view, however, was not projected onto the entire Slovene population, as can be seen in the “leading circles” conditional.

The expropriation of the *Deutsches Haus* was the last straw for those Germans who were weary of years of perceived attacks on their culture. “Every cheek must flush with the terrible thought that even our last public set of assets, which was built with so much effort and sacrifice...was simply taken from us.”¹⁹² The phrasing of “every cheek must flush” demonstrates a type of class divide among the German minority in Slovenia, as the *Deutsches Haus* had been historically used by wealthy elites, and not the more working class German-speaking urban residents of Cilli/Celje.¹⁹³ By saying “every cheek must flush”, the *Cillier Zeitung* exposes that *not* every cheek was being flushed at the Slovene takeover of the *Deutsches Haus*. Indeed, while non-affluent German-speakers might not have been able to bring themselves to quite the same level of indignation that their rich German businessmen and industrialists did over the *Deutsches Haus* incident, the paper’s description of the injustice of the situation was as much a declaration of

¹⁹¹ CZ, “Zum Gedächtnis”, January 11, 1925.

¹⁹² CZ, “Den Wahlen Zu”, January 11, 1925.

¹⁹³ For example, in Lower Styria at this time almost 26% of Germans were involved in trade, 21.7% in commerce, 17.9% in “free occupations” like medicine, law, and psychology, and only 14.1% in agriculture. Though a majority of German-speakers had well-paying, white collar jobs, many did not. Nečak, *Die “Deutschen” in Slowenien*, 11.

majority sentiment among the city's German residents as it was a plea to convince those more indifferent German-speakers of this travesty to the German culture in Slovenia.¹⁹⁴

The Election of 1925

The upcoming national election in February, 1925 gave the German minority community another chance to exercise their constrained political rights. Though the Germans “could decide nothing” in the election, it was nonetheless considered by the *Cillier Zeitung* to be the “greatest political campaign that was ever waged” in Yugoslavia. Despite knowing that they would be too insignificant to affect the election's outcome, the paper nonetheless reported that Slovenia's Germans “hope that the political campaign may bring a result that...can build the foundation of a secure, peaceful, and honorable [state] in the interest of all residents.”¹⁹⁵ Notably, the editor of the *Cillier Zeitung*, Franz Schauer,¹⁹⁶ ran for election to the national parliament in Belgrade.¹⁹⁷

Though Slovenia's Germans wished to express their preference for democracy by exercising their right to vote in the elections, they also feared the Slovene government's potential response to this demonstration of German political power. “For the upcoming

¹⁹⁴ The struggle over ownership of the *Deutsches Haus/Celjski Dom* lasted a decade and, after being brought to the League of Nations, a compromise was reached in 1930: The *Deutsches Haus* would remain under Slovene control in exchange for the newly-established *Schulstiftung der Deutschen Jugoslawiens* receiving half a million dinars. Reimann, “Für echte Deutsche gibt es bei uns genügend Rechte”, 140. Interestingly, the German minority had for several years negotiated directly with Yugoslav authorities instead of going to the League of Nations over the issue of the *Deutsches Haus*, even though they would have been able to bring forward a great number of complaints. Scheuermann, *Minderheitenschutz contra Konfliktverhütung?*, 283.

¹⁹⁵ CZ, “1925”, January 1, 1925.

¹⁹⁶ Suppan, *Bilaterale Aussenpolitik*, 696.

¹⁹⁷ CZ, “Die Deutsche Kandidatenliste”, January 15, 1925.

election,” the *Cillier Zeitung* warned its readers in late January, 1925, “expect arrests, house searches, knock arounds, and the prevention of personal freedom of movement of citizens.” The threat of oppressive measures was for some Germans an expected response in the context of their understanding of the Slovene government as being composed of nationalists who held an irrepressible hatred for the German minority. As such, Slovenia’s political atmosphere gave the “feeling of lawlessness and outlawness”, with the government’s attitude being considered “cowardice” to “threaten a small, friendless group due to the exploitation of their civil rights.”¹⁹⁸ From this perspective, the German minority in Slovenia was the victim of a hostile, undemocratic authority that would stop at nothing to constrict the exercise of German political rights, merely because of their German-ness.¹⁹⁹

The potential for oppression gave Slovenia’s German minority an extra incentive to participate in Yugoslavia’s democratic process. “We are fighting for the primitive human rights that must be fought for all, regardless of class... We all are leading the proof of our existence,” explained the *Cillier Zeitung* to its audience.²⁰⁰ The paper also ran advertisements that stressed the importance of peacefully participating in the electoral process, with sentences such as “We cannot impress our opponents through anxiety, but only through manly advocacy for our good right!”²⁰¹ For the German minorities who feared for the very existence of their presence and culture in Slovenia, being able to

¹⁹⁸ CZ, “Im Zeichen des Terrors”, January 25, 1925.

¹⁹⁹ In a special report on the German minority in Yugoslavia, the author noted that anti-German minority policies had been “contrary to the Yugoslav constitution and to the treaty agreements regarding these minorities.” John Dyneley Prince to Frank B. Kellogg, January 25, 1927. NARA, RG-59.

²⁰⁰ CZ, “An die Deutschen in Maribor!”, January 25, 1925.

²⁰¹ CZ, advertisement, January 25, 1925.

influence the election in a significant way was beside the point – what mattered was that they merely vote in large enough numbers to concretely prove to their detractors that they, as Germans, *did* exist and were not going away.²⁰²

The *Cillier Zeitung* acted as the German minority's public advocate, helping monolingual German-speakers to navigate Slovenia's electoral laws and stand fast in the face of tricks designed to confuse or block them from voting. Warning its readers to ignore opposition tactics, the paper advised that "the candidate list cannot be recalled" and that "Franz Schauer or his candidate list have not been removed and no one would even dream of doing so." The paper further made its readership aware that the German party's candidate list could "only be declared invalid by the authorities due to some kind of form mistakes."²⁰³ Publicly advising its readership reflects not only the types of electoral shenanigans that were being pressed upon the German minority, but also made known to those German-speakers who were either indifferent to or unaware of these tactics that they were, in fact, happening.

A reader writing in to the *Cillier Zeitung* to give his opinion on the election stated that the "Slavic parties have tried very hard with all kinds of threats, tricks, [and] abuse to beat the feeling of loyalty to the fatherland out of us." For this German reader, the "tribal membership" to the German nation, along with the "thought of the manes of our

²⁰² This sentiment was echoed by an American representative of the Department of State, who stated the following: "Until the summer of 1923, the Germans in Yugoslavia were deprived of all political rights. They could not even vote and, therefore, had no representation in the (parliament). Even today [1927], when this representation has been granted to them, they are not allowed to take part as I have already remarked, in the government of their own communes. The object of the Belgrade Government has undoubtedly been to exclude these Germans completely from public life and it is quite clear that the Slavs do not wish to have any Germans in their parliament." John Dyneley Prince to Frank B. Kellogg, January 25, 1927. NARA, RG-59.

²⁰³ CZ, "Wahlmanöver, Wahlschwindel, Wahlterror", February 8, 1925.

ancestors” and “devotion to our dear mother tongue” demanded that the Germans of Slovenia “do our duty” by casting a vote. The opinion piece went on to say

What do we actually want? To pursue a politics of “German nationalism”? That is complete nonsense, and anyone who says that or claims that of us...is trying to portray us in the eyes of the Slovene people, under whom we have lived for centuries in peace, as untrustworthy... We Germans in Yugoslavia want only to honorably contribute to the well-being, for the flourishing of our current fatherland, but for that we must be represented in the parliament...And in...this parliament, we want nothing more than to only achieve the lowliest rights of a minority; we do not want to deprive our youths of their mother tongue...we want only to have the ambition to live in peace with our respected Slavs as respected Germans.²⁰⁴

On the day of the election, the *Cillier Zeitung* urgently called on German-speakers of Slovenia, “as legally and constitutionally equal citizens”, to “most honorably represent your needs, your wishes, your complaints.” The paper desperately tried to impress its opinion of the circumstances onto its German readership, declaring that the election “is about the proof of our existence!” From the *Cillier Zeitung*’s perspective, the national election presented the “most sacred obligation” for Slovenia’s Germans to “do (their) duty”; the paper decried those whose “betrayal” was, “despite all awareness”, the sin of staying at home or voting for the wrong party.²⁰⁵

Several strands of German identity and nationalism can be seen in these articles in the *Cillier Zeitung*. Referring to the “Slavic parties” serves to encourage German-speakers to vote for the *Partei der Deutschen* while also attempting to exhibit the perceived vindictive nature of the Slovene government to those members of the German-language readership who had, for whatever reason, not felt compelled to support the “German” party over any of the “Slavic” ones.

²⁰⁴ CZ, “Wie Werde Ich am 8. Februar Wählen?”, February 8, 1925.

²⁰⁵ CZ, “In Zwölfter Stunde”, February 8, 1925.

That the “Slavic parties” would have to “beat the feeling of loyalty” to Yugoslavia out of the Germans signifies the extent to which some Germans truly did strongly affiliate with the kingdom.²⁰⁶ But this phrase also was a means of vindicating the opinion of those German nationalists who felt persecuted due to their ethnic identity, since the use of the word “fatherland” could be interpreted to mean either Yugoslavia or the German Reich. To “fulfill one’s duty” was to vote for the *Partei der Deutschen*, indicating that, for this contributor, those German-speakers who did not vote the “correct” way were not only voting out of their interests, but were going against their ethnic and cultural German comrades.

The opinion piece’s stressing of Germans’ desire for peace and stability, such as had reigned in Slovenia before the Great War, reflect a strong current of weariness among some Germans who wanted to contribute to Yugoslavia’s economy and society. By rejecting the notion of “German nationalist” politics and once again expressing a willingness to socially, economically, and politically integrate into Yugoslav society, Slovenia’s Germans were attempting to move on from the tiring nationalist back-and-forth that had marked the region’s previous several years. The frequent mentions of maintaining the German mother tongue shows as well the extent to which Slovenia’s German-speakers wished to maintain their version of German identity, but not necessarily at the expense of excluding themselves entirely from the wider ethnic-Slavic majority society. Such a view was incompatible with the “culture war” perspective of some German nationalists.

²⁰⁶ Use of the word “beat” was not just a literary flourish – the leader of the *Partei der Deutschen*, Dr. Stephan Kraft, had been “assaulted by night, dragged from his motor and his skull fractured, his motor being at the same time smashed to pieces. He was left for dead, but ultimately recovered much to the surprise of the surgeons.” John Dyneley Prince to Frank B. Kellogg, January 25, 1927. NARA, RG-59.

The election resulted in a “considerable loss” for the German minority in Slovenia, though Schauer himself was able to win a direct mandate.²⁰⁷ The Slovene newspaper *Nova Doba* called the German electoral campaign a “campaign against the state...and the Slovenian people”, which was regarded as an “infamous and obvious lie” by the *Cillier Zeitung*. For the *Cillier Zeitung*, the electoral campaign had been merely a “defensive campaign” which had unfortunately come up short.²⁰⁸ The idea of a “defensive campaign” gained credence when news emerged of a plan by 22-year old Slovene nationalist Ivan Lipnik to “get rid of” Franz Schauer on the day of the election. The *Cillier Zeitung* declared that Schauer had been targeted “not because he endangered the state in some way...but because this man...stepped to the front of a small, defenseless minority and led a defensive campaign for this minority within the framework of the existing laws and within the framework of the Belgrade parliament against an overwhelming majority.” In highlighting this story, the *Cillier Zeitung* hoped to ensure “that the world knows what is intended in our cultivated and civilized Slovenia for the leader of a small, defenseless national minority.”²⁰⁹

A planned assassination of an ethnic German political leader had the double effect of validating the notion that Slovenia’s government was undemocratic – even though the plot was hatched by a private citizen and foiled by Slovene/Yugoslav government forces – while also highlighting the specifically German character of the man being targeted.

The death of Franz Schauer was the potential assassin’s goal precisely because he

²⁰⁷ Suppan, *Bilaterale Aussenpolitik*, 696. The Croatian Peasant Party was able to retain its success from the prior election, despite its leader being imprisoned. They gained 67 seats, compared to 142 for the Radicals, out of a total of 313. Djokić, *Elusive Compromise*, 61.

²⁰⁸ CZ, “Nach den Wahlen”, February 12, 1925.

²⁰⁹ CZ, “Aufdeckung eines Anschlages auf den Deutschen Listenführer Franz Schauer”, February 12, 1925.

symbolized, from a German nationalist view, as the editor of the *Cillier Zeitung* and a leader in a German political party, the political and cultural strength of the ethnic German minority in Slovenia.

This perception of Slovenia as undemocratic and lawless was reflected in an official declaration by the *Partei der Deutschen*, who condemned the “electoral terror”, “serious abuse”, and “countless acts of violence” in Slovenia.²¹⁰ The *Cillier Zeitung* ran an advertisement on the same day of the *Partei der Deutschen*’s condemnation of the events in Slovenia which called upon German voters to “take care of your voting rights!”²¹¹ While there were certainly instances of voter suppression and other obstacles put in the way of allowing Germans from voting, the *Cillier Zeitung*’s fervent reporting of it suggests both outrage on the part of some and indifference or apathy on the part of others. Attempting to convince those Germans whose identities and worldview did not match up with the more nationalist one, the paper highlights in sensational terms the “terror” being employed against ethnic Germans by ethnic Slovenes as a way of showing the nature of this perceived tyranny. To ensure that Germans are not only aware of but actively concerned with the status of their voting rights indicates the extent to which a substantial portion of the German community was politically engaged. But it is as well a call to arms for those other Germans who had not placed such importance in the electoral process or in the Germanic character of their own identity.

²¹⁰ CZ, “Die Beschlüsse der Leitung der Partei der Deutschen”, March 15, 1925. “The number of instances of oppression, ruffianism, and violence directed against the German minority in this Kingdom”, wrote John Dyneley Prince “might be cited *ad nauseum*.” John Dyneley Prince to Frank B. Kellogg, January 25, 1927. NARA, RG-59.

²¹¹ CZ, advertisement, March 15, 1925.

A reader-submitted opinion to the *Marburger Zeitung* in May of 1925 elucidates this feeling. “National sentiment, which has deep roots in every noble person, can however impossibly aim at the extermination of the national sentiment of a neighbor! That would be completely wrong and would belittle and offend one’s own national sentiment.” Comparing Slovenia’s treatment of its German minority to a rebellious child rejecting both the “gift of (a mother’s) language” and her “*Heimat*”, the author wonders what the mother – that is, the Germans of Slovenia – had done to deserve such disrespectful and unfair treatment.²¹²

In comparing the relationship between Germans and Slovenes to a mother imparting unacknowledged benefits upon a child, the author expresses a form of German identity which viewed itself as a *Kulturträger*, bringing the superior German culture to the inferior Slovenes and bestowing upon them its advantages. Imparting the German culture onto Slovenes and Slovenia meant that the region’s cultural and social progress had originally been entirely due to the efforts and inherent characteristics of Germans.²¹³ To then be treated in a way that was felt to disrespect these basic facts about society and history in the Slovene lands would have incensed the German nationalists who held that worldview.

²¹² MZ, “Völkerliebe und Völkerhass”, May 1, 1925.

²¹³ This notion of unique characteristics inherent in the German character can be traced back to the late-nineteenth century’s Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl’s idea of *Deutsche Arbeit*, which was also linked to the concept of *Kulturarbeit*. These ideas combined with a vision of “unique German essence” called *völkisch* thought. Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East*, 99-100. The perception of Germans as *Kulturträger* in Eastern and Central Europe is reflected in the following declaration by a leader of the nationalist *Ostmarkenverein* in describing Posen: “...this land has been conquered for the German people by sword and plow, it has been fertilized by German blood and sweat, and owes its culture to Germans. For these reasons, we are the masters here.” *Ibid.*, 118.

Yet, the *Cillier Zeitung* was still willing to claim to speak for the majority of Germans when, exasperated, it addressed the claim that Slovenia's German minorities were disloyal. "We have concerned ourselves so often with the question of loyalty, as well as disloyalty, and have in no uncertain terms pronounced our belief." Pushing back once more against the idea that the German minority was actively working against the state, the paper declared that "we are loyal because we have, as reasonable people, accepted local relations [with Slovenia]...Everyone who has stayed within the borders of this state have, for a long time already, come to terms with it." "What do you actually want from us?", the paper rhetorically asked. "...That we spit on our history and our own people?" In what it hoped was a final, conclusive explanation of German affiliation to Slovenia and Yugoslavia, the paper declared, "We are loyal to the state and loyal to our *Volk*...If we were not loyal to ourselves and our *Volk*, then our loyalty to the state would also not be worth a damn."²¹⁴

The sentiment expressed in this article in the *Cillier Zeitung* reveals the fatigue that some Germans were experiencing after years of social policies and lack of political progress in the areas they wanted to see improve. That certain Slovenes were still skeptical of the Germans' loyalty to the state even after multiple public statements and peaceful, democratic participation left many of them feeling as though nothing they could do would ever be enough to definitively prove their fidelity to the South Slavic kingdom. Reaffirmation of the split German affiliation to both state and *Volk* illustrates the continuing tension between the different strands of German identity and nationalism. Those German-speakers who implicitly rejected the ethnic Slovene character of the

²¹⁴ CZ, "Wieder Einmal die Loyalität", December 20, 1925.

region would have appreciated the *Cillier Zeitung*'s confirmation of being *Volkstreu*, while others whose identities did not mainly revolve around their German language or culture would have better understood the paper's declaration of loyalty to the state. That the motto of the *Partei der Deutschen* sought to please its Slavic critics and German supporters at the same time does not reduce the significance that it also sought to please its German-speaking detractors and partisans alike.

German Identity and Nationalism between Culture Wars and Cultural Peace

Addressing the issue of minority rights in both Austrian Carinthia and Slovenia, an opinion piece in the *Cillier Zeitung* wrote that "...we see here, in the soul of a people, a cultural war happening that in its tragedy demands our participation." Recognizing that "we Germans also barged into the...cultural nationalism" of the previous "30 to 50 years", the writer opined that "we Germans must have the courage to have objective and compassionate self-criticism."²¹⁵ That the author of this opinion piece calls both Austria's treatment of its Slovene minority and Slovenia's treatment of its German minority as examples of a "cultural war" exhibits the enduring ethnic antagonism that had intensified during the Great War.²¹⁶ Yet, the author is willing to move on from the stale nationalist conflict and try to come to some meaningful compromise between the two major ethnic

²¹⁵ CZ, "Grundsätzliches zur Minderheitenfrage in Kärnten und Slowenien", January 1, 1926.

²¹⁶ Jerca Vodušek-Starič describes the following example as a "Kulturkampf" mentality between Germans and Slovenes: "To show how deep these feelings went, just one example. In the early twenties the French Consulate from Zagreb sponsored and took part in founding French clubs in towns throughout Slovenia, one of such was in Ptuj [Pettau]. The French were prepared to invite the local Germans into the club, as well, in order to be able to promote their propaganda among them. But the Slovenes would hear nothing of it; they regarded the French as their allies, but not the Germans." Jerca Vodušek-Starič, "The Beginning of the Ideological Dispute and its Consequences on German-Slovene Relations", in Heppner, ed., *Slowenen und Deutsche im gemeinsamen Raum*, 152-168.

groups of Slovenia and Austria. By admitting that the German side had “also” been guilty of the previous “30 to 50 years” of “cultural nationalism” conflicts, he endorses the view of Germans as having tried to force their culture on Slovenes. Through his attempts to move the discussion beyond the “culture war” happening between Slovenes and Germans, the author is appealing to those Germans who had rejected the notion of a “culture war” or had never been as stridently emphatic of their German language or culture as other nationalist activists would have liked.

The Germans of Slovenia called upon the Carinthian regional government in Austria to “give the Slovene minority...full cultural autonomy.”²¹⁷ In addition to being a plea to the Slovene regional government to reciprocate any progressive policy of cultural autonomy in Austria, this demand from Slovenia’s Germans to the Austrian Carinthian government is a recognition of the cultural equality between the Slovene and German cultures. Those German nationalists who viewed the Slovene and Slavic cultures as inherently inferior to the Germans’ would have disagreed with the sentiment of cultural equality, but for many Germans in Slovenia this recognition was nothing more than the simple acknowledgement of reality – there was, for these Germans, in fact no culture war going on in Slovenia.

Other Germans, however, felt that, after years of minority policies that removed the German language from the public sphere, significantly reduced the teaching of German in schools, and expropriated property held by ethnic Germans, the “minority policy in Slovenia up to now” had been a “systematic politics of de-nationalization

²¹⁷ CZ, “Die Denkschrift des Politischen und Wirtschaftlichen Vereines der Deutschen in Slowenien an die Kärntner Regierung”, January 17, 1926.

[*Entnationalisierungspolitik*].”²¹⁸ *Entnationalisierung* signified more than just the physical removal of the German cultural presence in Slovenia – that is, it meant more than the street signs and language of education changing from German to Slovene. For those Germans who felt strongly that they were, due to their German language, heritage, and culture, an integral part of the spiritual body of the German *Volk*, a “politics of de-nationalization” represented the spiritual as well as physical and legal removal and transformation of the German element in Slovenia. By removing the physical presence of Germandom in Slovenia – books, street signs, schools, businesses – as well as the cultural presence – language, education, and power over ethnic affiliation – the Slovene government was severing the spiritual link that connected Slovenia’s Germans with the rest of Europe’s Germandom. Not only was this “de-nationalization” a purposeful policy whose goal was to remove the German presence from Slovenia, it also was viewed as ultimately turning Germans into Slovenes, weakening the German *Volk* in its culture war against Slavic Europe.

Seven years after the tumultuous events of “Marburg’s Bloody Sunday”, the *Cillier Zeitung* reported on an article in the “Slovene nationalist” paper *Jutro*²¹⁹ that claimed that the Yugoslav soldiers in 1919 had acted out of self-defense. “This publication”, the German-language paper angrily riposted, “displays a completely absent willingness to understand on the part of certain Slovene circles who, through the reference and newly-fraudulent portrayal of any distressful event, seeks to open up old

²¹⁸ CZ, “Begleitschreiben, mit welchem das Memorandum dem Unterrichtsministerium in Beograd vorgelegt wurde”, January 17, 1926.

²¹⁹ Slovenia’s German-language press certainly considered the *Jutro* to be a Slovene-nationalist paper. This, however, is merely their opinion and there is not enough outside information available to me to either confirm or deny this allegation.

wounds in the hearts of all Germandom in Slovenia.”²²⁰ The paper then went on to give its version of the event, in which the unarmed German protesters had been innocently shot upon by Yugoslav troops. While German nationalist activists would certainly have much to agree with this portrayal of the incident in Marburg/Maribor in 1919, the *Cillier Zeitung*’s reminder and portrayal of the event as being twisted by a “nationalist” Slovene newspaper and “wound in the heart of all Germandom in Slovenia” was as much a statement of a German-nationalist worldview as it was an attempt to convince other Germans in Slovenia of the veracity of its interpretation. That “certain Slovene circles” actively wanted to “open up old wounds” indicates that the *Cillier Zeitung* is conveying the notion that the Ljubljana government – which had claimed power and thus responsibility in 1919 – had been openly trying to exploit a terrible event for German-speakers in the country in order to dispirit or break them up.

Despite marking the anniversary of an activist political protest in which ethnic Germans had been killed, the German minority community in Slovenia had changed the way it approached political action in the intervening years since 1919. The new *Partei der Deutschen* enabled them to represent themselves in a democratically-elected parliament. “The *Partei der Deutschen* stood and stands today outside of the narrow oppositional block and always gives independent and impartial opinions...on the political, cultural, and economic treatment of the minorities.”²²¹ The change in emphasis from the violent confrontations and calls for *Anschluss* with Austria of 1918-1919 to a

²²⁰ CZ, “Zum Siebenten Jahrestag des Marburger Bluttages”, January 31, 1926.

²²¹ CZ, “Die Deutsche Partei in der neuen Parlamentarischen Session”, October 14, 1926.

desire for peaceful, democratic political action can be seen in the *Partei der Deutschen*'s statement on the national election of 1927:

The *Partei der Deutschen* greets the announcement of elections [of 1927]...as the beginning of a renunciation from the arbitrary and commisarist methods of our political administration that had great harm and humiliation for the population as a result, as the beginning of a modern era of democratic administration in which the population will be called upon to an ever-widening extent for the direct participation in administration and contributions to decision-making...(The Germans) will provide proof, through loyal and serious cooperation with the important duties of (the parliament), that they are ripe for the...right of self-government."²²²

The *Partei der Deutschen*'s references to the "beginnings" of a "renunciation from the arbitrary...methods" and a "modern era of democratic administration" indicate a pervasive view among the Germans of Slovenia that, hitherto, the Ljubljana government had been acting in an unconstitutional, undemocratic, and discriminatory way. The phrasing and tone of the statement suggests that the German minorities and the *Partei der Deutschen* had been the cultured, modern, and democratic component of Slovene society for the past several years while enduring the effects of a backwards, vindictive, and tyrannical Slovene government lashing out at its disadvantaged yet superior German community. Through this frame of thinking, a form of German national identity in Slovenia can be seen – one that views ethnic Germans as having an inherently "orderly" and "civilized" culture with the opposite view ascribed to the Slovenes.

Though a paternalistic-nationalist identity was present among some Germans in society, many members of the community in Slovenia had, by the late 1920s, come to the decision that the way forward in advancing their goals of increased minority rights and protections was not through foreign help – from Germany, Austria, or the League of

²²² CZ, "Die Wahlentscheidung der Hauptleitung der Partei der Deutschen", December 9, 1926.

Nations – or from their own domestic resistance, but through proving their worth to the Slovene and Yugoslav majorities. “Loyal and serious cooperation” would provide “proof” to the regional and national governments of Yugoslavia that the ethnic Germans of the kingdom were not irredentist or disloyal but rather were capable and willing to contribute and participate in wider society. Such a transformation in political thought – from the violent and turbulent upheaval of the immediate post-war period to the late 1920s – represented a growth among the German minority community of a desire for peace and stability over other, more radical forms of action.²²³

An advertisement in the *Cillier Zeitung* from July of 1927 expresses this new political development among the German-speaking community in Slovenia: “Ethnic brothers! Join, without fail, the *Politisch- und Wirtschaftliche Verein der Deutschen in Slowenien* and support it with your best power for its fulfillment of its greatest duties! Because it is the only shield and sponsor of your ethnic cultural, social, economic, and political interests!”²²⁴ The *Partei der Deutschen*’s claim to be “the only shield and sponsor” of Slovenia’s ethnic German interests represents a strong turn away from expectations of receiving aid from the foreign German-speaking nation-states or the League of Nations. But its pleading for higher membership indicates that there was a not-insignificant section of the German community that was politically unengaged, favored a different political party, or harbored hopes that Germany or Austria would still come to their rescue. That the *Partei der Deutschen* formed itself explicitly to advocate for the interests of Yugoslavia’s German minority and yet was disappointed in lower voter

²²³ The American legation in Belgrade noted, in a report to the Secretary of State, that “(as) a matter of fact, the German population has never attempted politically to oppose the Yugoslav state.” John Dyneley Prince to Frank B. Kellogg, January 25, 1927. NARA, RG-59.

²²⁴ CZ, advertisement, July 10, 1927.

turnout and community support demonstrates that, for many German-speakers, their identity and cultural affiliation did not begin or end with their mother tongue.

Germans had become tired of Slovene attacks that questioned their loyalty to the state or accused them of pursuing nationalist goals. Calling out the Slovene Democratic Party for having “German hatred”, the *Cillier Zeitung* declared that, in contrast to alleged claims of being staunch nationalists, Slovenia’s Germans were “businessmen, manufacturers, (and) private retirees.” Fatigue and exasperation can be heard in the paper’s voice, as the title of its article asked of its Slovene critics “Do you all really have nothing else?”²²⁵ Descriptions of ethnic Germans as “businessmen” and “manufacturers” was a way of showing to the Slovene majority the skills and characteristics of the minority community, and intimating that these Germans were ready and willing to contribute to the wider ethnic Slovene majority society if given the chance to do so. That the *Cillier Zeitung* had been publishing articles making this point for almost 10 years without a satisfactory acknowledgement by some Slovenes explains the paper’s weary tone. Yet this weariness with unsuccessful attempts to integrate into Yugoslavia’s society and economy would come with a price; weariness would give way to a feeling of bitterness that would leave open the door to a potential outside force with the power to uphold their wants, wishes, and rights.

²²⁵ CZ, “Habt Ihr denn wirklich nichts anderes?“, January 20, 1927.

The Regional and National Elections of 1927

The election for the regional parliament in Slovenia took place on January 23, 1927. The election, according to the *Cillier Zeitung*, should have been “clear for everyone” that they “cannot be indifferent, especially for the members of a national minority.”²²⁶ Previous years’ electoral results had so underwhelmed the paper’s expectations of Slovenia’s ethnic Germans banding together in a unified community to showcase their political strength that it sought to shame its readership into realizing the seriousness of the election’s consequences.

Germans wanted equality and justice from the election. “If we want to find understanding for the cultural, social, and economic needs of our population, (then) the representatives must allocate justice,” declared the *Cillier Zeitung*. The paper went on to condemn the “hatred” it felt had been shown to the German minority, and extolled the virtues of full legal equality. Underneath this article, the paper also printed in enormous letters “Everyone in Celje vote for the first box! No one stay home! This is to go against our common enemy!”²²⁷ While Slovenes would certainly not have appreciated being designated the Germans’ “common enemy”, this description of the region’s ethnic majority was intended by the *Cillier Zeitung* to stimulate ethnic Germans’ sense of nationalist patriotism. Repeatedly demanding that Cilli/Celje’s German-speaking population turn out in greater numbers as well as vote for the “correct” party reflects the high hopes and depths of disappointment in rousing the region’s minority community that the paper had experienced in prior elections.

²²⁶ CZ, “An unsere Wähler in Stadt und Land!”, January 23, 1927.

²²⁷ CZ, “Von Gerechtigkeit und von Einsicht”, January 23, 1927.

The election ended in a loss for the Independent Democratic Party and a win for the United Economic List, which had stressed economics over social policies, and the socialists. The *Cillier Zeitung* was relieved: “The occasional exaggeration of electoral agitation,” it declared, “has receded.”²²⁸ Though the paper clearly meant the Slovene “nationalist” press’s “exaggeration of electoral agitation”, its omission of its own part in inflaming tensions does not take away from the fact that both Slovene- and German-language nationalists had portrayed the regional elections in a sensationalized, epochal light.

An election for the national parliament in Belgrade was to take place in September of 1927. Despite remaining a politically-insignificant force, Slovenia’s Germans hoped that they would be able to “see to it that we also find a comfortable home in the new house (of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes).” The *Cillier Zeitung* declared that Slovenia’s Germans “enter the electoral campaign as a *Volk*, not as a party”, and once again stressed that only the *Partei der Deutschen* could protect Yugoslavia’s German element.²²⁹ The *Partei der Deutschen*, for its part, included in its party platform the “compensation of all the serious injuries to the rights and equality of the German minority”; the “protection and realization of complete civil equality in political, cultural, and economic life”; and the ability to participate in governing.²³⁰

Once again, on the day of the election the *Cillier Zeitung* did all it could to stress to its readership the seriousness that the election would have for the German minority in

²²⁸ CZ, “Des Volkes Stimmes”, January 27, 1927.

²²⁹ CZ, “Ein Geleitwort zu den Septemberwahlen”, August 14, 1927.

²³⁰ CZ, “Die Politischen Forderungen der Partei der Deutschen”, August 28, 1927.

Slovenia. “The day of duty is here, the day of fate”, proclaimed the paper. The election would “decide the future of our *Volk* in our beloved old *Heimat*.” The 1927 national election was “incomparably more” meaningful than for the Slavic parties, since such an election was for the German minority a “confirmation” of their “*Volkstum*, our existence, the validity of requests, without whose fulfillment a people cannot live.”²³¹ Essentially a full-page advertisement for the *Partei der Deutschen*, in large block letters on the front of that day’s *Cillier Zeitung* was listed the party’s electoral demands:

We demand, in order to be able to live, German schools for our children! We demand that we are able to continue to live in the greater cultural sphere of our *Volk*! We demand equality in all areas of life that are owed us as loyal, resident...citizens! In order to achieve these fundamental necessities, however, we must all fulfill our duties on September 11 like a man! We must vote on this Sunday for the representatives of our good causes, whose choice alone confirms our existence!”²³²

The fear of some German nationalists of having their spiritual connection to the German *Volk* severed can be seen in the *Partei der Deutschen*’s call to “continue to live in the greater cultural sphere of our *Volk*”, as well as the repeated references to the threats facing the German minority’s “ability to live” and even its very “existence.” Equating the “fulfillment of duty” to acting “like a man” was another tactic of the nationally-aware *Partei der Deutschen* and *Cillier Zeitung* to shame or goad its readership into participating in the election and voting for the “right” party. The *Partei der Deutschen*’s exclamation that voting for it would “confirm” the “existence” of Slovenia’s German-speaking minority indicates that not every German *was* aware that they were part of a wider cultural community, or, if they were aware, did not identify strongly enough with that wider community to politically engage with it.

²³¹ CZ, “Wir müssen!”, September 11, 1927.

²³² Ibid.

The *Partei der Deutschen* saw their share of seats in the national parliament decrease from 8 to 6.²³³ Despite the *Cillier Zeitung*'s urgent calls for Slovenia's German minority to fulfill its duty, the paper blamed the lack of German representatives on those German voters who did not heed its previous advice to participate in the electoral process. "It is so bitterly sad," complained the paper, "that the fulfillment of almost 6,000 valiant men's duty was forced to collapse due to disinterest."²³⁴ Out of a total population of over 41,000 native German-speakers in Slovenia, receiving only 6,000 votes must have seemed quite low.²³⁵ While electoral participation rates of eligible voters is not available, it can however be assumed that there were more than 6,000 eligible voters among Slovenia's German-speaking minority. That only 6,000 voted for the *Partei der Deutschen* suggests that those who did not stay at home due to apathy or indifference indeed voted for a different party. The continuing disappointment that the *Cillier Zeitung* expressed after another election in which the German turnout was lower than expected is a testament to the enduring national indifference, ambiguous nationalism, and soft- or non-German identities that the minority community contained.

²³³ The Radicals increased their seats from 108 to 112, with the Croatian Peasant Party decreasing from 69 to 61. The Democrats, Slovene People's Party, and other smaller parties also saw a loss of seats. Coalition-building proved difficult and led to only a weak minority government, which would add to the factors influencing the eventual royal dictatorship in 1929. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 156-157.

²³⁴ CZ, "Im Vorwärtsschreiten!", September 15, 1927.

²³⁵ This is according to the 1921 Yugoslav census, which should not necessarily be taken as wholly accurate. Ferenc and Repe, "Die Deutsche Minderheit in Slowenien in der Zwischenkriegzeit", 163.

Developments in Education Policy and German Schools

Schools continued to be an issue for German-speakers in Slovenia. The *Cillier Zeitung* reported in March, 1927, on a speech by Stephan Kraft, leader of the *Partei der Deutschen* in the national parliament. “For a national minority,” began Kraft, “there is no greater branch of determining factor of public life than the education system, given that a national minority entrusts the education system to its young offspring and with that, its national language and cultural future, its continued existence.”²³⁶ Kraft emphasized that it was “just as important and justified to learn the state language” as for the minorities to be able to raise their children in their own culture. “How should teachers for German schools”, Kraft asked, teach their students important topics, such as science, if they could not speak German well enough?²³⁷ “Without a complete understanding of the soul of the child,” continued Kraft, “and without love, then pedagogic successes are impossible.”²³⁸ Kraft expressed a visceral fear for Yugoslavia’s ethnic Germans being realized when he exclaimed, “Our German education system, for both elementary and middle schools, is thus effectively destroyed.”²³⁹

Even after the Yugoslav Education Minister Kumanudi abrogated the previous school policy which had given the local government and not the parents the decision for where to send their children, Slovenia’s Germans remained extremely skeptical that this

²³⁶ CZ, “Über das Deutsche Schulwesen in Jugoslawien”, March 20, 1927.

²³⁷ CZ, “Über das Deutsche Schulwesen in Jugoslawien”, March 27, 1927.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ CZ, “Über das Deutsche Schulwesen in Jugoslawien”, March 31, 1927.

would actually be implemented and enforced in their own schools.²⁴⁰ “A provision that is qualified as unjust in the Bačka, the Banát, and the Baranja is supposed to be justified in Strymnia and, above all, in Slovenia?!”²⁴¹ Years of the Ljubljana government ignoring or bypassing federal law and international treaty when treating its German minority had left many Germans bitter and resentful that any policy change that did not come from the regional government itself would actually be carried out. Such disaffection with the effects of political action marked a change from previous years’ hopefulness and optimism that the Germans’ situation would improve. If the League of Nations, Germany, Austria, and the national Yugoslav government all could not significantly alter the plight of German-speakers in Slovenia, then what would?

Education policy had become, for Slovenia’s German minority, generally intolerable by the end of 1928 – 10 years after Yugoslavia had declared its independence.²⁴² Ethnic German politicians in the national assembly in Belgrade attempted to pass their version of minority education policy changes. The proposed new policy sought a middle way between respecting the current government’s policies towards their South Slav constituents on the one side and needs of the minorities on the

²⁴⁰ Until 1929, Yugoslav education policy was, except for Serbia, based entirely off of ministerial orders. Bundesministerium für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und Kriegsgeschädigte, *Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa, Band V: Das Schicksal der Deutschen in Jugoslawien*, Theodor Schieder, ed. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1961), 23E-24E.

²⁴¹ CZ, “Zweierlei Gerechtigkeit”, November 10, 1927.

²⁴² Going beyond banning the German language from being taught in schools, German and Austrian history were also “strictly forbidden in the local schools.” A member of the U.S. legation in Belgrade reported that such “shortsighted policy can only be disastrous for future generations, because German has been and still is the only medium of communication between all the inhabitants of Slovenia and the outside world, as it is almost hopeless to expect foreigners to learn the difficult Slavonic idiom.” John Dyneley Prince to Frank B. Kellogg, January 25, 1927. NARA, RG-59. As well, it was practically impossible to obtain a higher education in the German-language, after the *Realgymnasium* in Novi Vrbas/Neu Vrbas had its upper classes shut down in 1925. Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 128.

other side. The German deputies' proposal envisioned the minority schools being "completely independent from the other administrators" as well as granting the minority "full participation in the running of the schools."²⁴³ German-language parallel classes would be reinstated, with exams being taken in the "mother tongue of the child." These changes would also see the Serbo-Croat language taught from grade 3 on as a requirement in German parallel classes and schools. Minority schools would be constructed when the minorities affected communicated in writing to the local administration their intent to do.²⁴⁴ The draft of the bill called for the right of national minorities "to construct, manage, and inspect school and other educational facilities with the mother tongue as language of instruction through cultural organizations and private means."²⁴⁵

This proposed minority education policy was designed to appease both the South Slav majority and its German-speaking minority. Allowing minority participation in the running of the schools would be enough to satisfy both minority calls to have a say in how their children were being taught while also leaving the Yugoslav majority in overall charge. While the German language would be reintroduced, thereby easing German fears of having their culture erased and "turning into" Slovenes, the teaching of the "state language" remained mandatory, thereby demonstrating ethnic Germans' loyalty to the Yugoslav national framework.

²⁴³ CZ, "Der Schulgesetzentwurf des Deutschen Abgeordnetenklubs", December 30, 1928.

²⁴⁴ CZ, "Der Deutsche Minderheitenschulgesetzentwurf", January 3, 1929.

²⁴⁵ CZ, "Der Deutsche Minderheitenschulgesetzentwurf", January 6, 1929.

Within the first few months of 1928, a new national minority education policy allowed for parents in the Marburg/Maribor administrative district, following the precedent set in the Bačka, Banát, and Baranja, to choose the nationality of their child and therefore to which school they would go. The Education Minister, in announcing the change in policy, stated that it was “so that the freedom of cultural development is also made for the national minorities and with it the stipulation that the learning of the state language is maintained.”²⁴⁶ German-speaking parents were relieved and overjoyed. That the “right to decide for themselves the nationality of their children” had been taken from parents had been “the heaviest burden that had been imposed on the German minority” in Yugoslavia. “How many tears...the question of schooling had condemned our children to does not need to be fleshed out...It is enough (to know) that the majority of children that...went through middle school in these years cannot speak and read German. They have been excluded from the enormous cultural assets of our *Volk*.”²⁴⁷

That the new national minority education policy broadly agreed with the framework laid out in the one proposed by the German delegates symbolizes a small but significant victory for German politics in interwar Yugoslavia. The very real and deeply-held fear by some German parents of losing their children or even their community’s culture is seen in their exultant and relieved reaction, as well as their sadness over the “majority of children” who were cut off from the German *Volk* after being unable to learn how to read or speak the German language properly. This new policy was a partial fulfillment of the minority protection treaty that Yugoslavia had signed after the end of

²⁴⁶ CZ, “Eine Wichtige Verordnung”, March 15, 1928.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

the Great War.²⁴⁸ Nonetheless, German-language education in Slovenia remained more restricted than for the rest of Yugoslavia's German-speaking minority.²⁴⁹

Response to the Rise of Fascism and National Socialism in the 1920s

As events in fascist Italy in the late 1920s developed, the *Cillier Zeitung* responded with disgust at the loss of “freedom in Italy”, in addition to decrying the “end of parliamentarism” in that country. The paper, in November of 1926, described Mussolini and his fascist allies as “agents of conspiracies”, “liars of right and freedom”, “Rome’s barbaric conquerors”, and “adventurers without belief and law.”²⁵⁰ Slovenia’s ethnic Germans’ response of shock and revulsion at the undemocratic and authoritarian events in neighboring Italy could perhaps be understood as an attempt to prove their pro-democracy bona fides to the Yugoslav majority skeptical of their intentions. But their reaction more convincingly points to a real sentiment of disapproval of fascism,

²⁴⁸ *Dokumentation der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa*, 24E-25E.

²⁴⁹ Private education in the German-language remained banned in Slovenia, which was not the case for the other parts of Yugoslavia with significant German minorities. Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 128. For example, the *Schulstiftung der Deutschen des Königreiches Jugoslawien* was only truly active in the Vojvodina, while the implementation of ethnic German teachers for parallel classes for the most part ended up only in the *Dravska Banovina*, encompassing Ljubljana and its surrounding areas but not the more urban cities of Cilli/Celje and Marburg/Maribor. Reinhard Reimann, “Für echte Deutsche gibt es bei uns genügend Rechte”, 136-137. Though the number of German parallel classes had risen from 35 in 1928 to 46 in 1932, the Slovene government still distrusted the German minority, who they saw as “always (looking) towards the northern border [with Austria].” Suppan, “Lage der Deutschen in Slowenien”, 207.

²⁵⁰ CZ, “Ende der Freiheit in Italien”, November 11, 1926. “Ende des Parlamentarismus in Italien”, November 11, 1926. By 1925, Italian fascism has gained control of the government and suppressed all other opposition parties, as well as essentially controlling the entire press. After several unsuccessful assassination attempts on Mussolini in 1926, all anti-fascist parties, organizations, and newspapers were officially disbanded. Court proceedings began to go through a “special tribunal” which did not allow defense witnesses, a jury, or right to appeal. Political leaders of the opposition who refused to pledge allegiance to the fascist government were banished and exiled. F.L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1967), 73-74.

dictatorship, and undemocratic principles that had also been evident in certain responses to the, from their perspective, undemocratic and illegal social policies implemented against Slovenia's ethnic minorities.

The *Cillier Zeitung*'s report on the 1928 Reichstag election, in which the left-wing Social Democratic and Communist Parties gained more than 40% of the total vote, barely mentioned the National Socialist German Workers' Party, who lost 100,000 votes from 1924 in receiving just 2.6% of the vote.²⁵¹ The new government led by the Social Democratic Party, who were so hated by Hitler's NSDAP, was accepted by the *Cillier Zeitung* without a fuss.²⁵² The paper's detailed analysis of the center-right national liberal *Deutsche Volkspartei* and its subsequent fall in the share of votes from the previous election demonstrates that an important segment of its readership was generally of the same type of ideology and identification. The *Deutsche Volkspartei* had split from the left-wing of the former National Liberals, the *Deutsche Demokratische Partei*, after World War I and initially favored a constitutional monarchy over a republic. The party's platform called for a larger commitment to free enterprise and stronger emphasis on improving big business as a way of strengthening the middle class.²⁵³ Affiliation to a pro-business, pro-capitalism ideology among Slovenia's German population makes sense, considering their share of ownership in industry, trade, and banking.

²⁵¹ J. Noakes and G. Pridham, eds., *Nazism 1919-1945, Volume 1: The Rise to Power, 1919-1934* (Exeter, United Kingdom: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 62. While the Left's share of the vote rose, the Right saw a decrease in seats. But the centrist parties, *Zentrum*, the *Deutsche Demokratische Partei*, and the *Deutsche Volkspartei* all lost seats.

²⁵² CZ, "Der Neue Reichstag", May 24, 1928.

²⁵³ Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter: The Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919-1933* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 38.

The possibility of an *Anschluss* with Austria, so favored and prevalent among Slovenia's German population in 1918, had by 1928 come to be rejected as unfeasible, as its hypothetical completion might very well lead to war. "It is clear," wrote the *Cillier Zeitung* in August of 1928, "that...the...threat of war cannot bring about any special effect."²⁵⁴ With the treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye signed, Austria was not in a position to do more than conduct diplomatic action to address their concerns over the republic's territorial boundaries and the German-speaking minority in Slovenia. Having experienced four years of brutal, bloody warfare as part of the Habsburg Empire, followed by several months of paramilitary fighting in the borderlands, the idea of unintentionally inciting another European war was not appealing. But there was another sentiment found among Slovenia's Germans other than peace: a desire for stability. Through the first several years after the founding of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, ethnic Germans endured in rapid succession various policies that completely changed the region's social landscape to which they had in their daily life been accustomed. While unhappy about the current state of social and political affairs in Slovenia, Germans no longer sought any kind of rapid, radical change, instead preferring the peace and stability that they had missed out on for so many years.

A strong strand of German identity and nationalism in Slovenia was connected with a cultural awareness of the accomplishments of Europe's German-speakers. When the Graf Zeppelin made its first intercontinental flight across the Atlantic Ocean, Slovenia's German-speakers were exultant over this feat of German scientific progress. "For all Germans in the world and also for us," wrote the *Cillier Zeitung* on the occasion

²⁵⁴ CZ, "Anschluss...", August 9, 1928.

of the successful flight, “the flight of the ‘Graf Zeppelin’ is a joyous symbol. As the German airship, the German soul on board, flew against the storms and proved its capability in this hard approach and fly-through, so too does the German *Volk* grind out its history in the most terrible storm nights, the German soul on board, the way leading forwards and upwards.”²⁵⁵

The case of the Graf Zeppelin was, for some German nationalists in Slovenia, a testament to the progress that the German culture could bring about. But the airship was more than simply a feat of German scientific achievement – it was also a symbol of the living body of the German *Volk*. The “German soul” was on board the dirigible – the same soul that inhabited the German *Volk* of “all Germans around the world” and led the world “forwards and upwards” in cultural progress. The *Cillier Zeitung*’s reaction to and description of the Graf Zeppelin’s flight simultaneously represents a German nationalist worldview while also serving to project an idea of an indissoluble spiritual body of Germandom upon those ethnic Germans in Slovenia who had not yet been convinced of or made aware of their affiliation with this body.

Under a Royal Dictatorship

On January 6, 1929, King Aleksandar dissolved the national parliament, abolished the constitution of 1921, and banned political parties with any ethnic affiliation.²⁵⁶

Renaming the country from the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes to the Kingdom

²⁵⁵ CZ, “Bei jedem Wetter!”, October 18, 1928.

²⁵⁶ Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 160-162.

of Yugoslavia, the king intended to run the country through his sole power as a nation-state, in the wake of political gridlock and ethnic strife that had resulted in the shooting death of the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, Stjepan Radić. The kingdom's name change went along with a corresponding re-ordering of territorial districts called *banovinas* which, in theory, formed geographic and not ethnic boundaries.²⁵⁷

The royal dictatorship, as it was called, was an attempt by the monarchy to fix the kingdom's nationality problems between Serbs and Croats, and in the process bring about national unity and social stability. Thus, Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes ostensibly became Yugoslavs.²⁵⁸ The news that the king was taking over the running of the country and turning it from a democratic state into a dictatorship was received by the *Cillier Zeitung* with a neutral or even positive tone, who simply reported the event as if it were talking about the weather.²⁵⁹ This non-confrontational tone reflects the paper's caution about what the political consequences of coming down on one side or another in the immediate aftermath of the king's seizure of power might be.

In the days after the king's announcement, however, German reaction was split. In an article discussing the new situation in Yugoslavia, the *Cillier Zeitung* bemoaned the country's experience thus far with politics and political parties. While on the one hand

²⁵⁷ Djokić, *Elusive Compromise*, 72.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 73-74. The following anecdote from a report from the American embassy in Belgrade attests to the difficulty the kingdom would have in forging a common Yugoslav identity: "I visited Krain (Kranj) [Carniola] in Slovenia yesterday...I found the people I talked to very reticent and sullen, as they seemed to regard my Croatian language as a sign that I was some sort of Serb. The ignorant Slovenes do not distinguish between Croatian and Serb and lump all the idioms under the latter category...I was informed that the district is a unit against the Belgrade government and especially against the nomination of Milan Srankich as premier whom they regard as a terrorist and an anti-Catholic...The substance seemed to be that Belgrade is the enemy of the Catholic Church and therefore of Slovenia as a whole." John Dyneley Prince to Henry L. Stimson, July 16, 1932. NARA, RG-59.

²⁵⁹ CZ, "Manifest des Königs an das Volk", January 10, 1929.

passively supporting the seizure of power in the hands of one man, the paper at the same time noted that the dictatorship was “not forever”, and would “look forward...full of hope” that in so doing, the king would soon be able to bring order and stability back to the country.²⁶⁰ Slovenia’s German minority community had over the years witnessed not only minority policies that negatively impacted their social lives, but also the political strife and ethnic tension at the heart of the social framework of the Yugoslav state.²⁶¹ The *Cillier Zeitung*’s article demonstrates a tension among Slovenia’s German community between supporting a dictatorship versus supporting a democracy. But this tension was also present in, on the one side, conservative nationalists with a disparaging view of Slavic culture and, on the other, less ideological German-speakers who wanted Yugoslavia to live up to its potential as a modern, pluralistic, and democratic state.

There is yet a third dimension in the German reaction to the royal dictatorship, however. While there were both those who supported and disagreed with the king’s seizure of power on principle, there were also some Germans who supported it simply because they had become weary of the, from their perspective, disadvantages to democracy: too many divergent political parties, corruption, political impasses, and insufficiently tangible policy implementation meant that the end of a working democracy would lead to a better, more efficient state. Such disaffection with the downside of democratic governance was a major driving force behind the radical and revolutionary

²⁶⁰ CZ, “Der Neue Stand im Staate”, January 13, 1929.

²⁶¹ Continuing tension and failure to resolve the issue of Croatian autonomy and Serb centralizing tendencies climaxed in the shooting death on the floor of the national parliament of Stjepan Radić by Serbian nationalist politician Puniša Račić. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 157-158.

right-wing in Germany and Austria, whose influence would be felt upon Slovenia's Germans when the National Socialist movement gained in popularity.²⁶²

Due to their weariness with politics and political parties, as well as the increasing ethno-political conflicts between Serbs and Croats, it was "unsurprising" when, in January 1929, the *Partei der Deutschen* and the *Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund* were both banned.²⁶³ Disbanding both the *Partei der Deutschen* and the *Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund* drastically reduced the political and organizational power of Yugoslavia's German minority. But, in practical terms, it also severely limited the ability for the different local branches to coordinate their efforts with each other, thereby compounding the problems facing the two ethnic German organizations in unifying the kingdom's diverse German population.²⁶⁴

²⁶² For activists on both the Right and the Left in interwar Europe, "unambiguous support for democracy was thin on the ground." Communists and conservatives alike despised parliamentary democracy, and both would find authoritarian rule appealing. Many in the political center began to gravitate towards a more authoritarian type of government out of fear of communism. Many right-wing conservatives yearned for a less egalitarian society, one that reserved power for elites and placed more emphasis on communal duty and nationalist spirit than individual rights. Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 24-25. For more, see Matthew Stibbe, *Germany, 1914-1933: Politics, Society and Culture* (Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson, 2010), 78-83. See also Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 18-48; and John T. Lauridsen, *Nazism and the Radical Right in Austria, 1918-1934* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2007).

²⁶³ CZ, "Auflösung der Partei der Deutschen", January 31, 1929. The *Kulturbund* had only 9,000 members (1% of the total ethnic German population in Yugoslavia) in 1929. Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 126.

²⁶⁴ Rasimus, *Als Fremde im Vaterland*, 429. Despite being initially banned in 1929, by the Spring of 1931, new meetings were allowed to take place for the *Kulturbund*. Reimann, "Für echte Deutsche gibt es bei uns genügend Rechte", 141.

The *Cillier Zeitung* becomes the *Deutsche Zeitung*

In February of 1929, the *Cillier Zeitung* was ordered to change its name due to the continuing use of the German name for Celje in the paper, which went against the law forbidding use of a non-state language in public. Despite the “bad times behind itself”, the *Cillier Zeitung* nonetheless felt that it had “maintained itself as an upstanding, courageous, honorable fighter in defense” of the German minority. “We do not favor parting from our old name, and not voluntarily...It is not a goodbye, however... What it was as the *Cillier Zeitung*, it remains in the next period and in all those in the future. It remains the loyal German paper of our minority even under the new name.” The paper’s new name had not been “an easy” decision, but was to be called “simply what it is for us all, as well in the eyes of our opponents: the *Deutsche Zeitung*.”²⁶⁵

The new *Deutsche Zeitung* claimed to be the “mouthpiece for the German minority in Slovenia.”²⁶⁶ This transformation of the *Cillier Zeitung*, though forced upon them, signified another stage in its attempts to unite the contested identities and multiple nationalisms of the German minority in Slovenia. The previous name of *Cillier Zeitung* was a reference to the city and therefore region of Lower Styria that had for centuries contained a German-speaking presence. *Cillier Zeitung* signified a type of regional identity in which ethnic Germans and Slovenes could both appreciate the German-language press without the distorting effects of nationalism. Though “not an easy

²⁶⁵ CZ, “Zum Letzenmale ‘Cillier Zeitung’”, February 21, 1929. Changing the name to something so explicitly German stood in stark contrast to the *Marburger Zeitung*, which had also been ordered to change due to its use of the German name for Maribor; the *Marburger Zeitung* simply became the *Mariborer Zeitung* in 1929, apparently because it was not as offended by the use of a Slovene name for the city. Peter Vodopivec, “Die Presse der Deutschen in der Untersteiermark und in Krain”, in Corbrea-Hoişie, Lihaciu, and Rubel, eds., *Deutschsprachige Öffentlichkeit und Presse in Mittelost- und Südosteuropa*, 146.

²⁶⁶ *Deutsche Zeitung* (hereafter to be signified by “DZ”), “Deutsche Zeitung – Organ für die Deutsche Minderheit in Slowenien”, February 24, 1929.

decision”, changing the name of the newspaper to *Deutsche Zeitung* (which was not mandated but chosen by the owners) represented a shift from the regional to the nationalist identity for German-speakers in Slovenia.

By bluntly displaying the German name of the paper, the new *Deutsche Zeitung* was claiming a nationally-aware identity for all of Slovenia’s German-speaking population that was affiliated with the greater German *Volk*. To appease the various types of German identities and nationalisms in Slovenia – conservative nationalism, soft nationalism, indifference, apathy – the *Deutsche Zeitung* claimed to be maintaining its core from the *Cillier Zeitung*. But by explicitly proclaiming to be the “mouthpiece” for all German-speakers in Slovenia, as well as noting that in doing so it was merely responding to the characterizations its “enemies” had bestowed upon it, the *Deutsche Zeitung* was also making a political claim over the self-identity and nationalisms of the German minority community.

The new *Deutsche Zeitung* started displaying “German commemoration days”, highlighting events such as the founding of the North German Confederation in 1870, the victory of Prussia over the French in 1871, and the birth of Habsburg Emperor Franz Josef I in 1830.²⁶⁷ In addition to these commemoration days, the *Deutsche Zeitung* also put the spotlight on the fact that the “600-year anniversary” of the Gottschee Germans was also being celebrated in Germany.²⁶⁸ Such emphasis by the paper on important events in German history highlighted and attempted to show the connection between Slovenia’s German minority and the wider cultural sphere of European Germandom.

²⁶⁷ DZ, “Deutsche Gedenktage”, August 15, 1929.

²⁶⁸ DZ, “Die Gottscheer 600-Jahrfeier wird auch in Deutschland gefeiert werden”, July 6, 1930.

Using geographically disparate events – the North German Confederation, Prussia, the Habsburgs – was a means for the *Deutsche Zeitung* of shoring up German nationalist sentiment while illustrating for more ambiguously self-identified German-speakers in Slovenia the alleged strong ties that they held with the wider German world.

The lack of discernible progress in gaining more rights, autonomy, and maintaining their identity led some of Slovenia's Germans to look outside Yugoslavia for help.²⁶⁹ After Reich Foreign Minister Dr. Gustav Stresemann died, the *Deutsche Zeitung* praised his support for the ethnic Germans living outside Germany: "...foreign Germandom throughout the world will keep the memories of this flawless person, this tireless fighter for a better present, this powerful, forward-pushing leader...in loyalty and gratitude."²⁷⁰ Stresemann had been notable for originally being a pan-Germanist and fervently believing in a strong German foreign policy that supported Europe's German minorities. This support translated into increased government funds for the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* and the *Deutsche Auslandsinstitut*.²⁷¹

That the *Deutsche Zeitung* considered Stresemann "flawless" due to his "tireless" efforts in support of Germans outside of Germany demonstrates a strong current among Slovenia's Germans of seeking help from outside Yugoslavia that would aid their cause. But the paper's highlighting of Stresemann's efforts in support of "foreign Germandom" also was a demonstration to nationally-indifferent Germans in Slovenia who had been

²⁶⁹ Reinhard Reimann argues that, due to the failure of a "lasting balance between Slovenes and Germans" in the 1920s, it was therefore "understandable that the Germans in Slovenia looked for possibilities to improve their societal position, and it is legitimate that they as such were on the lookout for help from abroad." Reimann, "Für echte Deutsche gibt es bei uns genügend Rechte", 144.

²⁷⁰ DZ, "Der verstorbene Reichsaussenminister Dr. Stresemann und die Auslandsdeutschen", October 13, 1929.

²⁷¹ Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 3-4.

unaware or apathetic to the efforts that their ancestral mother country had been partaking on their behalf.

Reaction to Nazi Electoral Success, 1930-1932

In Marburg/Maribor, the local German-language paper reported on the September 1930 Reichstag election, in which the National Socialist German Workers' Party massively increased their votes from the previous election and became the second strongest party behind the Social Democrats.²⁷² The *Mariborer Zeitung* informed its readers that the “victory of the extremist parties” had been “surprising” and thus served to make Germany’s domestic political scene even more difficult than it had been. In listing the Nazis’ post-election conditions for entering the government, the paper adopted a severely disapproving tone in acknowledging that “if these conditions are not accepted, (the Nazis) would...turn to obstruction” in the opposition. For the *Mariborer Zeitung*, that the “new parliament (would) have to overcome great difficulties in order to put together a stable governing majority from the [political] center” was not only a disheartening and disappointing failure of Weimar’s pro-democracy parties, but also an alarming threat to the cherished notion of democracy itself.²⁷³

²⁷² The NSDAP gained 18.3% of the vote, behind the SPD’s 24.5% but ahead of the KPD’s 13.1% and the Catholic *Zentrum*’s 11.8%. The Nazis’ almost six and a half million votes was an increase of the slightly more than one million they had received in the previous election. The 1930 Reichstag election saw their seats rise by 95 to 107, just behind the SPD’s 143, who had actually declined by 10 seats. The liberal parties, the DVP and DDP, received a combined 11.5%, which was also a decrease. Stibbe, *Germany, 1914-1933*, 168.

²⁷³ MZ, “Sieg der Extremisten”, September 9, 1930.

In the days after the election, the *Mariborer Zeitung* expressed further alarm at the street fighting and violence occurring in the Reich. Detailing the dead and wounded that had resulted from the “bloody...confrontations” between National Socialists and Communists, the paper emphasized the extent to which it had taken the police to “restore order” and bring about “relative peace” – it had only come about as a result of “strong police detachments” who had been “patrolling the streets all over.”²⁷⁴ The *Mariborer Zeitung*’s shock and alarm at the surprising electoral gains for the Nazi Party and the subsequent violence that accompanied those gains speaks to the strong current among Slovenia’s Germans for peace and stability. Political strife and social instability had been front and center for Yugoslavia for years. The *Deutsche Zeitung*’s passive acceptance of the royal dictatorship suggests that many were willing to approve, however hesitantly, the temporary end of democratic governance if it meant peace and stability, but not if it was accompanied by violence as was the case in Germany. Though desperately wanting to see an end to political and social instability, Slovenia’s Germans nonetheless were open to the idea of a dictatorship to bring about a more quiet state of affairs – a sentiment that would gain exponentially in importance after 1933.

Germans’ desire for peace in Slovenia and Europe centered on an end to violence and war, in stark contrast with the ideas of the Nazis. While Hitler’s plans for the National Socialist revolution called for German rearmament and aggressive expansion,²⁷⁵ in Slovenia the German minority community felt that the “path to Europe’s pacification and recovery” lay in the world conference on disarmament to be held in Geneva in

²⁷⁴ MZ, “Hitler Siegreich”, September 15, 1930.

²⁷⁵ Rich, *Hitler’s War Aims*, volume I, 83-85.

February of 1932.²⁷⁶ The Great War and the violent upheaval that occurred in its aftermath clearly had an impact upon Slovenia's German minority, as their support for and understanding of disarmament being the "only path" for European stability demonstrates.

A new census was to be taken in 1931. Similar to the 1921 version, the *Deutsche Zeitung* advised its readership to resist influence from any non-Germans about how to correctly inscribe their ethnicity in the form.²⁷⁷ For German nationalists who were concerned about the disappearance of their culture and presence in Slovenia, the census represented both an important yet terrifying opportunity to display their existence. If the numbers of German-speakers were too low, then this would prove that the German presence was on an inevitable path to decline and erasure. If, on the other hand, German-speakers showed themselves to be residing in Slovenia in great numbers, they would therefore be able to secure the preservation of their culture through this demonstrably and verifiably clear method. The results of the census showed the number of Germans in Slovenia declining from 41,514 in 1921 to 28,998 in 1931, a slip from 3.9% to 2.53% of Slovenia's population.²⁷⁸ In Cilli/Celje, the number of Germans fell by half, making their share of the city's population there only 5.9%. The German share of population in Marburg/Maribor fell from 21.5% to 8.3%.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁶ DZ, "Um die Weltabrüstung", August 2, 1931.

²⁷⁷ DZ, "Volkszählung", March 29, 1931.

²⁷⁸ Ferenc and Repe, "Die Deutsche Minderheit in Slowenien in der Zwischenkriegszeit", 163.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

By the spring of 1931, the Great Depression had reached Slovenia. Unemployment increased steadily until 1933, and only reached its pre-Depression level in 1938.²⁸⁰ Austria's Creditanstalt failed in May of 1931, resulting in Yugoslavia losing millions of dollars.²⁸¹ "Our whole continent," wrote the *Deutsche Zeitung* in May of 1931, "especially its center, but also its east, are under the crushing pressure of economic desolation and therefore an uncertainty reaches into almost every family."²⁸² Economic problems added to the already-strained German minority in Slovenia, who were still dissatisfied with the current state of minority education and political rights.

Despite recoiling from the end of democracy in Italy and violence in the streets in Germany, Germans in Slovenia welcomed the stability that their own royal dictatorship had brought. "We Germans," wrote the *Deutsche Zeitung* in October of 1931, "having always proven to be an element of order, of construction, of economic progress, are above all interested in" the "well-being of all citizens" at a time when the worsening continental economy was causing hardship for millions. The paper expressed support for the royal dictatorship, since it was no longer "weakened by party struggles." "We would like to keep this state of peace and order", wrote the paper, "and so...we will vote for the state!"²⁸³ Despite massive abstention from non-Serbs, the 1931 election brought 306 new

²⁸⁰ Toussaint Hočevar, *The Structure of the Slovenian Economy, 1848-1963* (New York: Studia Slovenica, 1965), 131.

²⁸¹ Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 168-169.

²⁸² DZ, "Traurige Erkenntnis", May 24, 1931.

²⁸³ DZ, "Wir wählen die Staatsliste!", October 29, 1931.

deputies to the national parliament, little more than a front for democracy under the king's personal rule.²⁸⁴

In November of 1931, the *Deutsche Zeitung* wrote an article addressing the rapid political rise of the National Socialist movement in the German Reich. Noting the incredible gains of the NSDAP in only a few short years, the paper expressed a mix of shock and awe at the increase in mandates for the National Socialists “from 12 to 107” and “six and a half million votes for Adolf Hitler.” While recognizing that “parliamentarism is rejected by the Hitler party”, the paper nonetheless could not help its amazement at how “every type of class...from the simple volunteer over [to] the bureaucrats and farmers, to the academics and educated” had been convinced to vote for the Nazis. The *Deutsche Zeitung* was aware of the implications for European diplomacy and stability that the election of the National Socialists would bring: “It is obvious that this would be of enormous meaning for world politics.”

“What, then, do the “Nazis” want...?” asked the paper. It went on to describe the party's program, emphasizing the “liberation” and “renewal of the German people” in “racial, political, economic, and cultural” terms. Hitler's claim to include all Germans in one state, along with his plans for reducing unemployment, was also stressed. Finally, the *Deutsche Zeitung* concluded its assessment of the Nazi Party by noting that “it was they

²⁸⁴ The new constitution of 1931 had allowed election of members from open ballot, and gave the king the ability to veto any legislation while disallowing self-autonomous municipal governments in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana. The new parliament “passed no noteworthy legislation and made no appeal to an opposing minority that included representatives from the seven major parties from the previous decade, all still formally illegal.” Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 166-167.

who first confronted the Social Democratic terror, broke it, and today are wresting away thousands of members from the Marxists.”²⁸⁵

Yet during the campaign for the new Reich President, the *Deutsche Zeitung* observed that “no one seriously believed” that Adolf Hitler would defeat “the old Field Marshal” Hindenburg. “For that”, the paper stated, “there would have had to have been a revolution of the soul of extraordinary kind that, however, is still unimaginable in the peaceful, order-loving German people, despite its terrible experiences.” The paper went on to express relief that Hindenburg would “remain at the head of the Reich”, meaning there would be “no rash, adventurous development.” Nonetheless, the *Deutsche Zeitung* also remarked that “Hitler has doubled his votes...and that against Hindenburg!”²⁸⁶ After the second round of voting concluded, the paper expressed its relief that the “venerable, legendary form of Hindenburg” would remain at the head of the Reich, and that what was “even more important” was that Hitler’s failure to win was seen as a setback for the National Socialists.²⁸⁷

“Hitler’s National Socialism has become”, declared the *Deutsche Zeitung* on July 24, 1932, “one of the most violent movements that is shaking the German world...It is the ideology of Hitler and his supporters that...must be grappled with.”²⁸⁸ Revulsion at the violence that accompanied the National Socialist movement in Germany but tacit approval of the end of democracy, as displayed by the *Deutsche Zeitung* and *Mariborer*

²⁸⁵ DZ, “Der Deutsche Nationalsozialismus”, November 29, 1931.

²⁸⁶ DZ, “Die Deutschen Reichspräsidentenwahlen”, March 17, 1932.

²⁸⁷ DZ, “Nach der Deutschen Präsidentenwahl”, April 14, 1932.

²⁸⁸ DZ, “Deutsche Zukunftswirtschaft”, July 24, 1932.

Zeitung, demonstrates the tensions and conflicting opinions among Slovenia's German minority community. Some German nationalists were amazed at the astounding political rise of Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists, who they saw as embodying their worldview of a living German *Volk* and German cultural superiority. Others of a more conservative nationalist persuasion agreed with parts of what the National Socialists were advocating, but disavowed its violent tendencies. Still others who may have had favorable or unfavorable views of the NSDAP itself had reservations over the party's violence but had stronger concerns over the political instability its electoral success and party program resulted in. Such a wide spectrum of views on the National Socialist movement mirrors the type of reactions Reich Germans themselves held,²⁸⁹ and displays the various types of German nationalisms present in Slovenia.

After the July 1932 Reichstag elections in Germany which saw the NSDAP gain the largest share of the vote but not a majority,²⁹⁰ the *Deutsche Zeitung* expressed its "wonder" at the way "all of Germany" had been gripped by "election fever." The paper gushed about how "there are now 13,722,748 National Socialist voters!" Most notable was the *Deutsche Zeitung*'s concluding thoughts about the election: "(What is) important for Germany is the overwhelming proof that this election has brought, that the German

²⁸⁹ National Socialists were "determined to transcend those widely accepted restrictions on their potential constituency to become the first genuine party of mass integration in German political history." As such, they focused on garnering support in every aspect of German society – class, religion, economy, and region. As the Great Depression took its toll on Germany in the early 1930s, "traditional loyalties within the middle-class electorate" fell away and the Nazis were able to achieve "significant breakthroughs into each of the major elements of the *Mittelstand*." The core group of NSDAP voters, outside of the lower middle class, were "small farmers, shopkeepers, and independent artisans" who had "fear of social and economic displacement associated with the emergence of modern industrial society." Childers, *The Nazi Voter*, 262-264.

²⁹⁰ The NSDAP achieved 37.3%, only four years after it had received slightly more than 2%. The Communists gained votes, while the SPD and *Zentrum* were able to maintain stable core constituencies in getting 21.6% and 12.4% respectively. *Ibid.*, 208-209.

Volk is disposed towards national, fatherland-ish, and masculine in its dynamic and youthful parts. When a people in the situation of the German people give 37.3 percent of its voters to so sharp a fatherland party, then that is a sign of healthy, lively freshness. Every German abroad must be happy about that.”²⁹¹

The *Deutsche Zeitung*'s disdain of the disorder the democracy could bring was seen in its reaction to the NSDAP's electoral rise. “No one other than the leader of the largest...German party, Adolf Hitler, has denounced parliamentarians as well as parliamentarism as sharply as he did in his book, *Mein Kampf*.” The German people themselves, after the November elections resulted in a slight loss for the Nazis,²⁹² had “decisively...shown” that the “Reichstag cannot rule”, and was “incapable of working, as it was earlier.”²⁹³

While the *Deutsche Zeitung* was largely approving of Adolf Hitler and the rise of National Socialism in Germany, the *Mariborer Zeitung* expressed different views. A few days after the July election, the paper commented upon the possible participation of the Catholic *Zentrum* party in a right-wing coalition government. Phrasing the article as “*Zentrum* against Dictatorship”, the paper saw the party's entrance into a coalition with the NSDAP as helping to bring stability and legitimacy to what would otherwise prove to be a disaster for the German Republic.²⁹⁴ Unlike its counterpart in Cilli/Celje, the *Mariborer Zeitung* emphasized the NSDAP's electoral decline in the November 1932

²⁹¹ DZ, “Die Deutschen Reichstagswahlen”, August 4, 1932.

²⁹² Stibbe, *Germany, 1914-1933*, 186.

²⁹³ DZ, “Parlamentswahlen gegen den Parlamentarismus”, November 10, 1932.

²⁹⁴ MZ, “Zentrum gegen Diktatur”, August 5, 1932.

Reichstag elections. Especially important for the *Mariborer Zeitung* was that the election had taken place in “complete peace” and throughout “the entire Reich”, demonstrating that the German people had not been unduly influenced by other factors in expressing their will against a Nazi majority.²⁹⁵

The Nazis’ electoral gains through the end of 1932 had produced mixed reactions among Slovenia’s German minority. While the *Cillier Zeitung/Deutsche Zeitung* spoke for some in its exultation and awe at the Nazis’ party platform and incredible gains made over such a short time, there were still pockets of skeptics to be found in ethnic German perceptions of the NSDAP. Some Germans had seen the stability that had been brought about by the royal dictatorship in Yugoslavia and applied that logic to the politically-deadlocked Weimar Republic. Others were revolted by the Nazis’ use of violent tactics to sway public opinion, or were not convinced by arguments in favor of a living *Volksgemeinschaft* of Germans in Europe. Though some German nationalists in Slovenia were taken up in passion by the rise of the NSDAP, this had only come about after their initial explosion onto the political scene in the 1930 Reichstag election. The effects of the Great Depression and continuing lack of progress in regards to minority education, rights, and protection in Slovenia added to the disaffection that some Germans in Slovenia felt for the Yugoslav state.

Throughout the 1920s, however, there remained a tension among Slovenia’s German minority – a tension in identity, nationalism, and views of Slovenia and Yugoslavia. While some Germans remained optimistic that they could achieve social and cultural progress through political means, others maintained their conviction that they

²⁹⁵ MZ, “Die Nationalsozialisten Geschwächt”, November 7, 1932.

were being persecuted by a nationalist Slovene majority government due to their ethnic German character. While German nationalist activists – aided by, at times, the *Cillier Zeitung* and *Deutsche Zeitung* – attempted to convince their fellow German-speakers that they were a part of a wider German *Volk* whose very existence was under threat, the reality of German identity and nationalism was more nuanced. Many German-speakers were unconvinced that voting for the *Partei der Deutschen* was in their best interest, or indeed, that voting in the election was important at all. The repeated attempts of German nationalists to control the interpretation of German identity in Slovenia were unsuccessful, attesting to the persistence of national ambiguity in self-identity.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶ This indifference to national affiliation was not exclusive to Slovenia's Germans. "There was also, as in most polities, a relatively indifferent, apolitical mass in the center, a *Volksdeutsche* 'silent majority', which left politics to the leadership and the activists and accepted the political flow passively, wherever it might take them." Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries*, 28.

Chapter Three – In the Shadow of the Third Reich, 1933-1941

Previous scholarship has shown that, after the Nazis' rise to power in 1933, particularly the Germans of Slovenia became Nazified, beginning a period of staunch support for National Socialism that would last through to the war years of the 1940s. Were all Germans supporters of the Nazis though? If not, then who were the Germans that were not supportive? What was, or was not, the appeal of National Socialism? How did the Germans in Slovenia view political developments in neighboring Austria? What can this reaction show about German identity and nationalism? This chapter will examine the reaction of the German minorities in Slovenia to the rise and the rule of the Nazis in the 1930s, then analyze what this reaction shows about German identity and nationalism in Slovenia, and explain why National Socialism was so appealing to some.

Adolf Hitler, who had been publicly declaring his intentions to “intern Communist and Social Democratic opponents in concentration camps” should he receive the power to do so, became Chancellor of Germany in January of 1933 due to his own political maneuverings, as well as a “complex process of bargaining and intrigue” from other factors. Kurt von Schleicher and Franz von Papen’s fatefully-misguided assumptions of being able to control Hitler, or, once he “cracked under the strains of government”, take control of the German government, helped to manufacture the opportunity for the leader of the National Socialists to come to power.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷ “Those who had engineered Hitler into the chancellorship imagined that they had finally achieved a viable conservative coalition, with the National Socialists alongside the German National People’s Party and the Stahlhelm, together with a scattering of expert ministers. Papen exuded confidence that Hitler could be contained, marginalised, and dropped before government reverted to those who thought they had an entitlement to it.” Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 149-151.

Shortly after Adolf Hitler was appointed *Reichskanzler* on January 30, 1933, the *Mariborer Zeitung* expressed skepticism about the wisdom of giving “exclusive power” to “one single man” whose placement had been “strikingly” faster and earlier than “one may generally have thought.” The paper went on to explain, in a reassuring way, that the *Reichswehr* remained separate from his control, and that the Social Democrats would “set themselves in the harshest struggle against the new Hitler regime...with all available means.”²⁹⁸ Predictions of left-wing resistance to the Nazis’ rise to power were immediately proven accurate, as members of the KPD and SPD, who had long been the objects of fanatical hatred of National Socialists during the years of the Weimar Republic, engaged in street fights, produced anti-Nazi publications, and otherwise “engaged in mass resistance” in the first year of dictatorship. Reprisal and repression was quick and ferocious; thousands of left-wing opponents of the Nazi regime were imprisoned, detained, tortured, and brutally mistreated in the months after Hitler and the National Socialists gained control of the Reich government.²⁹⁹

Similar to the *Deutsche Zeitung*’s previous alarm and exultation at the surprisingly rapid rise in the electoral fortunes of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party, the *Mariborer Zeitung*’s critical appraisal of Adolf Hitler’s appointment to Chancellor of the German Reich reflects varied thoughts among its German-speaking readership in Slovenia. Reflecting on the “exclusive power” being given to “one man”

²⁹⁸ MZ, “Hitler als Kanzler”, February 1, 1933.

²⁹⁹ Nikolaus Wachsmann, “The policy of exclusion: repression in the Nazi state, 1933-1939”, in Jane Caplan, ed., *The Short Oxford History of Germany: Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 123. For more on left-wing resistance to the Nazis, see Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure, and Effects of National Socialism*, trans. Jean Steinberg (New York: Praeger, 1971), 370-379. See also Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).

who had gained that power in a rather quick fashion is at once a lament for the fall of German democracy and an expression of support for the end of a perceived-unworkable parliamentary system.

For those German-speakers in Slovenia who felt strongly in the tenets of democracy, the rise of the extremely anti-parliamentary NSDAP could only be a step backwards for stability both in Germany and in Europe. Others, who had seen the years of fragile coalitions of Weimar politics and obstacles to strong governance, felt that Hitler's appointment and the strength of the Nazi Party would bring about a more stable, stronger German nation. Mentioning the opposition SPD gives a signal to both supporters and detractors of the NSDAP alike; for detractors, this was a sign that the Nazis would not have it all their own way, while supporters could steel themselves for the coming attempt to crush left-wing forces in Germany. Both of these currents, pro- and anti-Nazi, were among the members of the German minority community in Slovenia on the eve of the beginning of the German dictatorship.

The Reichstag Election of March 1933

The German Reichstag election of March 5, 1933, resulted in a slim 52% majority for the Nazis and the DNVP, giving them 340 out of 647 seats. Despite expectations for a better result, the lack of a more widespread support for the National Socialists' revolution meant that the two-thirds majority necessary to alter the constitution failed. Even with various methods of disenfranchisement and political oppression of other parties, the

National Socialists faced a country that had not, in the end, given it full trust to control the country.³⁰⁰

The *Deutsche Zeitung* was firmly on the side of the new National Socialist government.³⁰¹ In an article titled “Maker of Poison: The Fight against the Massive Lies of the Press”, the paper explained how a new “emergency decree” that contained “significant tightening of existing penalties for treason” was necessary to counteract the communications broadcast to foreign countries whose goal was to “slander and damage Germany.” From the *Deutsche Zeitung*’s perspective, the Reich government had “special reason to defend itself” against “how many occurrences happen abroad”, and was thus justified in its “fight against the untrue news” which had resulted in a “poisoning of public opinion.” The problem was, as the paper put it, that “the public will always believe these false, sensationalist news reports over the sober truth.”³⁰²

The *Deutsche Zeitung*’s vindication for the Nazis’ press censorship appealed to German nationalists who were already supportive of the National Socialist movement and government. But the paper’s lengthy explanation of the purpose of the censorship was also an attempt to persuade skeptical German-speakers in Slovenia of the legitimacy of the Third Reich’s new governmental policies. Being outside of Germany, German-speakers in Slovenia would have been open to other countries’ interpretations of the

³⁰⁰ These methods included discounting the “votes of eighty-one Communist deputies” and changing procedural rules of the Reichstag to count absent deputies as present. Burleigh, *Nazi Germany*, 153. The Nazis and their allies were also able to command totally all media and had the police and SA to suppress political opposition. Stibbe, *Germany, 1914-1933*, 194.

³⁰¹ The editor in chief, Erich Petschauer, was known to be an “organized National Socialist” and “notorious opponent of Austria.” Dušan Nećak, “‘Die Deutschen’ in Slowenien, 1938-1948”, in *Slowenisch-österreichische Beziehungen*, 375.

³⁰² DZ, “Giftmischer”, March 5, 1933.

Nazis' policies and, in the words of the *Deutsche Zeitung*, might be led to "believe these false, sensationalist news reports over the sober truth."

After the March 5 election, the *Deutsche Zeitung* reported on the "German wonder" that "Adolf Hitler's liberation movement" had achieved. Noting how much larger the National Socialist share of the vote was over its nearest competitors, the paper exulted in the spectrum of different types of people who had supported the NSDAP:

The child from the *Volk*, the unknown German soldier, the German musketeer have accomplished the great, the unthinkable, after 14 years of superhuman struggle: The German nation has placed a majority behind its national government, forged together in a fire. The Hitler government has been promised the overwhelming trust and all power from the German people. There is today no government in Europe that could have won such a measure of power in a legal, constitutional way through the persuasive power of its idea[s]...³⁰³

Welcoming the "turnaround of the German people and its fate" that the NSDAP's political breakthrough had caused, the *Deutsche Zeitung* castigated "all those who...prophesied the deterioration" of the Nazi Party and its ability to "take power through legal means." The paper declared that "Adolf Hitler has confirmed his power through legal means: through legal means, he achieved the German revolution, the uplifting of the nation (*Aufbruch der Nation*), the Third Reich."³⁰⁴

Addressing critics who would "of course say, the wonder of this election has been achieved through the terrorization of the other parties", the *Deutsche Zeitung* asked, "Where was this terrorization?" Putting the blame on the "communists" who had "identified themselves" as "lackeys of Moscow" in burning the Reichstag, the paper rejected the notion that the Nazis had achieved their electoral victory through illegal or

³⁰³ DZ, "Das Deutsche Wunder", March 9, 1933.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

violent methods.³⁰⁵ The *Deutsche Zeitung*'s accusation of communist terrorism in Germany was one reason for its support of the NSDAP's political victory: "The elections of March 5 are, finally, of great significance for Europe, since it signals the liquidation of Communism." The paper also explicitly included the German minority community in its celebration of the result of the March 5 election. "Not only the Germans in the Reich or in Austria, but rather all Germans in the world joyously and, deeply moved, thank God that He has sent the German *Volk*, of which we are a part, over all borders as a far-reaching community, the right man for the most horrible hours of fate."³⁰⁶

The *Deutsche Zeitung*'s crowing over the NSDAP's electoral success was tempered by its awareness that a significant portion of its readership held critical views of the violent tendencies of the Nazis. Stressing the legal methods by which the Nazis gained power was intended to reassure or placate that segment of German-speakers in Slovenia who were skeptical of aspects of National Socialism, while the paper's clear joy of the significance of the National Socialists' ideology for the renewal of the *Volk* shows that there was also a not-inconsiderable amount of Germans in Slovenia who were supportive or, indeed, fanatical in their beliefs in common with National Socialism. The *Deutsche Zeitung*'s stringent anti-communism as well reflects a deeply-held worldview among certain members of the German minority in Slovenia, like those involved in industry and business, who were strongly liberal, nationalist, pro-free market, and pro-

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid. Including "Germans all over the world" as part of the *Volk*, not just the citizens of the Reich, supported National Socialism's ideology of the *Volk* as a living, breathing, indivisible component nation comprised of all Germans throughout the world. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries*, 19.

capitalism.³⁰⁷ That the paper would include a strongly-worded reference to God's involvement in the rise of German National Socialism points to a robust Catholicism and Christian identity among German-speakers in Slovenia. By linking Christianity with the Nazis, the *Deutsche Zeitung* was attempting to persuade those German-speakers who felt strongly about their religion and the anti-Christian tendencies of the National Socialists³⁰⁸ that the revolutionary movement was not in fact a threat to their way of life and identity.

³⁰⁷ Despite the social policies of the 1920s that saw German culture and societal institutions restricted if not removed, Germans still retained well into the 1930s a large part of their pre-Versailles hold on Slovenia's industrial wealth: Slovenian sources stated in 1938 that, in Lower Styria, 144 industrial establishments were German, while only 131 were in Slovenian hands. This at a time when the German population had been shrinking and the Slovene one increasing. The German community in banking was still strong in the 1930s as well; the *Marburger Kreditanstalt* had links to Vienna and though it had Slovenian representatives on its board of directors, it was always Germans who had the final say in decisions. Suppan, "Zur Lage der Deutschen in Slowenien zwischen 1918 und 1938", 190. When the NSDAP was campaigning in elections in the Weimar years, emphasized anti-capitalist views in order to appeal to the working class. Mark Mazower writes that "fascism stressed manual labor rather than machinery and technology as in the USSR or the USA... 'I am a socialist,' Hitler stated, 'because it appears to me incomprehensible to nurse and handle a machine with care but to allow the most noble representatives of (labor), the people, to decay.'" Though the Nazis and other fascist parties in interwar Europe portrayed themselves as pro-worker and anti-capitalism, once in power they acted quite differently – as the Nazis' treatment of socialists and communists in the 1930s decisively shows. Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 131. Though German industrialists, liberals, and others who held pro-capitalist views in Slovenia would have regarded the anti-capitalist, anti-business rhetoric of the Nazis with alarm, this was evidently outweighed by these same peoples' intense dislike of socialism and communism, as well as perhaps other appealing aspects of National Socialism.

³⁰⁸ The Nazis were, in their early years, supporters of Christianity, even including an article in the party's program that emphasized Christianity's role in fighting "Marxist atheism." Bracher, *The German Dictatorship*, 380. Though Hitler was personally opposed to the Church for political reasons, millions of German Catholics and Protestants – who together constituted the overwhelming majority of Germans – were drawn to the National Socialist movement. Despite this, many Christians found the Nazis incompatible with their religious beliefs; in some parts of the country, Catholics "were explicitly forbidden to become members of the Nazi Party." J.S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933-1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 3-6. The Roman Catholic Church and many Catholics in Germany in particular were opposed to the Nazis' racist treatment of Jews, forced abortions, sterilizations, and euthenizations, if they at the same time did not actively or violently resist the National Socialist regime. See Richard Steigmann-Gall, "Religion and the churches", in Caplan, ed., *The Short Oxford History of Nazi Germany*, 146-167. As for Austria, the German Nazi Party saw Catholics as "the chief sources of anti-German hate" in that country. Bruce F. Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis: A History of Austrian National Socialism* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 99.

In the Wake of the *Machtergreifung* and the National Socialist Dictatorship

Moving quickly after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January and the Party's electoral success in March of 1933, the Nazis manipulated the political opposition enough to pass the Enabling Act by a wide margin, thereby giving the NSDAP the ability to govern for four years without needing to consult the Reichstag.³⁰⁹ With complete political power in the hands of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, the various cultural organizations that supported Germans abroad quickly fell victim to the process of *Gleichschaltung* and began, along with newly-created organizations such as the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*,³¹⁰ to pursue the spreading of Nazism to the *Volksdeutsche* outside the Third Reich.³¹¹ For Hitler and his National Socialist ideological compatriots, Eastern Europe's vast terrain, inhabited by "lesser" humans, posed a grave threat to the

³⁰⁹ The Enabling Act, which was renewed in 1937, was only opposed by the Social Democrats, who voted against it *en masse*. While the SS and SA intimidated opposition deputies, Hitler and Papen managed to convince the Catholic *Zentrum* and other parties, to vote in favor of the law. The Weimar constitution was kept "for reasons of convenience, and to foster an impression of continuity and legality." Burleigh, *Nazi Germany*, 154-155.

³¹⁰ The *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VoMi – Ethnic German Liaison Office) was founded in 1935 by the Nazis to "centralize and coordinate all organizations and activities in the Reich dealing with the *Volksdeutsche*." Hitler had given leadership of the new party apparatus to Heinrich Himmler, who, in his new capacity as *Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums* (RKFDV – Reich Commissar for the Strengthening of Germandom), "considered it a chance to begin the construction of the new racial order." Himmler eventually maneuvered VoMi's organization to essentially become an arm of the SS, and would use the group to communicate with and spread Nazi ideology to Europe's ethnic German minorities living outside the Third Reich. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries*, 12-14.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 73. The ultimate goal was to, if not completely convince the millions of Germans abroad to become hard-core believers in National Socialism, then to at least accept Adolf Hitler as Führer of the German *Volk*. Once this was accomplished, the various ethnic German minority groups would then be able to serve (or be exploited for) the foreign policy objectives and interests of Nazi Germany. *Ibid.* The major Reich organizations concerned with Germans abroad, the VDA and DAI, were quickly put under Nazi leadership. New Reich departments, such as the *Aussenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP* and *Auslandabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP* were set up so as to promote Nazi ideology abroad, especially among ethnic Germans. Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 6-9. An example of the type of message Nazi organizations sent to ethnic Germans abroad can be seen in the following quotation from Theodor Oberländer, writing against Poland: "The struggle for ethnicity...is nothing other than the continuation of war by other means under the cover of peace. Not a fight with gas, grenades, and machine-guns, but a fight about homes, farms, schools, and the souls of children, a struggle...which goes on for generations with one aim: extermination!" Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 44.

very existence of Germany. The only recourse was a massive territorial expansion into the East, accompanied by Germanization of the land and its people.³¹² Though Hitler privately was uncertain as to what role, precisely, ethnic Germans abroad should have in his plans for *Lebensraum* in the East, in public at least he claimed that Nazi Germany was to be their defender. While this purpose would, for the Nazis, partially justify aggressive territorial expansion, the views and loyalties of the ethnic Germans themselves towards the Third Reich and its motives were more nuanced.³¹³

The first signs of National Socialist propaganda,³¹⁴ or indeed, genuine support for the Nazis, among the German community of Slovenia began to arise in early 1933. Some German-speakers in Cilli/Celje had begun to greet each other with “Heil Hitler”, while swastika flags started appearing on houses in the Gottschee/Kočevje and Hitler’s

³¹² Rich, *Hitler’s War Aims, volume I*, 4-9.

³¹³ Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 11-15. Though there were, depending on which country, many Germans who desired to return to the Third Reich and accepted Nazi Germany’s expansionist goals, the fact that many more of the so-called *Volksdeutsche* had to be persuaded and sometimes “educated” to accept this ideology and their Germanic identity itself shows that regional affiliation was often stronger than an ancestrally-German one. For Europe’s ethnic minorities in the interwar period, the question of loyalty was often interpreted by the majority ethnicity to justify anti-minority policies. Traditional pillars of “loyalty” that divided majorities from their minorities – nationality, ethnicity, religion, language – were not in every case treated the same by either side of the issue. Peter Haslinger and Joachim von Puttkamer, “Staatsmacht, Minderheit, Loyalität – konzeptionelle Grundlagen am Beispiel Ostmittel- und Südosteuropas in der Zwischenkriegszeit”, in Peter Haslinger and Joachim von Puttkamer, eds., *Staat, Loyalität und Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa, 1918-1941* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 1-3.

³¹⁴ The Nazi *Machtergreifung* signaled the start of a “national revolution” that would “transform German society in accordance with their ideology.” Part of this “re-education” and mobilization of the German people, as well as Germans abroad, was through propaganda aimed at the integration of “disparate elements under the banner of national rebirth for Germany.” This attempt to spread the message of a *Volksgemeinschaft*, of which every ethnic German in the world was a part, was based upon four core principles: “1) appeal to national unity based upon the principle ‘the community before the individual’ (*Volksgemeinschaft*); 2) the need for racial purity; 3) a hatred of enemies which increasingly centered on Jews and Bolsheviks, and 4) charismatic leadership (*Führerprinzip*.” David Welch, “Nazi Propaganda and the *Volksgemeinschaft*: Constructing a People’s Community”, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2004), 213-217. For more on Nazi propaganda during World War II, see Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006).

speeches were broadcast on the radio.³¹⁵ Austria's consul in Ljubljana, Dr. Orsini-Rosenberg, "apprehensively" (*besorgt*) reported to Christian-Social Chancellor Dollfuß on the National Socialist attitudes of German youths in Slovenia, many of whom had studied at universities in the Reich.³¹⁶

The *Deutsche Zeitung*, in its exhilaration over the rise of the Nazi Party, listed the reasons for its support of the NSDAP – and thereby attempted to persuade its readership of the benefits the new National Socialist regime would bring. The paper jubilated over the German people's "readiness" to "raise itself out of destitution and, through effort and labor, win a place in the world again, a place in the sun." The rejuvenation of Germany's economic and political might, which had been brought down by "enmity against Germany", would "signify good for the whole world."³¹⁷ The National Socialist "revolution" had brought about "reconciliation between the manual laborer and intellectual" which had helped to bring about the "elimination of unemployment."³¹⁸

Germany's economic revival would certainly have been welcome news for the business owners, bankers, and other industrialists in Slovenia who stood to benefit from increased trade between the Third Reich and Yugoslavia.³¹⁹ Expressing exhilaration over

³¹⁵ Attempts by the Austrian National Socialist Party to spread their own version of German nationalist propaganda to the Germans of Slovenia were largely suppressed by the Slovene government, though not in every case; for example, the Marburg/Maribor branch of the Kulturbund was successful in March of 1934 in organizing a German youth group with the *Führerprinzip* being implemented. Suppan, "Lage der Deutschen in Slowenien", 210-212.

³¹⁶ Nečak, *Die "Deutschen" in Slowenien*, 14.

³¹⁷ DZ, "Die Deutsche Maifeier", May 4, 1933.

³¹⁸ DZ, "Das Riesenfest der Deutschen Arbeit", May 4, 1933.

³¹⁹ A major problem for establishing Yugoslavia's independence was its reliance upon foreign trade with the neighboring countries that "most wanted to control or destroy" it. Frank C. Littlefield, *Germany and Yugoslavia, 1933-1941: The German Conquest of Yugoslavia* (New York: Columbia University Press,

Germany's apparent revival of its former glory attests to the strong current of post-war emotion for German-speakers throughout Eastern and Central Europe, as they had had to endure losing their privileged status as an ethnic majority in either the German Reich or Austrian Empire after the Central Powers' defeat in the Great War. Emphasizing National Socialism's appeal across class boundaries as well reflects upon a certain class divide among Slovenia's German community; in highlighting the "reconciliation between the manual laborer and intellectual", the *Deutsche Zeitung* is demonstrating the newfound strength in unity in Germany that it wanted to replicate in Slovenia's German minority.

While the *Deutsche Zeitung* was expressing support for a foreign political party that was explicit in its aggressive intentions towards other countries,³²⁰ the paper still emphasized non-violence and loyalty to the Yugoslav state. On the occasion of an attempted assassination of Chancellor Dollfuß, the paper reported that "an Austrian shot at the Minister-President of our neighboring state! Luckily the shots were not fatal, and we are happy that they were not deadly." To underscore its continuing loyal devotion to

1988), 27. Yugoslavia's main trade partner had been Italy, until the Great Depression led Mussolini to favor Hungary. Relations worsened when Yugoslavia approved of the sanctions put against Italy for its invasion of Abyssinia in 1935. Nazi Germany was ready and willing to fill the gap that had thus opened up in Yugoslavia's trade. Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*, 275. While economic concerns were definitely a reason for increased trade with Germany, there were also political reasons for Yugoslavia's shift in foreign interests. "By 1935, Yugoslav exports to France had shrunk to less than 15 percent of their 1930 level. The shift to Germany began as an effort to observe the League of Nations embargo against Italy after its 1935 conquest of Ethiopia. If Yugoslavia observed the sanctions, it would hurt Mussolini's hostile government and win Western approval at the same time. When the French government failed to reward [Prime Minister] Stojadinović by relaxing its protectionist tariffs, he readily responded to the offer of favorable export prices tendered by Hitler's finance minister, Hjalmar Schacht, in June 1936." Germany had also an increased demand for Yugoslavia's copper and bauxite resources. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 179-180. As well, France's diplomatic cooperation with Italy and the Soviet Union especially irritated Yugoslavia. The Great Depression had heavily damaged the export-oriented economies of Slovenia and Croatia, who began in the early 1930s to advocate for a stronger economic relationship with both Germany and Great Britain. Suppan, *Jugoslawien und Österreich*, 285.

³²⁰ Though Hitler had, once he gained power, begun to moderate his international image, his earlier speeches that strongly emphasized the need for Germany to expand was "very popular." Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 43.

the Yugoslav state, the paper explained that “as members of the German *Volksgemeinschaft* with the motto “loyal to State and *Volk*, we are interested in the incidents in Germany and Austria.” Noting that “because we belong to a different state”, the Germans of Slovenia would be expected even more so to condemn the incidents, they took pains to repudiate what had happened.³²¹

With the growing strength of the Austrian National Socialist Party (*Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Partei*, DNSAP) creating a threat to Dollfuß’s ruling by decree in early 1933, the Austrian Nazis began a period of several years in Austria marked by terrorism, civil war, bombings, and political suppression.³²² As a reflection of its German-speaking, Austrian-affiliated readership, the *Deutsche Zeitung*’s repudiation of the violence occurring in Austria done by National Socialists was meant to reassure both Germans in Slovenia as well as the Ljubljana and Belgrade governments that this same type of ideological warfare would not be spilling over the border. But the paper’s inclusion of Slovenia’s German-speaking population in the racial *Volksgemeinschaft* points as well to a large segment of the minority community that sympathized, at least in some ways, with aspects of the German nationalism of National Socialism.

³²¹ DZ, “Schüsse in die Weltgeschichte”, October 8, 1933.

³²² By the Spring of 1933, Austria’s Nazi Party could “legitimately claim to be a mass movement”, with roughly one-third of Austrians finding at least parts of its platform appealing. The DNSAP appealed to a wide swath of the Austrian electorate – the young, students, peasants, miners, businessmen, and Catholics and Protestants alike. With the German Nazis’ electoral victory in March of 1933, the Austrian Nazis “appeared to be well prepared to challenge the government in a test of strength and will power.” Chancellor Dollfuß “refused to be intimidated” by this growing threat, and exploited a parliamentary procedure in March to rule Austria by decree. He proceeded to outlaw the Austrian Nazi Party and wage a campaign of violence against both Nazi and Socialist agitation against his rule over the next several years. Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, 102-104. Austria’s Christian Social movement saw “political Catholicism” as a greater force than ethnic German nationalism as espoused by the Nazis, who in any case were perceived to be anti-Catholic. Similar to the German-language press in neighboring Slovenia, this did not stop pro-Nazi sentiment in newspapers to claim a majority in favor of *Anschluss* and National Socialism after the *Machtergreifung* in 1933. Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist state*, 108-109.

One major factor shared by both of these camps, whether anti- or pro-Nazism, is a type of German nationalism. German proponents of National Socialism in Slovenia who jubilated over Hitler's ascension to power in the Reich and sought Austria's inclusion with Nazi Germany maintained this sentiment, but had to remain muted due to the hostile attitude of the Yugoslav and Slovene governments. But other German nationalists, many of whose Christian identity precluded them from fully embracing National Socialism, were apprehensive about the Third Reich's intentions towards Austria and Slovenia's Catholic German populations.³²³

The *Deutsche Zeitung* found itself defending Nazi Germany's new laws,³²⁴ such as one aimed at "preserving the (German) race", which had "incited a not inconsiderable storm" of controversy. To justify what was "really meant to achieve with this measure", the paper declared that the "most dangerous opponent of German National Socialism was and is perhaps still – Communism." Noting that the Soviet Union had the "most inconsiderable" attention to "preservation of the race", the paper then explained how "German racial preservation is not so much the product of an overwrought, specific Germanic racial pride as it is more a defensive measure against an intermixing [of races]

³²³ This same type of dynamic was present in Austria at the time, whose geographical proximity to the Third Reich heightened the conflicted identities and nationalisms among German-speakers there. Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 109-120.

³²⁴ Shortly after taking over control of the country, the Nazis began to implement racial laws that legalized discrimination against "non-Germans" in Germany, such as Jews, gypsies, Poles, and other minorities. Some examples of the titles of these laws, whose objectives were plain to see: "The Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases (Eugenics Law)", "The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor" (September 15, 1935), "The Law on the Revocation of Naturalization and the Deprivation of German Citizenship (July 14, 1933)", "The Reich Citizenship Law" (September 15, 1935). See Diemut Majer's exhaustive study of the Nazi legal system and its racial discrimination against "non-Germans" in the Third Reich and the countries it occupied during World War II. Diemut Majer, *Non-Germans" under the Third Reich: The Nazi Judicial and Administrative System in Germany and Occupied Eastern Europe, with Special Regard to Occupied Poland, 1939-1945*, trans. Peter Thomas Hill, Edward Vance Humphrey, and Brian Levin (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

that can bear no good fruit.”³²⁵ The paper’s defense of Nazi Germany’s race laws was also a defense of an extremely nationalist aspect of National Socialist ideology that saw the German *Volk* as composed of not merely German language and culture, but by race. For the *Deutsche Zeitung*, a dangerous “mixing” of other races into the German *Volk* was not simply a problem for the Third Reich, but all Germans in Europe who, as organically attached to the *Volk*, could not be divided by geographical barriers.³²⁶

Justifying Nazi Germany’s racial laws by referring to the specter of international communism indicates that the more extreme-racial strand of National Socialist ideology did not have a strong grip upon German-speakers in Slovenia. Rather, the threat of revolutionary communism was a real, tangible fear for many Germans in Yugoslavia. While certain German nationalists in Slovenia felt themselves to be culturally superior due to their Germanic characteristics, this did not necessarily translate into support for the Nazis’ belief in Aryan dominance.³²⁷

Anti-communism was a robust principle held among a significant segment of Germans in Slovenia, whose politically center-right, national liberal worldview became more prominent as the National Socialist government targeted the German left-wing for persecution. One of the last articles of the *Deutsche Zeitung* before it was shut down due

³²⁵ DZ, “Rassenerhaltung”, November 19, 1933.

³²⁶ Lumans, *Himmler’s Auxiliaries*, 20.

³²⁷ Hitler, who as Führer was the embodiment of the will of the entire German *Volk*, mixed the biological racism of radical anti-Semitism with the “politically and economically motivated anti-Semitism that had been widespread in the nations of Europe since the end of the nineteenth century. According to this doctrine, whatever race was stronger was therefore the better one, and the weaker therefore the worse; the stronger race’s rule over the weaker was a necessity ordained by nature.” The strongest race was the Aryan one, which was the only race capable of being able to rule the world. Majer, “*Non-Germans*” under the *Third Reich*, 35-37.

to governmental pressure³²⁸ painted in hysterical tones the “danger of war from Bolshevism”, an ideology that was aggressive in its nature and “duty-bound” to spread itself across Europe.³²⁹ Such fear-mongering indicates what was a common view held by many towards communism, but was also an attempt to convince others who were more pragmatic in their skepticism of communism how real the ideology and its adherents were for potentially impacting their lives.³³⁰

The *Erneuerbewegung*, Conflicted Identities, and Contested Nationalisms

In early January, 1934, the *Deutsche Zeitung* addressed claims about a split between older and younger Germans in Yugoslavia over loyalty to the state versus Nazi Germany. Though the paper explicitly rejected the thesis of the composition of the so-called *Erneuerbewegung*, arguing that young and old Germans in Slovenia alike were united in their support for National Socialism,³³¹ this “renewal movement” had in reality taken firm root among many Germans outside the Reich.³³² In Yugoslavia, there was an intense struggle for power for the leadership of the *Schwäbisch-Deutsche Kulturbund* between the “old” and the “new” generations, mostly over differences concerning the

³²⁸ Vodopivec, “Die Presse der Deutschen in der Untersteiermark und in Krain”, 146.

³²⁹ DZ, “Kriegsgefähr durch den Bolschewismus”, January 31, 1937.

³³⁰ Anti-communism was not limited to the wealthy classes who feared for their material and physical well-being in the case of a hypothetical communist attack. Many anti-Communists were religious, afraid that a revolutionary takeover would lead to the abolition of their faith. Others, who sometimes had been enchanted by the Russian Revolution, became disillusioned after seeing the disconnect between rhetoric and reality in communist countries. See François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Deborah Furet (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 93-124.

³³¹ DZ, “Jungdeutsche Bewegung”, January 18, 1934.

³³² Lumans, *Himmler’s Auxiliaries*, 27.

minorities' relationship with Germany and National Socialism.³³³ While the "old" generation held on to its leadership for a long time, it was forced to change direction by the increasingly-close relationship between Germany and Yugoslavia, as well as maneuverings from the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* and *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland*.³³⁴ The *Deutsche Zeitung*'s dismissal of the idea of a split in German attitudes towards National Socialism is in part an affirmation of the strength of the *Erneuerbewegung* in Slovenia³³⁵ but also highlights the fact that there was in fact *some* disunity, despite what the paper's editors claimed.³³⁶

One year after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, the *Deutsche Zeitung* reflected on the "historic" year 1933 and its implications for the "whole German people." "When,

³³³ For a detailed look at the split in leadership of the *Kulturbund* and the *Erneuerbewegung*, see Lyon, "After Empire", 310-376.

³³⁴ Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 130-134. This split was marked not only by young versus old, but also by "Austrian" Germans in Slovenia, who had mostly controlled the leading positions in the *Kulturbund* despite being a minority of Germans in Yugoslavia, and German-speaking Swabians from the more rural parts of the kingdom. The *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* had been trying since the early 1930s to decisively influence and control the SDKB, but was only successful in 1939 in getting their choice for leader, Sepp Janko, accepted by the membership. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries*, 119. Nonetheless, the mid-1930s saw increased contact between the *Kulturbund* and government agencies of the Third Reich. Four German members of the Yugoslav parliament sent a report to the German Foreign Ministry in late 1935/early 1936 that gave a less-than-even-handed account of the political and economic developments of the German minority in Yugoslavia up to then. Report of the *Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund* to the *Auswärtiges Amt*, February 14, 1936. NARA, RG-242, T-120, Roll 3107, frame E540496-E540519. This undoubtedly helped to shape the Nazi regime's understanding of the German situation in Yugoslavia as being dire and in need of official assistance from the Reich.

³³⁵ "The popularity of the radical *Erneuerung* movement in Slovenia was understandable because of the Slovene attitude toward the ethnic Germans. By 1937 they had eliminated all German schools, and in the German classes of the state schools, the instructors were mostly anti-German Slovenians. The Slovenes discriminated even against Germans who were reserve officers in the Yugoslavian army, especially in the border districts where they did not permit the ethnic Germans to buy real estate within fifty kilometers of the border." Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 134.

³³⁶ Indeed, the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* itself noted that the strongest way that it could spread its influence among the German minority in Yugoslavia was through the leader of the SDKB, Dr. Stephan Kraft, with dissenting opinions of anti-Nazi factions within the organization being "corrected." Recognizing that there were powerful anti-Nazi voices within the German community shows how strong this non-Nazi identity was in Slovenia. Memorandum of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, March 19, 1936. NARA, RG-242, T-120, Roll 3107, frame E540528-E540529.

in high misery, Adolf Hitler took over the regiment on January 30, 1933,” began the paper, “he faced a task whose solution appeared to exceed human power and human ability. Today, however, the new Germany is showing that it has become a strong state framework (*Staatsgefüge*) and a political factor that is no longer overlooked.” The paper also praised Hitler’s foreign policy, saying that he had “pursued the struggle for Germany’s equality and security.”³³⁷ By showing how Hitler had overcome those problems facing Germany “whose solution appeared to exceed human power”, the *Deutsche Zeitung* is implicitly adhering to a religious-like belief in the Führer’s power to single-handedly renew the *Volk*, of which the Germans in Slovenia are a part. As such, Germany’s “struggle for equality and security” meant that the Germans outside of the Third Reich could expect to achieve those rights and protections from a successful Nazi foreign policy that they had not received through the previous decades diplomatic overtures.

The *Deutsche Zeitung* gushed over how Hitler had “achieved a completely new state and is in the process of forming a new *Volk* that will have nothing more in common with the German *Volk* before 1933.” Hitler, in contrast to what Bismarck had attempted to do with the founding of the Second Reich, was “creating one Reich and one *Volk*.” In foreign policy, the paper praised the “diplomatic success” of the Führer in signing the “pact of peace” between Poland and Germany. Hitler had “proven that he would pursue an identified goal with fanatical energy” as “part of a plan.” As well, the “Austrian people” would “not accept for long” the way the country had been being run by Dollfuß: “No country can be ruled (through) terror for very long. After these last, harsh measures

³³⁷ DZ, “Ein Jahr Nationalsozialismus”, February 1, 1934.

by the Dollfuß government, the rest of Austria will also probably grasp what is at stake.”³³⁸

The paper’s emphatic expression of awe and jubilation over the Nazis’ “renewal” of the German *Volk* emphasizes one way in which National Socialism was appealing to Germans in Slovenia. It promised not only a legal restoration of prior societal dominance, in that Nazi Germany would return one day to give back to Germans their lost rights and privileges, but also a spiritual renewal, by including the souls of Germans in Slovenia with the organic, living body of a renewed, strong, and pure *Volk*. Restoration of both societal dominance and spiritual purity was needed for these Germans, as the Great War had resulted in not only a humiliating loss for Austria and Germany, but the real threat of cutting off the Germandom of the Slovene lands from its ancestral home. For these German nationalists, Hitler represented the final key to decisively ending the nationalities struggle, the culture war, that had existed between Slovenes and Germans for decades, and would ensure that the Germans, who were inherently superior, would emerge on top.

Though the *Deutsche Zeitung* meant the suppression of Austria’s National Socialist opposition when it referred to the “harsh measures” of the Dollfuß government, its disinterest in clearly explicating that interpretation indicates that there was disagreement in Slovenia’s German community over the course of events in Austria. By highlighting the peacemaking abilities of Adolf Hitler, as well as the denigration of “rule through terror”, the *Deutsche Zeitung* exposes a segment of its readership that were either anti-Nazi, anti-violence, pro-democracy, or some combination of all three. One does not

³³⁸ DZ, “Friede und Arbeit”, February 1, 1934.

necessarily have to be a supporter of National Socialism to dislike the imprisonment and oppression of its members within the context of an anti-democratic state.

The *Deutsche Zeitung* emphasized the “real domestic stability” that the Nazis had brought to Germany, even (or perhaps especially) because of its “confrontation with the 10 million Social Democrats and 5 million Communists.” The paper additionally pointed out how Hitler had succeeded in getting “millions of Catholics” to “heartily support” him, including his predecessor as Chancellor, Franz von Papen.³³⁹ The *Deutsche Zeitung* relayed a speech given by Franz von Papen on January 14, 1934, about the “Christian principles of the Third Reich.”³⁴⁰ Though in prior speeches von Papen had been critical of certain aspects of the Nazi regime, including its totalitarianism and dangerous joining of “Party” with “State”, the *Deutsche Zeitung* selectively edited its reports to include only excerpts that positively emphasized the different ways in which Christianity and National Socialism were compatible.³⁴¹ In this way, the *Deutsche Zeitung* tried to persuade skeptical Catholic Germans in Slovenia of the merits of National Socialism, and show that the Nazis were not the danger to their religion that they were perceived to be.

Germans in Slovenia were not completely convinced about the unity of the German people, especially when it came to a distinct Austrian identity.³⁴² Reporting on

³³⁹ DZ, “Zuversicht – Ruhe und Arbeit in Deutschland”, February 15, 1934.

³⁴⁰ DZ, “Die Christlichen Grundsätze des Dritten Reiches”, March 1, 1934.

³⁴¹ Though von Papen himself was spared retribution for his less-than-subtle anti-Nazi comments, several thousand Catholics gathered for a rally a short time later to hear another speech by Erich Klausener’s Catholic Action, which would incense Hitler and lead to the death of the man who wrote von Papen’s speeches during the Night of the Long Knives. Burleigh, *The Third Reich*, 677-678.

³⁴² That is, the type of Austrian identity that competed with the Nazis “as defenders of the ‘true Germany’ and ‘true Germandom.’” Dollfuß displayed this uniquely Austrian-German nationalist identity when he proclaimed that “We want a German Austria and a free Austria...At a time when the world shrinks from a

this “cleavage” that had arisen at a time when “history is being made for the German Volk”, the *Deutsche Zeitung* expressed deep skepticism over the “tragedy” of the implications of the Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye, which had said that “Austria must remain independent”:

That the Germans in the Reich and in Austria were unable to fuse together, even though Austria was freed from all the non-German areas by the peace treaties, is sad. But what is to be anchored in the German *Volk*'s fate on May 1 of this year in Vienna is deeply tragic, (this) is history becoming German disunion!... The one half of Austrians thinks ethnically (*völkisch*), pushes ideologically and politically towards the Reich [while the other half] thinks Catholic and places itself with the government away from the natural arc of history of each geographically-separated body of the *Volk*. These two parts of the Austrian people are in a mighty struggle against each other.³⁴³

The *Deutsche Zeitung*'s derision of an independent Austria and a uniquely Austrian identity exhibits the cleavage that had split German-speakers' identities and nationalisms in Slovenia after the rise of National Socialism in the Reich. While the first several post-war years had seen the forced exclusion of Austria from Germany, the Nazis' taking of power in the Reich and explicit calls for *Anschluss* changed the dynamics of how German identity was shaped among the minority communities of East and Central Europe. Before the establishment of the Nazi state, Germans' identities and nationalisms in Slovenia could be defined in terms of a shared language, culture, and history. That Hitler established racial criteria in determining who was a German narrowed the spectrum for

certain German spirit we want to show the world that we possess a Christian German civilization. In our Austrian way we feel ourselves to be a true component of the German way and of German life...” This German-Austrian identity allowed Austrians to continue to see themselves as members of the German nation and culture, but that the Christian and Austrian concept of Germanness was irreconcilable with the Nazi one in the Third Reich. William T. Bluhm, *Building an Austrian Nation: The Political Integration of a Western State* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1973), 35-36. Dollfuß and his successors “defined the nature of their regime as Christian and German and Austrian – Austrian not as a contradiction to German but as the resumption of pre-republican traditions with a distinct Catholic flavor.” Pelinka, *Out of the Shadow of the Past*, 12.

³⁴³ DZ, “Zwiespalt”, April 26, 1934.

who could be a part of the *Volk*. Catholic German-speaking residents of Lower Styria or Carinthia who were married to Catholic German-speaking and ethnically Slovene spouses would not be able to include their family in this new *Volksgemeinschaft*. For those German-speakers in Slovenia who identified themselves as strongly by their German language and culture as with their Roman Catholic religion or affiliation to an independent, Catholic Austria, the new German nationalism as defined by National Socialism was not especially appealing, and the new Third Reich was not the welcoming homeland for European Germandom that it was touted to be. Still other German-speakers who were perhaps bilingual, or did not consider themselves fully “German” or part of the German community, had to be persuaded that they were, in fact, members of a racial *Volksgemeinschaft*.

While the *Deutsche Zeitung* was denigrating an independent, German Austria, it also displayed advertisements that implored for more Germans in Slovenia to join the *Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund*: “Fellow Germans, join the *Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund*! It is the best promoter of your aspirations (and) that stands by your side in your ethnic distress (*Volkstumnöten*)...”³⁴⁴ That the *Deutsche Zeitung* so prominently and consistently published these large-scale advertisements for the *Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund* reinforced both its own claim to be *the* voice of the German minority in Slovenia and that this German minority shared its editorial stance in defining the contours of German identity and nationalism. But its explanations of the point of the *Kulturbund* – to promote and support the German culture and community in Yugoslavia – should have been obvious and thus unstated if, indeed, all German-speakers shared a common self-

³⁴⁴ DZ, advertisement, April 26, 1934.

identity. That the paper continued to feel it necessary to clarify what use ordinary Germans would get out of joining the *Kulturbund*, as well as the fact that the *Kulturbund* itself felt that its enrolment was too low, shows that, for many Germans, identity and nationalisms were varied and not necessarily the same as those being espoused by the *Deutsche Zeitung* and *Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund*.

After the assassination of King Aleksandar in Marseilles on October 9, 1934,³⁴⁵ Slovenia's German-language press expressed its shock and sympathy. The *Deutsche Zeitung* exclaimed "The greatest misfortune that could meet our state has happened: A heinous hand has murdered its king. The whole Yugoslav people stands as never before deeply shook before this unthinkable fact: the King is dead!"³⁴⁶ The *Mariborer Zeitung* featured an enormous front-page display that stated "Honor the dead king!"³⁴⁷ and had an article titled "Yugoslavia's Great King."³⁴⁸ The enormous outpouring of sympathy for the dead king demonstrated not only the loyalty of Slovenia's German-speaking minority, but also the pro-monarchy views held by many of them. This affinity for monarchy coincided with the history of the Austrian Empire, whereby continuing affiliation with the Habsburgs and Catholic, conservative tradition marked a distinctly Austrian identity among some German-speakers.

³⁴⁵ The king was supposed to meet with French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou, who had wanted to draw France and Italy closer together. The Croatian extremist group *Ustaša* and Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) had felt forced to resort to terrorism, with one assassination attempt by the *Ustaša* failing before VMRO was successful in gunning the king down. The two groups feared that Barthou would include Hungary with Italy in France's diplomatic relationships, and that Aleksandar would end VMRO's funding source in Bulgaria. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 172-173.

³⁴⁶ DZ, "S.M. König Alexander I", October 11, 1934.

³⁴⁷ MZ, October 11, 1934.

³⁴⁸ MZ, "Jugoslawiens großer König", October 11, 1934.

Reaction to the Plebiscite in the Saar

After the Saar voted over 90% in favor of joining the German Reich in January of 1935,³⁴⁹ the *Deutsche Zeitung* commented on the “world historic” speech that Adolf Hitler gave in response. Noting that Hitler’s “moving” speech spoke for the “whole German *Volk*” in thanking the “Saarland for its unparalleled loyalty”, the paper framed the area’s addition to Germany as a way to “world peace” and “solidarity of nations.” The paper went on to comment that the “people fell crying into each other’s arms, they sang and danced out of sheer unbearable joy.”³⁵⁰ The result in the Saar had, according to the *Deutsche Zeitung*, initiated “immense jubilation” not only in Germany but also “in the whole world”, and especially, “where German hearts beat.”³⁵¹

Reaction to the Saar plebiscite showed that there were still contested identities and nationalisms among the Germans of Slovenia. Descriptions of the reactions of the Saar Germans on becoming part of the Third Reich were in part reflective of how some Germans in Slovenia would have accepted their own inclusion in the Reich. But these portrayals were also intended to demonstrate to German skeptics of National Socialism the benefits that Hitler could bring. These benefits are tendered by the *Deutsche Zeitung*’s framing of the plebiscite in terms of achieving world peace, thereby eschewing criticism of National Socialist foreign policy as being aggressive and destabilizing. Such framing of the intentions and rationale for Nazi foreign policy as being geared towards peace

³⁴⁹ DZ, “Das Wunder der Saartreue”, January 17, 1935.

³⁵⁰ DZ, “Hitler spricht Welthistorische Worte zur Saarabstimmung”, January 17, 1935.

³⁵¹ DZ, “Saarantwort”, January 17, 1935.

indicates the extent to which many Germans in Slovenia valued stability over violent upheaval and revolution.³⁵²

Hitler's successful and peaceful inclusion of the Saar represented one way that the question of German minorities could be solved. Noting that the League of Nations had been thus far unable to satisfactorily solve the minority question in Europe, the *Deutsche Zeitung* praised Adolf Hitler's "hard will" in pushing Europe to come to find a way to come to a conclusion for this topic that was still sore for many Germans in Slovenia. "Adolf Hitler therefore represents for the German people, who are Europe's largest minority group," the paper declared, "extraordinary and fruitful thoughts" for solving the problem of minority protections and rights.³⁵³ Continued praise and focus on Adolf Hitler as the sole force in Europe to bring about the much sought-after minority protection and rights for Germans outside the Reich was a method that the *Deutsche Zeitung* used to both contest German nationalism and identity in Slovenia and convince its readership to embrace the National Socialist movement. By connecting Slovenia's German population with that of the Third Reich, Austria, and other German minorities, the *Deutsche Zeitung* was thereby making a case to its readership that this was the only acceptable identity for Germans – to be supportive of National Socialism as members of a living, spiritual German *Volk*.

³⁵² This sentiment of Germany's peaceful intentions were probably partly influenced by the "massive propaganda campaign" that the Nazis had engaged in so as to "reassure the world about Germany's peaceful intentions" despite the Reich's rearmament. Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, vol. I, 83.

³⁵³ DZ, "Gegenseitiger Nationalitätenschutz", January 31, 1935. Ethnic Germans did indeed comprise the largest group of national minorities in Europe during the interwar period, numbering at least 10 million. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries*, 22.

In the eyes of the *Deutsche Zeitung*, Hitler's actions had shown that it was Germany and not Austria that could be relied upon to support the case for political rights of Germans in Slovenia. "Since...the summer of 1933", noted the *Deutsche Zeitung*, "there have been more or less heavy attacks in the Austrian press against the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland*."³⁵⁴ The *Auslandsdeutsche* should be able to form their own opinion of the VDA, and not be swayed by the efforts of the Austrian press. For the *Deutsche Zeitung*, the "Austrian Germans should take (the *Auslandsdeutsche* opinion of the VDA) as a reason for satisfaction, not dissatisfaction." Despite this attack on Austria's claims of being the "true Germandom", the paper reassured its readership that "our *Volkstum* seems God-given to us *Auslandsdeutsche*." Nonetheless, that "90% of the German people belong to the National Socialist state" after the Saar plebiscite was, for the *Deutsche Zeitung*, an "impressive demonstration" for the Germans "outside the borders of the Reich to support the current Germany to at least as high a percentage."³⁵⁵

The *Deutsche Zeitung*'s attempts to convince its readership of the superiority of the Third Reich's "Germanness" over that of Austria's is seen by its defense of a Reich organization against what it perceives as a biased Austrian press. But the paper takes care to distinguish between the Austrian people and its media, giving notice that Germans' ethnicity is "God-given." Such phrasing, which was careful not to come across as being anti-Catholic, lent support to the strong Christian current present in some Germans'

³⁵⁴ The mission of the VDA was to support and strengthen German culture and minority communities outside the borders of the Reich, with special regard to schools and education. Collectively, this cultural support was called *Volkstumarbeit*, efforts intended to maintain the specifically Germanic nature of European Germandom. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries*, 25. The reference to the "summer of 1933" was the time when the leadership of the VDA came under intense pressure to Nazify, which it eventually completely did several years later. Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 6-10.

³⁵⁵ DZ, "Auslandsdeutschtum und 'Gleichschaltung'", February 28, 1935.

identities in Slovenia. The paper's final request for the Germans of Slovenia to "support the current Germany" in numbers as high as 90% shows that this level of overwhelming favor for the Nazis was far from being realized – if it were, there would be no reason to refer to the "impressive demonstration" as a positive example for its readership to follow.

German Identity and Nationalism up to the Nuremberg Party Congress

As German reactions to the Saar plebiscite and events in neighboring Austria show, many Germans in Slovenia had become fervent supporters of National Socialist Germany and Adolf Hitler, though there were still others who were not. For Nazi supporters, the ideological underpinnings of National Socialism combined with the re-emergence of an economically and geo-politically-strengthened Germany to command their devotion. Still others who were critical of the Nazis' and their ideology felt a strong connection to their Christian identity and affiliated with the Catholicism of an independent, but German, Austrian Republic. Most of these Germans shared at least two major things in common: They were – at least outwardly – loyal to the Yugoslav state, and they remained, as *Auslandsdeutsche*, outside the borders of the Third Reich

The conception of *Auslandsdeutsche* rested on the assumption that Germans abroad were in every way the same as German citizens of the Reich, but just happened to live outside its borders. But the veracity of this conception was not universally-held, for both *Reichsdeutsche* and *Auslandsdeutsche* alike. The *Deutsche Zeitung* reported on an anecdotal piece of evidence of a woman in Berlin lamenting the "poor *Auslandsdeutsche*" as she donated money to the VDA:

We *Auslandsdeutsche* are not “poor”, we are not to be felt sorry for, to be pitied... We *Auslandsdeutsche* are not “poor” since we too have our *Heimat*... we also have our feeling of *Heimat*, our love of *Heimat*, that are certainly no less than that of the (*Reich*) Germans; because the commitment to our *Heimat* is a commitment to the struggle, to daily exertion, to the daily ordeal. We Germans abroad have our signal for the entire *Volk*, our clear-cut field of activity with which we are partaking on the fate of the core *Volk* – just as the core *Volk* is partaking on ours’.³⁵⁶

Portraying *Reichsdeutsche* views of the *Auslandsdeutsche* as being at a disadvantage due to living outside the Reich was a way for the *Deutsche Zeitung* to show its readership that they shared a unique connection with German-speakers in Germany, despite the geographical barriers separating the two. But the woman in Berlin who donated to the VDA also demonstrates a conception among Reich Germans of the *Auslandsdeutsche* as being somehow different than themselves, as not “true” Germans.³⁵⁷ Repeated stressing of the Slovene Germans’ “love of *Heimat*” was both an affirmation of existing German nationalists’ spiritual affiliation with Germany as well as a reassurance to those Germans whose regional identities were especially strong; *Heimat* can refer to both Germany and Styria. But by referring to the *Auslandsdeutsche* mission for the *Volk*, the *Deutsche Zeitung* reminded its German nationalist readers of their role to play in society, thereby emphasizing affiliation to Germany over Yugoslavia and opening itself up to charges of disloyalty.

³⁵⁶ DZ, “Die ‘Armen Auslandsdeutschen’”, March 31, 1935.

³⁵⁷ As Pieter Judson has persuasively argued, it should not necessarily be simply assumed that German-speakers of East Central Europe should have, by nature of a shared language, culture, or history, automatically had an affinity or deep loyalty for the German Reich. See Judson, “When is a Diaspora not a Diaspora? Rethinking Nation-Centered Narratives about Germans in Habsburg East Central Europe”, in O’Donnell, Bridenthal, and Reagin, eds., *The Heimat Abroad*, 219-247. See also John C. Swanson, “The Second World War and its Aftermath: Ethnic German Communities in the East”, in Szabo and Ingraio, *The Germans and the East*, 347-361. This type of unique regional German identity being distinct from Reich German nationality can be seen, for example, in the case of the Baltic Germans of Latvia and Estonia, who referred to the Reich as *Ausland* – for their part, Reich Germans up to the eve of World War I considered the Baltic Germans to be Russians in any case. See Heide W. Whelan, *Adapting to Modernity: Family, Caste, and Capitalism among the Baltic German Nobility* (Cologne, Germany: Böhlau Verlag, 1999), 228-229.

The *Deutsche Zeitung*, in reporting on Hitler's proclamation at the Nazi Party Congress at Nuremberg in September of 1935,³⁵⁸ emphasized that "National Socialism fosters an aggressive intention towards no European nation." As well, the "Party has...neither previously or today the intention of leading any kind of war against Christianity."³⁵⁹ Emphasis on the lack of aggression was belied by the paper's stance on National Socialism's feelings towards Bolshevism. For those critics who saw an "aggressive and defensive attitude" in Hitler's speech, the paper noted that this had not only been called "the strongest shield of peace" by the *Wehrmacht* but was also vital in defending shared "European cultural goods" from "Bolshevist Soviet ideology."³⁶⁰ Denying the Nazis' aggressive intentions towards other European countries and Christianity was an appeal to those members of the German minority community who were strongly Catholic and wary of any actions that would lead to continent-wide violence and upheaval. But the *Deutsche Zeitung*'s defense of Nazi Germany's anti-communism as a "shield of peace" that would protect civilized Europe reinforced the notion held by some German-speakers in Slovenia of a unique German duty and ability to maintain and protect *Kultur*.³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ The 1935 Party Congress was when the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor was announced, which aimed at bringing about the "purity of German blood" by outlawing marriage and extramarital intercourse between Jews (which was used for the first time instead of "non-Aryans") and Germans. Majer, "*Non-Germans*" under the Third Reich, 101-103. The *Deutsche Zeitung* did not ignore this aspect of the rally so much as downplay it by focusing much more intently and with many more voluminous articles on other aspects of the event.

³⁵⁹ DZ, "Die Proklamation Hitlers auf dem Parteikongress", September 15, 1935.

³⁶⁰ DZ, "Die Grundthemen des Nürnberger Parteitages", September 19, 1935.

³⁶¹ The notion held by some German-speakers in Central Europe of being a bulwark of *Kultur* against Bolshevist barbarism was not restricted to the lands bordering the Reich: when communist troops began spreading the Russian Revolution eastward in the aftermath of World War I, German soldiers flocked to the Baltic, where they formed the *Baltische Landwehr*; though many who joined were simply looking for

Between Germany and Austria

In contrast to “almost the entire non-German world press”, who had been writing about the “threat to world peace through the German Reich” and had “moved the people and nations to worry and disquiet”, the *Deutsche Zeitung* reported that “nowhere else in the world” was more “happily peaceful”, or had greater “willingness for peace and work” than in the “National Socialist state.” From this perspective, the Third Reich’s “love of peace” was the “basis for National Socialist foreign policy.”³⁶² The *Deutsche Zeitung*’s persistent defending of the Third Reich’s foreign policy and Hitler’s aggressive intentions indicates that there was a large split dividing the German minority community in Slovenia. For German nationalists, a stronger and more forceful Germany was a welcome development in helping to gain back Germany’s lost status as a Great Power and thereby restore ethnic German minorities to their previous positions of privileged status. Other Germans, perhaps but not necessarily otherwise supportive of the Nazi Party, were alarmed at the potential for another European general war should Hitler’s belligerence work out differently than he thought it would.³⁶³ Order, stability, and minority protection were all very noble goals, but not at the expense of peace and certainly not if they were gained through illegal or violent means.

something to do, others saw themselves in the same mold of the Teutonic knights of the Middle Ages, saving civilization from barbaric hordes. Modris Eksteins, *Walking Since Daybreak: A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Heart of Our Century* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 63-64.

³⁶² DZ, “Das Hitler-Deutschland liebt den Frieden”, February 6, 1936.

³⁶³ This is one reason why some Generals in the *Wehrmacht* opposed, to varying degrees, Adolf Hitler’s leadership. Chief of General Staff Ludwig Beck, for example, finally abandoned loyalty to the Führer after the crisis over the Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia in 1938. Burleigh, *The Third Reich*, 683. For more on anti-Hitler opposition in the German military, see *Ibid.*, 677-687.

But the presence of a sovereign, German, and Catholic Austria split the unity of ethnic Germans of the former Habsburg Empire and competed with the German Reich for their loyalty. “A small house of neo-Austrians on the Danube is trying to make world history,” complained the *Deutsche Zeitung*. “First, six and a half million state nationals (*Staatsvolk*) were culturally and politically disenfranchised and in every way made defenseless. Then came the conflicts and showdowns that led to the defeat of Fascism and to a victory for the clericals.” The paper deplored that the “Austrian government lies in the hands of a group of people who completely pursue the policies of the Vatican.”³⁶⁴ The *Deutsche Zeitung* tried to link Austrian monarchists, clericalists, and Jews in a kind of conspiracy to reinstall the Habsburgs: “There can be no doubt that the clerical regime is for the Habsburgs. The *Volk*, however, decisively rejects the regime and Habsburgs and a restoration would cause serious domestic disturbances.”³⁶⁵

The *Deutsche Zeitung*'s criticism of the Roman Catholic characteristics of the Austrian *Ständestaat* exposes the cleavages within the German minority community in Slovenia. Its attacks on the clericals and lament over the “defeat of Fascism” represent a culture war. This culture war, in contrast to the 1920s, was not occurring between Slavs and Germans but between Germans themselves – between German Austrians and Reich Germans. At risk was the spiritual unity of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, and with it, the national renewal of the German people that had been ushered in by the National Socialist revolution. If Hitler, as an embodiment of the living will of the entire German *Volk*, demanded the loyalty of every single German in the world, then it was intolerable for

³⁶⁴ DZ, “Zwischenspiele an der Donau”, June 4, 1936.

³⁶⁵ DZ, “Habsburger Propaganda”, February 7, 1937.

there to be a source of loyalty for millions of Germans other than National Socialism.

One of the major tasks of the *Deutsche Zeitung*, as a *de facto* arm of National Socialist ideology outside of the Third Reich, was to convince the Germans of Slovenia that were not already devoted to the Nazis of the necessity of becoming so – to end any and all conflicts in German identity and nationalism.

Manufacturing Anti-Jewish Sentiment

As Hitler and the Nazis' extreme, radical anti-Semitism formed an undeniably central role in National Socialist ideology and thus permeated throughout German society,³⁶⁶ its impact would necessarily have to be felt among all Germans, no matter where they lived. The *Deutsche Zeitung* had, through the first several years of the Nazi dictatorship, either ignored or de-emphasized the anti-Semitic rhetoric that had so characterized the German National Socialists.³⁶⁷ But the paper could not maintain avoidance of this glaring feature of Nazi Germany forever, and by the latter half of the 1930s found itself explaining to its readership in Slovenia the rationale for discriminatory policies targeted at Jews in the Reich. "It is still too little known that, at the decisive negotiations that led to the dictate of Versailles, Jews played a leading and

³⁶⁶ Saul Friedländer describes Hitler's "very specific brand of racial anti-Semitism" as "redemptive anti-Semitism", one that he "carried to its most extreme and radical limits. This "redemptive anti-Semitism", which was "shared by the Nazi leader and the hard core of the party", was a "synthesis of a murderous rage and an 'idealistic' goal" that, Friedländer argues, "led to Hitler's ultimate decision to exterminate the Jews." Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, Volume I: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939* (London: Phoenix Giant, 1997), 3.

³⁶⁷ The radical anti-Semitic narrative of a massive Jewish conspiracy that was not held back by national borders and sought to destroy the German people was propagated in the Third Reich through mass media such as newspapers and radio, as well as the Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. Herf, *The Jewish Enemy*, 6-7. For more on the spreading of anti-Semitic messages to German society in the 1930s, see *Ibid.*, 17-49.

disastrous role.” The paper continued, “The Jews do not constitute a nation...(Their) form of existence is not the *Volk* but...destruction.”³⁶⁸ The *Deutsche Zeitung* also sought to link Jews with the Soviet Union and communism. “The Paris-based journal ‘Centre de Documentation et de Propaganda’ reports that the Soviet authorities intend to guarantee a sum of 100 million rubles in the year 1937 for the construction of an autonomous Jewish district...in order to achieve a Red paradise for the children of Israel in Russia.”³⁶⁹

The *Deutsche Zeitung*’s previous lack of attention for the Nazis’ extreme anti-Semitism can be explained partly by the NSDAP’s downplaying of this element of their ideology so as to become more electable,³⁷⁰ but also because of the lack of any significant Jewish population in Slovenia.³⁷¹ As such, the paper needed to reconcile the increasingly harsh anti-Semitic policies that had been enacted in Germany that sought to exclude German Jews from society. By linking Jews with both communism and the hated Versailles treaty, the *Deutsche Zeitung* was attempting to illustrate for its readership, the overwhelming majority of whom did not share the Nazi Party’s fanatical hatred for

³⁶⁸ DZ, “Juden und Völkische Minderheiten”, March 18, 1937.

³⁶⁹ DZ, “Juden und Sowjets”, March 18, 1937.

³⁷⁰ This occurred between the 1928 Reichstag election, where the Nazis won less than 3% of the vote, and their 1933 seizure of power. Richard J. Evans, “The emergence of Nazi ideology”, in Caplan, ed., *Short Oxford History of Nazi Germany*, 46.

³⁷¹ The 1931 census showed 165 Jews with a German mother tongue in Slovenia, out of a total German-language population of almost 29,000. For comparison, there were over 27,000 Roman Catholics, 1,447 Protestants, and 5 Muslims who reported having German as their native language. Protestants and Jews were both found predominantly in urban centers such as Ljubljana, Marburg/Maribor, Cilli/Celje, and Pettau/Ptuj. Suppan, *Jugoslawien und Österreich*, 666. Though there was a relatively small Jewish minority in Yugoslavia, including some who were included in the kingdom’s German population due to their language, they were mainly located in Croatia and Serbia. Hočevar, “Linguistic Minorities of Yugoslavia”, 218.

Europe's Jewish population,³⁷² that the NSDAP's anti-Jewish policies were legitimate. In doing so, the paper was tapping into a strong strand of German identity in Slovenia that was nationalist in its perception of the Versailles treaty and political in its fear of an international communist threat.

Anschluss with Austria

Four days before the German *Wehrmacht* entered Austria unopposed, the *Mariborer Zeitung* described the "massive crowd" of "50,000 people" that witnessed Minister of the Interior Dr. Arthur Seyss-Inquart give a speech in front of the Vienna *Landhaus* to the cheers of "Heil Hitler!" The paper quoted, in bolded letters, the part of the minister's speech that declared Austria to be a "German country – and nothing else", as well as "Austria can only go the way that Germany also goes."³⁷³

The conflicted and contested nature of German identity and nationalism in Slovenia is evident in the *Deutsche Zeitung*'s report on Minister Seyss-Inquart's speech. While there were clearly German-speakers in Slovenia who strongly identified with Nazi Germany's version of German nationalism,³⁷⁴ this nationalist identity conflicted with

³⁷² This is not to say that there were no anti-Semites among the Germans of Slovenia, just that the evidence of a similar kind of widely-held, publicly-displayed, virulently racial strand of anti-Semitism as appeared in Germany and Austria does not appear in the sources used for this thesis. Anti-Semitism of varying degrees was widely-held all over Europe, even in places where there were few if any Jews. Burleigh, *The Third Reich*, 94-95. There is a difference between the radical, extreme anti-Semitism of many of the leaders of the Nazi Party and the more casual forms of everyday, tacit prejudice which would not necessarily be showcased in newspapers or government reports.

³⁷³ MZ, "Österreichs Deutscher Programm", March 8, 1938.

³⁷⁴ The Third Reich's embassy in Yugoslavia reported to the German Foreign Office that, after the "situation of the local Germans (had)...considerably worsened", the "achievement of Greater Germany" had aroused "fantastical hopes for an improvement" in local conditions. The same report noted that this was

other German-speakers' Roman Catholicism and connection with Austria. Though these Germans spoke the German language and were proud of their German cultural heritage, this did not necessarily mean that they were eager to see a perceived anti-Catholic – or in any case, a majority-Protestant – German nation state take over an independent, Catholic Austrian republic.

The day after the Nazi “seizure of power in Austria” was “bloodlessly completed”, the *Mariborer Zeitung* detailed the appointment of Dr. Seyss-Inquart as the new Federal Chancellor, as well as the replacement of domestic security forces by “exclusively National Socialists” and the SS. The paper also repeatedly stressed that there had been “nowhere in all Austria any confrontations.”³⁷⁵ Reporting on Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg's farewell speech before giving up power, it quoted in full his speech, with his accusations of the “news about Austria” being “made up” and his final appeal, “So I depart in this hour from the Austrian *Volk* with a German word and with a heart's desire: God protect Austria!”³⁷⁶

The *Mariborer Zeitung*'s description of the *Anschluss* of the Austrian Republic by Nazi Germany demonstrates the mixed reaction among Slovenia's German minority, which was divided by the minorities' contested identities and nationalisms. Calling the *Anschluss* of Austria a “seizure of power” left open for its readership's interpretations whether this was a good or bad thing; the term *Machtergreifung*, depending upon one's

true for all Germans in Yugoslavia, not just those in Slovenia who “honestly perceived...the swastika...as the first step to their own liberation.” Report of the German Embassy in Yugoslavia to the *Auswärtiges Amt*, “Auswirkung des “Anschlusses” und der sudetendeutschen Autonomiebestrebungen auf die Lage der deutschen Volksgruppe in Jugoslawien”, June 15, 1938. NARA, RG-242, T-120, Roll 3107, frame E540660-E540661.

³⁷⁵ MZ, “Bundesregierung Dr. Seyss-Inquart”, March 13, 1938.

³⁷⁶ MZ, “Schuschniggs Abschiedsrede im Rundfunk”, March 13, 1938.

politics, signified either the extension of the beginning of the “national revolution” that had begun in Germany in 1933 or a naked power grab by a violent minority with authoritarian aims.³⁷⁷

The *Mariborer Zeitung* illustratively portrayed Adolf Hitler’s entrance into the Austrian capital, with “all Vienna” on the street to “experience the historic hour of (his) arrival.” Calling him Chancellor instead of Führer, the paper noted the “great interest” and “excitement” of the people that “(grew) from hour to hour.” The former State Secretary Dr. Michael Skubl “voluntarily” resigned his post and was placed in “protective custody.”³⁷⁸ “The events since Saturday have rushed with film-like speed. The National Socialist uprising (*Erhebung*) has become an upheaval, and overnight, so to speak, Austria – now called German-Austria – was united with the German Reich.”³⁷⁹ The *Wehrmacht*’s “invasion” had been met by “indescribable jubilation” and “scenes of fraternization (*Verbrüderung*) from the population.”³⁸⁰ The *Mariborer Zeitung* explained to its readers that Italy, a predominantly-Catholic country, had not “obliged itself to...protect Austria from Germany” and that both Italy and Germany had the “duty” to lead the “fight against the world-destroying Bolshevism.”³⁸¹

Describing the National Socialist takeover of Austria as widely welcomed by Austrian citizens, whose “indescribable jubilation” at finally being reunited with their

³⁷⁷ J.S. Conway, “‘Machtergreifung’ or ‘Due Process of History’: The Historiography of Hitler’s Rise to Power”, in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (1965), 399.

³⁷⁸ MZ, “Adolf Hitler in Wien”, March 15, 1938.

³⁷⁹ MZ, “Die Vereinigung Deutschösterreichs mit dem Reich vollzogen”, March 15, 1938.

³⁸⁰ MZ, “Der Einmarsch der Deutschen Truppen”, March 15, 1938.

³⁸¹ MZ, “Die Empfangsfeierlichkeiten in Wien”, March 16, 1938.

ethnic brothers was clearly evident, represented an attempt by the *Mariborer Zeitung* to persuade its readers who were anti-Nazi that the *Anschluss* was not a negative event but that it was popular, legitimate, and indeed legal.³⁸² Excusing Italy's non-interference showed to these German-speaking readers that their Catholic religious identity was not under attack in Austria and would not be so should the Slovene lands ever join the Third Reich. By emphasizing the popularity of the *Wehrmacht* and Adolf Hitler's entrance into Vienna, the paper was thereby marginalizing anti-Nazi sentiment among the German-speakers in Slovenia, who were to see that events in neighboring Austria were considered by the vast majority as a good result, with no negative consequences. Combining the "duty" of both the Third Reich and Fascist Italy to "fight against world-destroying Bolshevism" helped as well to prey on the fears of communism held by many Germans in Slovenia.

But the *Mariborer Zeitung* continued to refrain from wholly supporting the *Anschluss*, and this reticence to do so indicates that anti-Nazi sentiment in the German minority community of Slovenia remained at least somewhat significant. The paper's consistent use of *Reichskanzler* instead of *Führer* lent credence to the view that this was a legally-permissible action and mollified skeptics of Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist movement. As well, Secretary Skubl's "voluntary" imprisonment was meant to

³⁸² Despite a post-war portrayal of Austria as having been the "first victim" of Hitler's aggression, the *Anschluss* with Nazi Germany was in fact wildly popular. Anton Pelinka, *Austria: Out of the Shadow of the Past* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), 16-18. This is not to say, however, that it was universally welcome. But the portrayal of Austria as a "victim" of Nazi aggression served to, after 1945, allow Austria to escape the same fate as Eastern Germany and other Soviet satellites. As well, the idea of Austria as a victim had been promoted by the political right-wing in that country for decades afterwards, until the Kurt Waldheim affair in the late 1980s forced the country to attempt to come to terms with its past – a past that, for example, had Adolf Hitler being Austrian, a higher percentage of Nazi Party members than in Germany, and a disproportionate amount of Nazi concentration camp guards actually coming from Austria. See Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 2-3; 52-53. See also David Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 101-144.

show that the former, illegitimate government was, far from being undemocratically pushed out by an aggressive foreign power, acknowledging the legality and legitimacy of the *Anschluss*. Such nuanced reporting on these events demonstrate that, though perhaps not the more popular opinion, anti-*Anschluss* or anti-Nazi sentiment retained a considerable presence among the German minorities in neighboring Slovenia.

German Understanding of the Munich Crisis

In the days before the Munich Agreement was signed in September of 1938,³⁸³ British Prime Minister Sir Neville Chamberlain gave a speech that the *Deutsche Zeitung* described as appealing to “all those who would like peace and to avoid the downfall of

³⁸³ Czechoslovakia’s German-speaking population of more than 3 million represented an opportunity for Hitler to exploit the concept of self-determination and deplore the “oppression” of a German minority outside the Reich’s borders. While many Germans in the area called the Sudetenland did resent what they saw as harsh measures taken against them in the interwar years and desired to join with Nazi Germany, Hitler had ulterior motives – Czechoslovakia represented a strong threat to Germany and needed to be eliminated as a danger as soon as possible. Hitler’s belligerent stance towards Czechoslovakia heightened the political situation to the point that Italy, the United Kingdom, and France signed away the majority of the republic’s German population without the Czechoslovaks themselves being present. Rich, *Hitler’s War Aims, Vol. 1*, 101-109. For more, see Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed*, 78-86. See also Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*, 126-132 and Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 30-41. Though the cession of the Sudetenland to Nazi Germany in 1938 was seen by most as a victory for Hitler, the Führer himself viewed it as a “great, perhaps the greatest, setback and mistake of his career.” Hitler held a personal hatred for the Czechs, growing up as he did in the last decades of German-speaking Austria. As such, he desired the physical destruction of Czechoslovakia, not merely the inclusion of its German-majority regions. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler’s Germany: Starting World War II, 1937-1939* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 313-317. For more on the planning and diplomatic developments in the run-up to the Munich Agreement in September of 1938, see *Ibid.*, 318-377. Britain and France’s desire to come to a peaceful solution was heightened by their sense of isolation – unlike in World War I, there were no prospects of the United States or Japan, or another Great Power, coming to their aid. The costs of war would be enormous. Hitler’s Nazi Germany understood this, and acted accordingly to gain the most possible of their goals without inciting a European-wide conflict. In all this time, the Sudeten Germans themselves were never considered by the Nazis as anything more than a means to an end – their use was purely in exploiting the situation. The British, on the other hand, precisely saw the situation as one of a minority exercising their right to self-determination, and as such, *had* considered that issue as a real possibility in the context of keeping Czechoslovakia itself free from potential Nazi invasion. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II: Essays in Modern German and World History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 109-120.

European culture and civilization at any price.” The paper called it a “comfort to know that the considerations of a responsible statesman are being confirmed by elements of political events but also by regard for the people...who would be forced to fall victim to all the chicanery” that a “totalitarian war” and “its murderous annihilation” would bring. The “people’s memories of the four-year long struggle in the Great War (was) too lively” for any “clear-thinking” person to want again.³⁸⁴ Much as Prime Minister Chamberlain proclaimed “peace in our time” after concluding the Munich Agreement with Hitler, so too proclaimed the *Deutsche Zeitung* that “the world [had] exhaled” in relief.³⁸⁵

Though the *Mariborer Zeitung* supported Chamberlain’s policy of appeasement, and therefore his cession of the Sudetenland to Nazi Germany, its support was not couched in terms of allowing oppressed German minorities the right to return to their rightful homeland. Rather, the paper’s overwhelming relief is due to the aversion of a large-scale industrial war in Europe that had been threatening to break out. Such a “totalitarian war” would result in “murderous annihilation” that would inevitably fall the heaviest on innocent civilians. That the *Mariborer Zeitung*’s reporting on the Munich Agreement indicates widespread anti-war sentiment among Slovenia’s German minorities is evident by the dire situation it envisions should war come about, describing such a time as being the “downfall of European culture and civilization.”

What is notable about the *Mariborer Zeitung*’s interpretation of the Munich Agreement as one of relief at avoiding war is that it predicated this interpretation with the consideration that only “those who desire peace” would agree with its rejoicing over the

³⁸⁴ MZ, “Appell an die Vernunft”, September 29, 1938.

³⁸⁵ MZ, “Die Welt atmet auf”, October 1, 1938.

result. Certainly many European countries earnestly desired to avoid a general war at all costs, but Adolf Hitler and diehard members of his National Socialist movement viewed military engagement and aggression as a way to expand the Reich's borders, ensure German dominance in Central and Eastern Europe, and reshape the region's society and culture so as to maintain this dominance.³⁸⁶ That the *Mariborer Zeitung* would frame its perspective that avoiding war was a good thing for Europe's stability shows that, just as there was a strong desire for peace and stability among Slovenia's German-speakers, so too were there those who believed in the Nazi vision of a violent upheaval in Eastern Europe that would propel Germanism to new heights through military means. Germans' reaction to the Munich Agreement in Slovenia demonstrates the different strands of German identity and nationalisms in Slovenia.

Reaction to the *Kristallnacht*

On November 7, 1938, German diplomat Ernst vom Rath was fatally shot in Paris by Herschel Grynszpan, a German-born Jewish refugee whose parents were from

³⁸⁶ "German policy in Eastern Europe was aimed...at full political, economic, and military control of the whole space between Germany and Russia, in order to be able to strike, either at the Soviet Union or at the Western Powers." Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe between the Wars*, 382. But this simplifies the ideological underpinnings of Hitler's intentions towards Eastern Europe. "Hitler was no longer spurred by the usual kind of great power politics and struggle against his country's political and military rivals but rather by a desire to fully implement the 'eastern program' he had laid out many years earlier. This involved the most extreme plans for the destruction and obliteration of the Soviet Union...Hitler was at pains to add one component underlying all the rest: to effect a racist war of annihilation." Rolf-Dieter Müller and Gerd R. Ueberschär, *Hitler's War in the East, 1941-1945: A Critical Assessment* (Providence, Rhode Island: Berghahn Books, 1997), 209. This racist ideology led to plans such as the *Generalplan Ost*, which foresaw the "restructuring" of the Eastern European economy through the forced removal of millions, and the *Hungerplan*, which cold-bloodedly stated that "many tens of millions of people in these territories will be surplus to need, and will either die or have to emigrate to Siberia." See Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung: Auschwitz und die deutschen Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung* (Hamburg: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991), 372-373 and 394-397.

Poland.³⁸⁷ After being examined, the *Mariborer Zeitung* breathlessly reported, Grynspan admitted to committing the act “in order to avenge his Jewish racial comrades.” The paper explained how the “cowardly revolver attack has aroused great furor (*Aufsehen*) in Paris.”³⁸⁸ Only a few days later, in the German Reich “new Jewish decrees” were announced whose aims were the “arrangement of measures against German Jewry.” The paper described how in “all Germany” the assassination of the German ambassador by the “Polish Jew” had “incited popular outrage”; the “violent manifestation” against Jews in Germany was “a consequence.”³⁸⁹

In light of its previous efforts at manufacturing anti-Jewish sentiment among its German-speaking readership, who lived in a part of Europe with essentially no Jewish residents, the *Mariborer Zeitung*'s reporting on the assassination of vom Rath and subsequent riots in Germany can be seen as an explanation for the reasons behind why the NSDAP government and its supporters hated Jews and reacted with the *Kristallnacht*. The paper's rationale for the murder – that vom Rath was killed to “avenge” Herschel's “Jewish racial comrades” – clarifies that this action resulted in “great furor” and implies to its readership that anti-Semitic sentiment was widespread and accepted outside of the Third Reich.

³⁸⁷ Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 268. The assassination was partly in response to a “chain of events beginning in March 1938 when the Polish government rendered stateless thousands of Poles living abroad, including fifty thousand Polish Jews living in Germany, in a drastic attempt to stem the tide of Jewish refugees fleeing Austria in the wake of the Anschluss.” Burleigh, *The Third Reich*, 323.

³⁸⁸ MZ, “Attentat in Paris”, November 9, 1938.

³⁸⁹ MZ, “Neue Judendekrete in Deutschland angekündigt”, November 12, 1938. Vom Rath's death incited Nazi leaders to orchestrate a large-scale pogrom, later to be called *Kristallnacht* or the Night of Broken Glass, which saw coordinated violence directed at Jews in Austria and Germany. See Burleigh, *The Third Reich*, 323-330 and Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 271-277.

Legitimizing the Nazis' violent and discriminatory reprisals against Germany's Jewish population as being a "consequence" of the "popular outrage" incited by the assassination was a way of canceling the negative aspects of those reprisals' violence. In the same way that the *Mariborer Zeitung* attempted to shore up support for the Nazis among its readership by invoking the specter of international communism, the paper also attempted to create anti-Jewish sentiment by portraying Europe's Jews as an enemy element that deserved to be violently opposed. Such parroting of the National Socialists' reasoning for their extreme anti-Semitism shows that this type of perverse hatred was, if not completely unknown, then almost entirely excluded from the vast majority of ethnic German identities and nationalisms in Slovenia. Indeed, many Roman Catholics would have, similar to those in south Germany, found the violence and rampant anti-Semitism abhorrent and inconsistent with their Church's teaching.³⁹⁰

An article detailing the "synagogues in flames" in Germany and Graz was curtly-written, with few details and being located further down in the day's news listings than the death of Kemal Ataturk.³⁹¹ Similarly, an extremely short article described the arrests of 1,400 Jews in Munich who were then deported to the Dachau concentration camp.³⁹² Such lack of emphasis, details, and attention paid to outbursts of anti-Jewish sentiment and actions in the only major German-language newspaper left in Slovenia further indicates the extent to which extreme anti-Semitism was a non-presence in ethnic German identity or nationality. Indeed, Nazi Germany's anti-Jewish policies and

³⁹⁰ For some German Catholics, the *Kristallnacht* not only reinforced their perception of the Nazis as anti-Christian but also made them fear that they might be next to be targeted for such violence. Burleigh, *The Third Reich*, 332.

³⁹¹ MZ, "Synagogen in Flammen", November 12, 1938.

³⁹² MZ, "1400 Juden in München verhaftet", November 13, 1938.

oppression of Jews may very well have entrenched anti-Nazi sentiment among certain Roman Catholic Germans in Slovenia, while heightening their Christian self-identity.

Legitimizing the Annexation of Czechoslovakia

After German troops occupied the Czechoslovak Republic in March 1939,³⁹³ the *Mariborer Zeitung* portrayed it with the headline, “Czechs enter the protection of Adolf Hitler”, and shared speeches made by Hitler and Goebbels that legitimated Germany’s actions. “In light of the chaotic situation in Czechoslovakia...” reported the paper, “Greater Germany saw it necessary to take over the duty of order.”³⁹⁴ In an article entitled “Berlin for an honorable German-Czech Cooperation”, the *Mariborer Zeitung* explained to its readership how the “German troops” entrance into Bohemia and Moravia had “brought freedom” to the country and that the “Czechs (would) no longer be victims of Bolshevism.”³⁹⁵

Though the *Mariborer Zeitung* once again re-used Nazi propaganda about the Third Reich’s aggressive foreign policies in portraying the annexation of Czechoslovakia as that country voluntarily being “put under” the “protection” of Nazi Germany and thereby saving it from international communism, this portrayal does more than highlight the fact that a significant portion of Germans in Slovenia were largely and fervently

³⁹³ The invasion and occupation of the country by *Wehrmacht* troops was, as in Austria, not resisted and without violence. The former Republic of Czechoslovakia was split in two, with the new Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia being formed alongside an independent Slovak state. Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed*, 111.

³⁹⁴ MZ, “Die Tschechen begeben sich unter den Schutz Adolf Hitlers”, March 16, 1939.

³⁹⁵ MZ, “Berlin für Ehrenvolle Deutsch-Tschechische Zusammenarbeit”, March 17, 1939.

supportive of National Socialism. It also indicates a continuing reluctance of some German-speakers to pledge their own support either for the Nazi Party or for an aggressive war. Similar to prior explanations of Nazi foreign policies, the *Mariborer Zeitung* sought to head off criticism of the Third Reich's actions by claiming Hitler's government was acting out of a legitimate and noble purpose: to defend and save European civilization from the Soviet Union's dangerous international communism. By framing Germany's occupation of Czechoslovakia as its "duty" to restore order to a "chaotic situation", the paper was tapping into a widespread German nationalist identity in Slovenia that saw itself as a civilizing and orderly element, paternalistically looking down upon others in the region as needing German protection and culture to advance.

Germany and Yugoslavia

Germans in Slovenia felt content belonging to Hitler's "New Order" in Europe as an ally of Nazi Germany. "Yugoslavia occupies its place in Europe's New Order, which it acquired in a real assessment of the political distribution of power and measures of strength."³⁹⁶ The *Mariborer Zeitung* reported favorably on a speech given by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and Hungarian Prime Minister Pál Teleki that called Yugoslavia an important "part of this system of peace" of Axis policies in the Danube region.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁶ MZ, "Keine Änderung der Deutschen Politik gegenüber Jugoslawien", April 1, 1939.

³⁹⁷ MZ, "Mussolini und Teleti über den Donaufrieden", April 20, 1939.

Of course, faith in the honest intentions of Nazi Germany towards Yugoslavia for the “New Order” of Europe was misdirected, as Hitler’s ultimate goal with this concept was “not only to bolster German nationalism but to erase other peoples’ sense of national identity as well” – including Yugoslavia’s.³⁹⁸ But Germany’s relationship to Yugoslavia in the 1930s was important for several reasons: increased trade between the two countries was of mutual economic benefit; Hitler’s ulterior motives for annexing Austria and Czechoslovakia made friendship with Yugoslavia vital; and Hitler desired stronger interaction with Yugoslavia in part to, ostensibly, protect the German minorities and their culture in that country. The impact of the Third Reich’s increasing influence in Yugoslavia³⁹⁹ did not translate into generally better treatment of its German minority⁴⁰⁰ – in Slovenia, German schools remained banned and the authorities were highly vigilant of any sign of nazification among the German-speaking population.⁴⁰¹ Indeed, Stojadinović’s rapprochement with Nazi Germany opened him up to criticism from

³⁹⁸ Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire*, 8.

³⁹⁹ Increased trade with Germany became such a large and important factor in Yugoslavia’s economy that the Germans were able to influence, to a certain extent, Yugoslavia’s domestic affairs. In doing so, Hitler was able to keep Yugoslavia neutral while the *Wehrmacht* invaded and occupied surrounding countries. Littlefield, *Germany and Yugoslavia*, 29. For more, see *Ibid.*, 37-55.

⁴⁰⁰ This was in spite of the fact that German diplomats had for years been warning Yugoslav authorities that it would be impossible for the two countries to have a good relationship if the German minorities were not treated better. Report of the German Embassy in Yugoslavia to the *Auswärtiges Amt*, July 27, 1936. NARA, RG-242, T-120, Roll 3107, frame E540560-E540562.

⁴⁰¹ Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 133. The Nazis viewed this kind of treatment as “anti-German hatred”, thereby echoing the sentiment of German nationalists in Slovenia. Report of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, “Die Lage des Deutschtums im slovenischen Grenzgebiet.” NARA, RG-242, T-120, Roll 1453, frame D600644.

Yugoslav nationalists, and he was “released from office” by Prince Paul in early February, 1939.⁴⁰²

German Views of Slovenia and Yugoslavia up to the Nazi Invasion

Throughout the 1930s, as Nazi Germany achieved increasing economic gains and foreign policy success, many Germans in Slovenia became ever more supportive of the Third Reich and Hitler’s policies. But this increased loyalty to Germany did not lessen their own devotion to Yugoslavia.⁴⁰³ On the seventeenth birthday of King Peter II, on September 6, 1939, the *Mariborer Zeitung* expressed “the best wishes of the entire *Volk*” to the “personal luck of the young monarch.” The paper carried on, saying “wherever the young King may show himself, hearts fly all over towards him” and that the “united nation” had “jubilated” over the “great hope” he elicited in people. “The only thing we can do in these eventful times” the paper declared, “is to gather loyally around the throne, look events cold-bloodedly in the eyes”, and be “firmly resolute” in avoiding the “perception of state interests in these extraordinary times.”⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰² Ibid., 137. The decision by Stojadinović to establish closer ties with Nazi Germany was a poor one, as it turned out that the immediate economic benefits to increased trade would not make it less likely for Yugoslavia to become a target of Nazi aggression. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 182.

⁴⁰³ It is to be assumed that, for at least some of the more passionately nationalist Germans, professions of loyalty to Yugoslavia were merely window dressing in an attempt to maintain good relations between the Third Reich and Yugoslavia. This was confirmed in a report by the German *Auswärtiges Amt* from December of 1938 that, although noting that the “situation of the Germans in Yugoslavia had never been content since the establishment of the state”, it was crucial for the Reich’s foreign policy that the minorities maintain good relations with the authorities so as to maintain stability. Report of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, “Die Lage des Deutschtums in Jugoslawien”, December 22, 1938. NARA, RG-242, T-120, roll 1363, frame D520122-D520124.

⁴⁰⁴ MZ, “S.M. König Peter II. Feiert seinen 17. Geburtstag”, September 6, 1939.

While Nazi Germany had started the Second World War with the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, German-speakers in Yugoslavia had “placed (themselves) behind the [Yugoslav] government.” Yugoslavia’s position of neutrality had “undoubtedly the overwhelming agreement” of the people. “Neutrality”, explained the *Mariborer Zeitung*, “saves us from the horrors of war...Only in this way...(will) our Fatherland arise out of the storms of the present without trials and suffering.”⁴⁰⁵ As a symbol of the unity of Slavs and Germans in support of Yugoslav neutrality, the “whole city” of Marburg/Maribor “demonstrate(d) its loyalty for King, Dynasty, and State”, decking the streets and buildings in the national colors and “sea of lights.”⁴⁰⁶

The *Mariborer Zeitung*’s public affirmation of loyalty to the Yugoslav monarchy and state was significant for two reasons. On the one hand, it served to mollify Yugoslav concern over the loyalty of Slovenia’s German population, many of whom were supporters of Nazi Germany and National Socialism.⁴⁰⁷ On the other hand, it reflected a continuing sense of loyal German affiliation to Yugoslavia that had been tested with the rise of the Third Reich and perceived anti-German social policies in Slovenia. The paper’s emphasis on the “whole city” of Marburg/Maribor exhibiting their “loyalty for King, Dynasty, and State” highlights that this loyalty was in large part predicated on the kingdom’s remaining neutral and avoiding joining the war. By so publicly and forcefully expressing its support of the Yugoslav king and his kingdom’s neutrality, the *Mariborer*

⁴⁰⁵ MZ, “Jugoslawiens Neutralität”, September 7, 1939.

⁴⁰⁶ MZ, “Maribor manifestiert seine Treue für König, Dynastie und Staat”, September 7, 1939.

⁴⁰⁷ Yugoslav apprehension of Hitler’s intentions after the outbreak of war in 1939 heightened anti-German sentiment in Slovenia, which bordered Austria and Italy. Anti-German demonstrations increased, as German nationalist activists became increasingly loud and provocative with their revisionist goals. Lumans, *Himmler’s Auxiliaries*, 120.

Zeitung reflects both the deeply-held anti-war and pro-Nazi sentiment among its German-speaking readership. That the paper devoted so much effort to praising the young king and Yugoslav neutrality demonstrates both that pro-Nazi sentiment was high – if their loyalty to Yugoslavia were not so in doubt, the paper would not have felt the need to exclaim so loudly that they were not acting against its interests – and that anti-war feelings ran deep among Germans in Slovenia.

German Identity and Nationalism on the Eve of the 1941 Invasion of Yugoslavia

German identity in Slovenia by 1941 was split into various factions – Pan-Germanist, National Socialist, Austrian, Catholic, indifferent, loyal to Yugoslavia, and a mixture of several or all of these variants.⁴⁰⁸ On the occasion of the opening of the *Deutsches Wissenschaftliches Institut* in February of 1941, the *Mariborer Zeitung* quoted in full the speech given by Reich Foreign Minister Ambassador Fritz von Twardowski. The paper highlighted Ambassador von Twardowski's comments on the “spiritual-intellectual relationship between Germany and Yugoslavia”, which he hoped would “strengthen” the “cooperation” between the two countries. The paper put in bold the part of his speech that declared that what was “worth pursuing” was “not the uniformity of spirit, of culture...but rather the development of originality and individuality of every

⁴⁰⁸ Yugoslav authorities, who had good reason to suspect National Socialist sentiment among members of the German community, were uncertain how many “real” Nazis in Slovenia there were, and who were loyal citizens. Major Plhak of the Yugoslav intelligence services wrote that it was “hard to tell” who was an “ex-Untersteiermark who is German” and “who is a ‘cross-breed’ and changes sides when it is opportune.” Voduš-Starič, “The Beginnings of the Ideological Dispute and its Consequences on German-Slovene Relations”, 159.

nation...Between nations of highly-developed cultures...the goal is...cooperation on the grounds of complete equality and mutual learning and teaching, giving and taking.”⁴⁰⁹

The opening of the *Deutsches Wissenschaftliches Institut*, financed by Germany, symbolizes the conflicts and contested identities among Slovenia’s German minority. That the new institute was funded by the Third Reich indicates the extent to which German money and influence had spread in Yugoslavia. The institute represented not only the basic fact of Yugoslavia’s Germandom, but also the nature of its presence. Ambassador Twardowski’s hope that the institute would “strengthen” the “cooperation” between Yugoslavia and Germany expresses a belief in Germans’ cultural abilities in science and technology which could be utilized by Yugoslavs for mutual benefit. The *Mariborer Zeitung*’s emphasis on the parts of the ambassador’s speech that touched on the “originality and individuality of every nation” whose goals were “mutual learning and teaching” reflects a strand of German identity in Slovenia that viewed their Slavic counterparts as culturally equal though still able to receive unique contributions from Germans due to their inherent characteristics.

When Nazi Germany began publicly talking about, and then implementing, plans to resettle German populations in occupied areas of Eastern Europe for the ideological purpose of creating a racially-pure Greater Germany, German-speaking minorities in Yugoslavia panicked at the idea of being removed from their homes.⁴¹⁰ The *Mariborer*

⁴⁰⁹ MZ, “Die Kulturelle Zusammenarbeit zwischen Jugoslawien und Deutschland”, March 2, 1941.

⁴¹⁰ Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 139. Hitler’s decision to resettle ethnic German populations in Eastern Europe came as a surprise to the minorities living there. Annexation for purposes of uniting the *Volk* was one thing, but completing this process through forced removal from the places they had lived in for centuries was not something that they had contemplated. While the German minorities themselves were surprised and perplexed at this decision, in reality Hitler’s use for Germans

Zeitung published an article by Dr. Arnold Weingärtner that sought to placate German concerns about their *Umsiedlung* from Slovenia. Referring to the prior transfers of Germans from the Baltic and Lithuania, Weingärtner wrote that “Germany wanted to save all the (ethnic Germans) from a difficult-to-avoid downfall”, while removing potential “conflicts” between the Germans and local populations and thereby completing the “necessary” Nazi population and resettlement plans in Eastern Europe.⁴¹¹ Such attempts to assuage concerns of Germans in Slovenia had little success – the German minorities in Yugoslavia remained intensely anxious about resettlement and their fate through 1941.⁴¹²

After relations between the German minorities and the Yugoslav authorities deteriorated through 1940⁴¹³ and Yugoslavia was pressured to join the Tripartite Pact in

abroad was based upon how they factored into his foreign policy goals. “His general aim regarding the minorities was to win their loyalty and then to exploit them, group by group, in the interest of his immediate diplomatic needs. Each minority served the Reich as circumstances required. Some, such as the Sudeten Germans, performed as classic fifth columns, whereas others, such as the Germans of Poland, were for the most part passive pawns, pretexts for aggression. These groups had already served the Reich well, and in the fall of 1939, other minorities were expected to contribute to the cause by resettling.” Lumans, *Himmler’s Auxiliaries*, 151-152.

⁴¹¹ MZ, “Die letzte Deutsche Umsiedlung”, March 4, 1941.

⁴¹² Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 139.

⁴¹³ Serb attacks on German minorities at meetings of the *Kulturbund* had to be broken up by the police, while police in Slovenia beat ethnic Germans in Ljubljana in April of 1940. As well, flyers began circulating in Slovenia that advocated death for all ethnic Germans, and by June 1940, were “warning the population that the ethnic Germans were a fifth column.” Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 139-140. These and other anti-German activities, such as “Yugoslav efforts to rid the country of spies and foreign propagandists”, had “met with strong German official resistance.” As well, Germany’s military successes in Western Europe in 1940 had made “Yugoslav military officials consider that although Germany military dispositions do not point to a German attack in this direction in the near future, continued German successes in the West will inevitably hasten the arrival of German armies in southeastern Europe.” Arthur Bliss Lane to Cordell Hull, June 4, 1940. NARA, RG-59. Yugoslav civilians, however, viewed a German or Italian attack in the summer of 1940 as unlikely, however, and were more concerned about the economy and what the post-war settlement would look like. George H. Schellens to Cordell Hull, June 21, 1940. NARA, RG-59.

early March of 1941,⁴¹⁴ the *Mariborer Zeitung* reported that Yugoslavia's joining the Axis powers "guaranteed Yugoslav integrity" and reassured its readers by stating that there would be "no foreign troops marching through Yugoslavia."⁴¹⁵ The *Mariborer Zeitung*'s spin of Yugoslavia's decision to join the Axis as protecting the country's integrity and keeping "foreign troops" out attests to the enduring strength of an anti-war strand in identity among Slovenia's German minority group.⁴¹⁶ Though there was a significant amount of German National Socialist supporters in Slovenia who would have celebrated the *Wehrmacht*'s entrance into the country as they did after the *Anschluss* of Austria, there were still a not-inconsiderable number of Germans, whose identities were strongly Catholic, soft-nationalist, or otherwise unsupportive of National Socialism, that desired peace and stability over rejoining the spiritual body of the German *Volk*.

⁴¹⁴ Yugoslavia's strong desire to stay out of the war made them resist signing the Tripartite Pact that included Nazi Germany, Japan, and Fascist Italy despite outside pressure to do so until March 1941. Germany's transfer of over 350,000 troops to neighboring Bulgaria made this an increasingly untenable position, and the government signed the agreement on March 25. Two days later, a military coup replaced the government. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 194-196. For a more detailed account of Yugoslavia's joining the Tripartite Pact, see Littlefield, *Germany and Yugoslavia*, 87-130.

⁴¹⁵ MZ, "Jugoslawien ist dem Dreimächtepakt beigetreten", March 26, 1941.

⁴¹⁶ Germans' concern over their fate should Yugoslavia be dragged into the war was heightened after the new military government, which was composed of Serb nationalists, "arrested the entire ethnic German leadership" who then, after being released, did their best to assure the new leaders of the country of their loyalty. Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 140. As well, the new military government was strongly suspected by the German government of physically "mishandling" members of the ethnic German minority community in Belgrade and elsewhere. Morris to Cordell Hull, March 31, 1940. NARA, RG-59.

After the Invasion

Mussolini's ill-advised decision to attack Greece⁴¹⁷ on October 28, 1940, precipitated Nazi Germany's invasion of Yugoslavia.⁴¹⁸ The *Wehrmacht's* invasion on April 6, 1941 advanced quickly, ending with the "physical destruction" of Yugoslavia by June.⁴¹⁹ Though some Nazi-oriented Germans in Slovenia were actively serving the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) intelligence and military sections from the time of the *Anschluss* to the 1941 invasion,⁴²⁰ the majority of ethnic Germans were kept in the dark about the Nazis' intentions and obeyed mobilization orders after April 6.⁴²¹ The country was partitioned between the different Axis powers, with Nazi Germany completing the geographical expansion of the Greater German Reich by annexing northern Slovenia, whose "population according to Nazi ideology was amenable to speedy Germanization."⁴²²

German-speakers in Nazi-occupied Slovenia were re-united, spiritually and geographically, with Germandom. The now-Nazified and renamed *Marburger Zeitung*

⁴¹⁷ Mussolini did not consult with Hitler prior to ordering the attack. Jozo Timosevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 46.

⁴¹⁸ The failure of Italian troops to make quick progress in advancing through Greece, as well as German need for supplies to be sent through the fastest possible route to its armies in North Africa, contributed to Germany's decision to invade. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 195.

⁴¹⁹ Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 197.

⁴²⁰ In the summer of 1940, Yugoslav authorities discovered a (Nazi) German spy network in Marburg/Maribor, which had contacts via radio with Graz. These agents had prepared, in the days leading up to the invasion, a list of more than 3,500 Yugoslav citizens – mostly from Slovenia – who were to be immediately arrested. Nećak, *Die "Deutschen" in Slowenien*, 15-16. While a small minority of nationalist activists participated in fifth column-like activities, the secret radio stations set up by the SD were operated exclusively by *Reichsdeutsche*, not the German minorities. Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 140-141.

⁴²¹ Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 140-141.

⁴²² This did not include the city of Ljubljana. Timosevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 61.

welcomed the “inevitable” result of German troops “liberating” the “Yugoslav state”, which had “been overthrown by the betrayal of the Belgrade war criminals in an insane adventure.” The paper explained to its readers that a “new time” had begun for the region, since “Adolf Hitler’s Third Reich is a social state in the truest meaning of the word. The German *Volksgemeinschaft*, of which we had until now been separated by the unbearable Versailles system, spans our beloved green Styria.”⁴²³ An announcement in the *Marburger Zeitung* on April 9 greeted the Nazi occupiers:

Ethnic Comrades! The hour of our liberation has struck! A 22-year struggle for the continued existence of our *Volksgruppe* has concluded with the victorious liberating deed of our Führer. We have now the anxious hours of our life behind us. Joy and thanks fill our hearts. For our joy and thanks towards our beloved Führer and his brave and glorious *Wehrmacht*, we want to worthily...adorn our houses, windows, and businesses with our German flags, with the likeness of the Führer and with flowers. We have revived from struggle and misery to a new life of structure and service to our German *Volk* and our Greater German Fatherland. Everyone fulfill his German duty!⁴²⁴

Accusing the “seven million Serbs” of exercising a “political and economic system of terror” against “nine million people of other ethnic groups”, the *Marburger Zeitung* framed the Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia as “freeing” the populations there. The coming of the Nazis meant “freedom and bread for all in Adolf Hitler’s New Europe.”⁴²⁵ German occupation meant that the “22 years” that “the public use of our German mother tongue” was “refused” was over. “Now the time has come where we can once more openly

⁴²³ MZ, “Geschichtliche Wendung”, April 9, 1941.

⁴²⁴ MZ, “Volksgenossen!”, April 9, 1941.

⁴²⁵ MZ, “Der Sturmlauf der Gerechtigkeit”, April 10, 1941.

profess our German *Volkstum*.”⁴²⁶ Marburg/Maribor and the rest of Lower Styria were now free.⁴²⁷

As in other cases of Nazi foreign policy, the *Marburger Zeitung*'s interpretation of Germany's invasion was not simply a reinforcement of National Socialist propaganda. In addition to loudly and happily declaring what it claimed to be the full voice of Slovenia's German minority in approving the Third Reich's reasons for invading and occupying Yugoslavia, the paper was also explaining to parts of its readership why this invasion was a positive and what its impact would have on their lives. In interpreting the Nazis' invasion for its readership, the *Marburger Zeitung* thereby exposes the fault lines that divided German-speakers in Slovenia in their identity and nationalisms. Those German nationalists who were ardent supporters of National Socialism and believed in their belonging to the *Volksgemeinschaft* rejoiced at their liberation from Slavic overlords. Others who were not necessarily either for or against National Socialism but were adamant in their desire to avoid war at all costs would have been deeply uneasy about the repercussions that might occur after foreign troops began to occupy Yugoslavia. Still others, whose identities were shaped as much by their Roman Catholicism and affiliation to the Austria of the Habsburgs, could have been torn between their desire to regain their prior privileges while living in a German-dominated society and their distaste over being controlled by Nazi troops and administrators.

⁴²⁶ MZ, “Volksgenossen!”, April 10, 1941.

⁴²⁷ MZ, “Marburg Frei!”, April 11, 1941. The Nazis did indeed view their invasion and occupation of Slovenia as a liberation. Since the late 1930s, the Reich Foreign Ministry had viewed the Slovene government and Slovene people's actions against Germans as “terrorist activities.” Contrary to local German nationalists' views of these actions (at least as espoused in the German-language press) the Nazis saw anti-German attitudes as permeating Slovene society, from the authorities, to the press, to the local civilians themselves. Memorandum from German Embassy in Yugoslavia to the *Auswärtiges Amt*, May 4, 1939. NARA, RG-242, T-120, Roll 1453, frame D600645-D600651.

But Catholicism's strong role among Germans in Slovenia was persistent and strong. On Easter, the *Marburger Zeitung* celebrated the Christian holiday with "the sign of the victorious flags of Adolf Hitler." The paper equated Christ's rising from the dead with the Nazi invasion; just as Jesus Christ's resurrection had brought humanity out of the darkness and into a new age, so too did Hitler and the *Wehrmacht* accomplish a similar phenomenon in Yugoslavia and Europe. Notably, the paper published a full-length photograph of the Führer looking nobly into the distance, in full military uniform, but without any outward sign of the Nazi swastika.⁴²⁸

German-speakers' Roman Catholic identity was clearly deeply-held and widespread in Slovenia, as the *Marburger Zeitung's* extensive efforts to relate to the Christian denomination evince. That the newspaper would show a full-length photograph of Adolf Hitler but decline to display the infamous Nazi swastika indicates that a considerable number of those Germans who had strong anti-Nazi views – whether due to their Catholicism and the anti-Christian actions that the Nazis had taken over the previous several years, or some other reason – were ambivalent at best in how they felt about the Führer. While many Germans in Slovenia felt more strongly about their Catholic identity than their German nationalism, this was not the case for many others. Though the overwhelming majority of Germans in Slovenia were Roman Catholic, a great many of them were supporters of National Socialism, and their religion did not interfere with or cause them to question their identifying with the extreme right-wing German nationalism that the Nazis espoused.

⁴²⁸ MZ, "Auferstehung 1941", April 12, 1941.

On the “day of fulfillment” in Marburg/Maribor, when Dr. Sigfried Uiberreither took over the civilian administration of the region as *Gauleiter* and *Reichsstatthalter*, the *Marburger Zeitung* depicted the “indescribable joy” of the city’s population as Dr. Uiberreither entered the “ground of the old German city.”⁴²⁹ German occupation meant that those who had “annihilated the old monuments of German culture (and) defaced the centuries-old beautiful picture of German cities” had done so “only because they are destroying witnesses for Germandom.”⁴³⁰

The *Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund* was replaced by the *Steirischer Heimatbund*, whose leader Franz Steindl was given the order from Hitler to “make (Lower Styria) German.”⁴³¹ In an attempt to recruit more members for the *Heimatbund*, the *Marburger Zeitung* published an article from a reader that appealed to Germans’ regional identities:

All of us who are Styrians love our *Heimat*. Our forefathers lived here, built the ground here, established the cities, markets, and villages and laid down the streets and paths between them...(Our) sons and daughters well understood this legacy, this holy appeal: remain true to the *Heimat*... We had to suffer...almost 23 long years that the enemy ruled our country. And how he ruled! He expelled many of us, the town and streets decayed...and now this state that was built on lies has fallen...But we, we have our Lower Styria once more in tight hands...Since we all want to assist and cooperate with the development of our *Heimat*, our Lower Styria...None of us will fail. We will all be there. Because our great, our beloved Führer Adolf Hitler calls upon us.⁴³²

⁴²⁹ MZ, “Auf Ewig Deutsch”, April 15, 1941.

⁴³⁰ MZ, “Wir Danken unserm Führer!”, April 19, 1941.

⁴³¹ Scherer, “Die Deutschen in der Untersteiermark, in Ober-Krain und in der Gottschee”, 131.

⁴³² MZ, “Alle zum Heimatbund!”, April 27, 1941.

By July of 1941, the *Marburger Zeitung* had begun displaying at the top of its masthead the Styrian lion and carrying the slogan of “official organ of the Styrian *Heimatbund*.”⁴³³

Despite the obviously-biased pro-Nazi stance of the *Marburger Zeitung* after Slovenia came under German occupation, not all Germans in Slovenia agreed that the coming of the National Socialist regime signaled a liberation. While the Germans of Slovenia became once more a part of the German *Volk*, the nature of what this *Volk* was not one that all approved of. For German nationalists who cheered the rise of the Third Reich and eagerly awaited the revolution that would renew the nation and *Volk*, the events of April 1941 established the dominance of a German identity and nationalism in Slovenia that was in step with National Socialism. Other nationalists who had, as Roman Catholics and Austrians, contested this intra-German culture war might have been glad to have their prior social status and privilege restored, but not necessarily at the expense of the violence and atrocities that were to come. As well, fear of and desire for protection from communism was pervasive among the Germans in Slovenia, and was an important rationale for accepting the Nazis and their invasion of Yugoslavia. It is clear that, from the time of Hitler’s rise to power in 1933 to the German invasion of 1941, there were many Germans in Slovenia who became fervent supporters of the Third Reich and its ideology. As well, the Reich’s reach into German culture and society in Yugoslavia was long indeed.⁴³⁴ But this influence was never total, and both cultural and societal anti-

⁴³³ MZ, advertisement, July 9, 1941.

⁴³⁴ This can be seen in the *Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund*, whose leadership were thoroughly Nazified by 1939 and actively sought to become an arm of the Third Reich. Hans Rasimus, himself an ethnic German who was expelled from Yugoslavia after the war, denies that the *Kulturbund* had any “basis for National Socialism” and resented that the Yugoslav government conflated its own German minority with the National Socialists of the Third Reich. Rasimus, *Als Fremde im Vaterland*, 490.

Nazi institutions remained – the Catholic Church, conservative liberalism, and a different idea of nationalism, a different idea of what it meant to be German.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁵ For example, in Marburg/Maribor in 1940, less than half of the city's German population was registered in the Nazi-controlled *Kulturbund*. Of those registered, most were middle-aged (between 30 and 60) with a significant minority of younger men (15-30 years old). A majority were Protestant, with few Roman Catholic members. Vodušek-Starič, "The Beginning of the Ideological Dispute and its Consequences on German-Slovene Relations", 153.

Conclusion

Yugoslavia was divided by the Axis powers into three parts, being occupied by Germany, Italy, and Hungary. The Nazis controlled most of Slovenia north of Ljubljana, with its population of some 25,000 ethnic Germans, and intended annex the region to the Third Reich.⁴³⁶ The decision to consider the annexation of Slovenia as an extension of the *Anschluss* with Austria led to fierce partisan resistance from Slovenes and presented the local Nazi occupying force with unique problems of sabotage and disruption of a kind not seen in other occupied areas of Eastern Europe.⁴³⁷ Partisan warfare in Slovenia and Yugoslavia was particularly brutal, leaving repercussions for the region that would be felt for decades to come.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ The Yugoslav census of 1931 showed 25,054 ethnic Germans in what would become Nazi-occupied Slovenia, with the *Kulturbund*'s own internal studies only marginally increasing the number of Germans, at 28,075 in January 1941. Almost half of those were in rural Gottschee/Kočevje. Timosevic, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 83. Some of those Germans left under Italian or Hungarian occupation in Slovenia expressed their desire to be placed under German administration through waving Nazi flags, public proclamations, and protesting. Nečak, *Die "Deutschen" in Slowenien*, 17.

⁴³⁷ For more, see Tim Kirk, "Limits of Germandom: Resistance to the Nazi Annexation of Slovenia", in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (October 1991), 646-667. Though the Nazis intended to simply extend the civilian administrative area of Austria that bordered Slovenia to Lower Styria and Carinthia, this was never accomplished as partisan resistance was too fierce. But the NSDAP occupiers did implement the Nuremberg Racial Laws and introduced a military draft that forced Slovenes to fight for the Germans. Nečak, *Die "Deutschen" in Slowenien*, 18. This unpreparedness is understandable in light of the fact that the Germans had anticipated "70-80%" of Slovenes would be "in favor of Germany" during the invasion, ostensibly because of anti-Serb sentiment. Report of the German Embassy in Croatia to the *Auswärtiges Amt*, "Abschliessender Bericht Über die Umsiedlung", November 20, 1941. RG-242, T-120, roll 5781, frame H296639-296649.

⁴³⁸ Partisan paramilitary groups in Slovenia fought both for and against communists as well as Nazis. Timosevic, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 126-127. Tamara Griesser-Pečar has called this a "civil war" in Slovenia, one that led from one totalitarian regime (the Nazis and fascist Italy) to another (communism). See Tamara Griesser-Pečar, *Das zerrissene Volk – Slowenien 1941-1946: Okkupation, Kollaboration, Bürgerkrieg, Revolution* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2003). Slovene history for this period had been largely written from the communist viewpoint, who saw those Slovenes who had fought against the communist partisans and then left the country after the war not as refugees but as traitors. This interpretation has caused resentment among some Catholics in Slovenia, which has persisted for decades. For more on the experiences of these anti-communist partisans and refugees, see John Corsellis and Marcus Ferrar, *Slovenia 1945: Memories of Death and Survival after World War II* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005).

The Nazis intended to completely Germanize Slovenia, with Heinrich Himmler, in his capacity as Reich Commissar for the Strengthening of Germandom, establishing a Staff for the Resettlement of the Population and issuing the following directives to bring this about: expelling *en masse* the population of “undesirable” Slovenes, including the intelligentsia and those “nationally conscious”; transferring of ethnic Germans from the Italian-occupied part of Slovenia and other parts of Eastern and Southeastern Europe; and the Germanization of those Slovenes not included in the expulsion.⁴³⁹

Annexation to the Third Reich put many Germans in Slovenia in a tight spot.⁴⁴⁰

Similar to other regions of Eastern Europe that came under Nazi occupation, local ethnic

For more on partisan warfare and developments in Yugoslavia during World War II, see Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 197-228.

⁴³⁹ Timosevic, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 85. The Germans would end up expelling some 80,300 Slovenes, only one-third of the amount they had originally planned and about 10% of the total Slovene population. Those expelled went to Serbia, Croatia, and Germany, where they became forced laborers or were Germanized. For more, see *Ibid.*, 86-91. Those sent to forced labor camps became part of the millions of forced and slave workers from Nazi-occupied areas in the Third Reich that made up a large percentage of the German labor force during the war. For more, see Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). For more on the Nazis' racial treatment of Slavs, see John Connelly, “Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice”, in *Central European History*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1999), 1-33. Among those persecuted by the Nazis in Slovenia were Gypsies and the numerically-small Jewish population of less than 1,000. Since there were so few Jews, the NSDAP civil administration in Slovenia did not view this as a burning issue to be resolved, and roughly 80% of the Jewish population survived the war. See Andrej Pančur, “Genocide and Ethnocide: Similarities and Differences between Jewish and Slovenian Victimization in Slovenia”, in Anton Weiss-Wendt, *Eradicating Differences: The Treatment of Minorities in Nazi-Dominated Europe* (Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 165-186.

⁴⁴⁰ At the outset of the invasion, Germans were faced with what they viewed as an impossible choice: follow mobilization orders and fight German troops or disobey those orders and go into hiding until it was safe to come out. Many did flee to neighboring Hungary and other parts of Yugoslavia, while many also obeyed orders to mobilize. See Schieder, ed., *Das Schicksal der Deutschen in Jugoslawien*, 46E-50E. The extent to which ethnic Germans in Slovenia collaborated with and participated in Nazi occupation administration and anti-partisan efforts is disputed. Stefan Karner downplays the participation of Slovene, arguing that many Germans – including even Nazi supporters – spoke out about the brutal, racist occupation policies; he claims that the “majority” of ethnic Germans in Slovenia “rejected” the occupation policies of the NSDAP administration, while others followed orders and still others adopted a silent “*modus vivendi*” with the local Slovene population. See Karner, *Die Deutschsprachige Volksgruppe in Slowenien*, 72-76; 94; 117-118. In contrast, Dušan Nečak argues that “most” Germans were in fact

Germans were both recruited and volunteered to help the German war effort and occupation.⁴⁴¹ Germans in Slovenia who had been staunch National Socialist ideologues before the invasion embraced the coming of Nazi troops. Others who had been ambivalent or opposed to the Nazis might have been unsure what annexation would lead to, but were nonetheless relieved to have their prior privileges and rights – especially in education – restored.⁴⁴²

While ethnic Germans were either passionate or passive towards their membership in the Third Reich, many were still anxious about being resettled to another area of Greater Germany.⁴⁴³ In the winter of 1941-1942, the 600-year history of Germans

sympathizers of the Nazis, citing the “80%” of “functions of the occupying administration” being composed of “local” Germans. See Nećak, *Die “Deutschen” in Slowenien*, 14-15; 19.

⁴⁴¹ Timosevic, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 85. The Nazis raised an SS unit composed of local Germans, which only ended up comprising around 1,600 men. Nonetheless, these Germans helped fight the partisans, sometimes resulting in atrocities being committed. See Nećak, “‘Die Deutschen’ in Slowenien, 1938-1948”, 382-383. “Local” German participation in atrocities, such as the execution by shooting of 10 Slovene civilians for every one German soldier killed by partisans, linked all German-speakers in Slovenia with the brutal Nazi occupation. Damijan Guštin and Vladimir Prebilič, “Die Rechtslage der deutschen Minderheit in Jugoslawien 1944 bis 1946”, in Manfred Kittel, Horst Möller, Jiří Pešek, and Oldřich Tůma, eds., *Deutschsprachige Minderheiten 1945: Ein europäischer Vergleich* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 302-303.

⁴⁴² While Slovenes viewed the Nazi occupation for what it was – a hostile invasion by an aggressive, racist regime intent on exterminating the very idea of a Slovene culture – many Germans saw it as an opportunity to have their former privileges restored, not necessarily agreeing with the racist and eliminationist rhetoric of National Socialism. Karner, *Die Deutschsprachige Volksgruppe in Slowenien*, 75. A similar process was evident in Serbia among the occupying Nazi forces and local German population. The local Germans’ reasons for embracing the Nazis varied, but many of them collaborated and participated in anti-partisan activity and racial policies which engendered intense hostility and would lead to their expulsion after the war. See Mirna Zakic, “The Furthest Watch of the Reich: National Socialism, Ethnic Germans, and the Occupation of the Serbian Banat, 1941-1944”, PhD dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, 2011. But German-speaking Catholics in Slovenia might have been very apprehensive towards the Nazi occupation force, as it was started early on that “room must be made for a new mystic religion of blood and race as practiced by the old German race”, an action that would lead to the “abolition of Catholicism.” James B. Stewart to Cordell Hull, March 17, 1942. NARA, RG-59.

⁴⁴³ Komjathy and Stockwell, *German Minorities and the Third Reich*, 143. The *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* had not planned on transferring the German population in Slovenia until after the 1941 invasion, as it was intended that they would “serve as intermediaries between the Reich and the local Slavic population.” Lumans, *Himmler’s Auxiliaries*, 175. Indeed, some Germans who had been supportive of the National Socialists became disillusioned once they came under their jurisdiction. One man, who had “always

in Gottschee/Kočevje came to an end after roughly 15,000 were transferred to Carinthia and Lower Styria from the Italian-occupied region surrounding Ljubljana, to replace the Slovene population that had been expelled from there.⁴⁴⁴ Despite becoming a part of the Third Reich, being granted Reich citizenship, and being given administrative posts in the occupation, German-speakers in Slovenia were still ambiguous in how “German” they really were. The Nazis themselves were not entirely convinced that the “local” Germans were equals, with one report upbraiding a lower-ranked clerk for using the term *Reichsdeutsch* instead of *Volksdeutsch* to describe the Germans in Slovenia.⁴⁴⁵

For the Slovenes who were on the receiving end of the Germanization policies and violent reprisals of the occupying Nazi administration,⁴⁴⁶ the variants in German identities and nationalisms that had been present after World War I and continued

especially sympathized with the National Socialist worldview”, was “forcibly evacuated” by Nazi authorities from his home in Windisch Graz in Lower Styria with his family in the middle of the night, never receiving an official reason for the action. Martin Barl to the German General Consulate in Zagreb, September 10, 1941. NARA, RG-242, T-120, roll 5781, frame H296663-H296664.

⁴⁴⁴ Schieder, ed., *Das Schicksal der Deutschen in Jugoslawien*, 83E. This was done despite internal reports showing that the Gottschee Germans were “unprepared” for such a move. Report to Sigfried Ueberreither, “Aussiedlungen entlängs der Save”, January 7, 1942. NARA, RG-242, T-120, roll 5781, frame H296633-H296635. For more on the transfer of the Gottschee Germans, see Mitja Ferenc, “Für immer untergegangen? Die Gottscheer im 20. Jahrhundert”, in Mitja Ferenc and Joachim Höslér, eds., *Spurensuche in der Gottschee: Deutschsprachige Siedler in Slowenien* (Potsdam, Germany: Deutsches Kulturforum östliches Europa, 2011), 63-91.

⁴⁴⁵ Telegram from the German Embassy in Zagreb to the *Auswärtiges Amt*, September 16, 1944. RG-242, T-120, roll 5784, frame H299179. The German-speaking population of Slovenia was granted Reich citizenship in October of 1941. Nećak, *Die “Deutschen” in Slowenien*, 18.

⁴⁴⁶ Germanization measures included changing geographical names, street signs, businesses, and other aspects of society from Slovene to German; Slovene first names were prohibited and German spelling used in public records; Slovenes were forced or compelled to join two front groups, the Carinthian Volksbund and Styrian Heimatbund, and were classified by five different categories, ranging from “friendly to the Germans” to “strongly anti-German” as well as the racial categories of “very good” to “unsuitable” for becoming a part of the German *Volksgemeinschaft*; Slovene teachers were fired, Slovene schools were closed and re-opened with only German-language instruction, with the objective of “(preventing) the development of Slovene national consciousness in Slovene children..and to implant German national consciousness instead” – the very process that many Germans had felt the Slovene government was trying to accomplish in the 1920s and 1930s. Timosevic, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 91.

through World War II were essentially meaningless; the contested German National Socialist identity in Slovenia had convinced almost everyone that a German was a German, and all Germans were Nazis.⁴⁴⁷ In November of 1943, the Antifascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) decided that all "enemies of the people" must be dealt with, including the Germans of the country.⁴⁴⁸

Many ethnic Germans fled with the retreat of the *Wehrmacht*, who fell before the advancing communist partisans and the Red Army. Those who remained suffered the "vengeance" of the local Slavic population who had endured the harsh Nazi

⁴⁴⁷ Indeed, the Slovenes had called their German-speaking minority "Germans" throughout the interwar period, while Reich citizens called them *Volksdeutsche* or *Auslandsdeutsche*. Today, it might be more appropriate to designate them as Austrians, as a distinct German-Austrian cultural identity has become more prominent. Dušan Nećak, "Die 'deutschen' in Slowenien nach 1945 als Klassen- und Nationalfeinde: Ein Beispiel nationalpolitischer Stereotype", in Andreas Moritsch and Alois Mosser, eds., *Den Anderen im Blick: Stereotype im ehemaligen Jugoslawien* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 2002), 199. For more on the development of Austrian identity between 1918 and 1955, see Douglas Patrick Campbell, "The Shadow of the Habsburgs: Memory and National Identity in Austrian Politics and Education, 1918-1955", PhD dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, 2006. It is important to note that, even though the Nazis picked out the so-called *Volksdeutsche* as beneficiaries of Nazi extermination and racial policies in Eastern Europe, the Nazis themselves found it often difficult to determine who exactly was a German when they encountered the peoples of Eastern Europe. Designation could not rest solely on use of the German language, since many Jews and Slavs spoke German. Blood was another difficult criteria to establish, even more so than in the Reich. Regardless of whether they were "true" Germans, either in self-identification or marked as so by others, some of the ethnic Germans of Eastern Europe participated in the crimes of the Nazis, and all were officially beneficiaries. This does not take away from the fact that some ethnic Germans publicly and privately resisted and protested Nazi occupation policies. Many *Volksdeutsche* (who often did not call themselves by that name) tried to "prove" their Germanness by being good Nazis in order to gain certain favors, while some Nazis considered them to be "second- or third-rate Germans at best." See Doris L. Bergen, "The 'Volksdeutschen' of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Holocaust: Constructed Ethnicity, Real Genocide", in Keith Bullivant, Geoffrey Giles, and Walter Pape, eds., *Germany and Eastern Europe: Cultural Identities and Cultural Differences* (Atlanta, Georgia: Yearbook of European Studies, 1999), 70-93. Indeed, even after some Germans from Yugoslavia had entered Germany near the end of the war to avoid the Red Army, they were still "(relegated) to the table with the alien workers and the prisoners of war." Douglas, *Orderly and Humane*, 61.

⁴⁴⁸ Scherer, "Die Deutschen in der Untersteiermark, in Ober-Krain und in der Gottschee", 131. An exception was made for those Germans who had fought alongside the partisans against the occupiers, but this did not include many. See Tone Ferenc, "The Austrians and Slovenia during the Second World War", in F. Parkinson, ed., *Conquering the Past: Austrian Nazism Yesterday and Today* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 207-233.

occupation.⁴⁴⁹ On May 8, 1945, partisans in Cilli/Celje shot and beat to death any Germans they saw on the street. The entire German population of Lower Styria was imprisoned in concentration camps in Tüchern/Laško near Cilli/Celje, Herberstein near Marburg/Maribor, and in the death camp Sterntal/Kidričevo. Thousands died of hunger, typhus, and dysentery. Conservative estimates of the death toll of Germans in Yugoslavia after the *Wehrmacht* left the country are put at a minimum of 10,000, of which 6,000 were from Lower Styria.⁴⁵⁰

Slovenia was the region of Yugoslavia with the most concerted effort to expel the German population. After being interned in holding camps, where many fell ill and died, most Germans were sent by train to the Austrian border. Some were sent to labor camps, while those in “mixed” marriages were allowed to remain.⁴⁵¹ Reasons for the expulsion and forced removal of ethnic Germans from Slovenia were revenge and reparation for the Nazis’ occupation and treatment of Slovenes, of which local Germans had been a part; that German-speaking Yugoslav citizens who had been members of the *Kulturbund* had “betrayed their own state”; German industrialists and bankers were now viewed as “class enemies” by the communist authorities; and Slovenes were not “ready to live together

⁴⁴⁹ Some 80,000 Germans were officially expelled from Yugoslavia, with thousands more being unofficially forced out of their homes and fleeing, mostly to Austria but also Germany. Arnold Suppan, “Zwischen Rache, Vergeltung und ‘Ethnischer Säuberung’: Flucht, Vertreibung und Zwangsaussiedlung der Deutschen aus der Tschechoslowakei und Jugoslawien”, in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2003), 74-76. These tens of thousands of Germans formed part of the estimated 15 million ethnic Germans who were expelled from Eastern European countries after 1945. De Zayas, *A Terrible Revenge*, 1. For more on these refugees’ experiences while fleeing war and traveling the sometimes very long distances across Eastern Europe on foot, see *Ibid.*, 39-80. Such a massive movement of so large a group of people in so short a time “may well constitute the greatest single movement of population” in human history. Douglas, *Orderly and Humane*, 65.

⁴⁵⁰ Scherer, “Die Deutschen in der Untersteiermark, in Ober-Krain und in der Gottschee”, 132. For more on Germans’ experiences of the internment camps in Eastern Europe, see Douglas, *Orderly and Humane*, 130-157.

⁴⁵¹ Schieder, ed., *Das Schicksal der Deutschen in Jugoslawien*, 98E-101E.

with Germans again.”⁴⁵² In the 1948 census of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, the number of Germans in Slovenia had shrunk less than 2,000, effectively ending their status as an existing minority group.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵² Suppan, “Zwischen Rache, Vergeltung und ‘Ethnischer Säuberung’”, 74-84. The decision to expel the Germans of Yugoslavia was made in November of 1944 by the communist partisans fighting against the Nazis. The expulsion, sometimes violently and in disorganized fashion carried out, was tacitly condoned by the Allies. Damijan Guštin and Vladimir Prebilih, “Die Rechtslage der deutschen Minderheit in Jugoslawien 1944 bis 1946”, in Manfred Kittel, Horst Möller, Jiří Pešek, and Oldřich Tůma, *Deutschsprachige Minderheiten 1945: Ein europäischer Vergleich* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 297. For more, including primary documents issued by the provisional Yugoslav government, see Ibid., 297-346. One Slovene wrote in 1944: “As long as these...German elements are mixed in with our population, they will reduce the (people’s) self-consciousness and growth, economically paralyze and with that, inhibit our material and cultural progress...the only remedy against this...is to draw the border between the Styrian Slovenes and the former Yugoslav German minority...” Expelling the Germans was not done because they were German, but rather because they were part of Germandom, which was aggressive in its expansion. Nečák, “‘Die Deutschen’ in Slowenien, 1938-1948”, 390-391. Marina Cattaruzza has argued that geo-political and diplomatic considerations on the part of the Allies, particularly Britain, played a part in allowing these mass expulsions and population migrations to happen. Marina Cattaruzza, “‘Last stop expulsion’ – The minority question and forced migration in East-Central Europe: 1918-1949”, in *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (2010), 108-126. The Allies understood well the logistics of moving so many people at once, and the chaos that would ensue, without adequately preparing so such an endeavor; indeed, “they considered the anguish the displaced population would undergo to be a salutary form of reeducation.” Douglas, *Orderly and Humane*, 66. For more on Allied plans for the population transfer of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe during and after the end of World War II, see Alfred M. de Zayas, *Nemesis at Potsdam: The Anglo-Americans and the Expulsion of the Germans: Background, Execution, Consequences* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979). The population transfer and migration of millions of ethnic Germans after World War II was but one large piece among many such events as part of a longer history of ethnic cleansing, expulsion, migration, and population transfers in twentieth century Europe. See Benjamin Lieberman, *Terrible Fate: Ethnic Cleansing in the Making of Modern Europe* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006). See also Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 108-138; and Prusin, *The Lands Between*, 201-223.

⁴⁵³ Dušan Nečák, “Waren ‘die Deutschen’ Fremde in Slowenien nach 1945?“, in *Österreichischer Zeitgeschichtetag 1995: Österreich – 50 Jahre Republik* (Innsbruck, Austria: Studien Verlag, 1996), 189. The history of Germans in Slovenia has made it difficult for Austria and Slovenia to come to terms with their bilateral relationship and the events of 1918-1945, as has been the case to varying degrees for the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. Some of the Germans (Austrians) who left Slovenia after 1945 accused the Slovenes of pursuing “genocidal” policies on the Germans of Slovenia, due to expulsion, economic expropriation, and imprisonment in camps. This claim was officially supported by the Austrian government as late as 1991. See Dušan Nečák, “Einige grundlegende Angaben über das Schicksal der deutschen Volksgemeinschaft in Slowenien nach 1945”, in *Sudostdeutsches Archiv*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (1993), 163-171. Paul Mojzes argues that Yugoslav retaliation against its German minority population after the war was indeed a genocide, but has not been wished to be designated as such, as the local population “felt little sympathy for the German population.” Estimates range from 64,000 to 166,970 for the number of ethnic Germans interned in camps in Yugoslavia, with a minimum of tens of thousands dying. Paul Mojzes, *Balkan Genocides*, 109-114. Indeed, the history of the conflict over the borderlands meant that, post-1945, relations between Vienna and Belgrade were friendlier than between regional capitals Klagenfurt and Ljubljana. Moll, “The German-Slovene Language and State Border in Southern Austria”, 215. While the Republic of Austria recognizes Slovenes as an official minority, German-speakers are not accorded the same recognition in the Republic of Slovenia. The so-called *Orstafelstreit* over bilingual German-Slovene

Nationalism, Identity, Minorities, and Society

It was possible, in Eastern Europe, that one need not be confined to just one identity;⁴⁵⁴ for many German-speakers in Slovenia, it was possible to be German, Catholic, Austrian, and, in their own unique way, Yugoslav, all at the same time. National activists – both German and Slovene – tried to mark out the German minorities as being definitively identified as only a certain kind of German. But the reality for many individual Germans was rather different.

German identity and nationalism in interwar Slovenia had varieties and transformed after internal and external conditions changed. In the immediate aftermath of World War I, when Austria was forced to be an independent and separate state from the German Republic, German nationalists in neighboring Carinthia and Lower Styria sought to maintain their German identity and culture in the context of Austria's desire to politically and spiritually become a part of the German Reich. While some German nationalists maintained this stance throughout the 1920s, becoming more entrenched in

town signs in areas of Austria with large Slovene populations has taken years to come to a workable solution, having in the meantime elicited strong protests from the right-wing *Freiheitlichen in Kärnten* and Jörg Haider while he was alive. See the newspaper article "Harmonie beim Ortstafel-Festakt", *Kleine Zeitung* (Austria), August 8, 2011. The persistence of this tension between Austria and Slovenia is in contrast to trends in other Eastern European countries, who have begun to celebrate ethnicity as diversity and not as a problem to be "solved" for social cohesion. See Francis W. Carter and David Turnock, "Ethnicity in Eastern Europe: Historical legacies and prospects for cohesion", in *GeoJournal*, Vol. 50, No. 2/3 (2000), 109-125.

⁴⁵⁴ Marsha Rozenblit's study of the Jews of the Habsburg Empire in World War I illustrates this. Under the Habsburgs, the Jews of Austria had what Rozenblit describes as a "tripartite" identity: loyalty to the state, to the monarchy, and to the Jewish people around the world. But Jews found it difficult to maintain this identity after the fall of the empire, not just because the Habsburgs were no more, but because nationalist activists as well often defined national or ethnic belonging on the basis of race. See Marsha Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

their convictions after they felt singled out for persecution due to their Germanness, other German-speakers stressed a different type of national identity – one that saw German culture as a mutual force for good, able to be a bridge between the Slavic and Germanic worlds so that both might prosper. Still other “Germans”, described as such by both German and Slovene national activists, had to be persuaded that they were a part of the German cultural sphere. Despite such efforts, there were enough “Germans” that either kept resisting or maintained ignorance of belonging throughout much of the interwar years. A strong aspect of German identity that remained latent until the rise of National Socialism was the Roman Catholic religion; before the Nazis came to power, there had been no need to fear anti-Christian persecution, as Slovenes were as devoutly Catholic as their German-speaking co-residents.

As in so many other things, the coming of National Socialism as an ideology and political force changed everything. The Nazis offered renewal. They promised to rejuvenate the German *Volk*, restore them to their former greatness, and make the German minorities a majority once more. They offered the *Auslandsdeutsche* continued privilege and dominance. National Socialism signaled the coming of victory in the great culture war between Germans and Slavs. German-speakers had faced what was viewed as an attempt to eradicate their cultural presence in Slovenia – the Nazis would not only halt this, but reverse it. The Nazis would protect not only Germans but all of European civilization from communism – an aspect of a historical, noble Germanic mission that some Germans in Slovenia embraced. Unlike in Austria, where the cities were largely left-wing bastions and the countryside largely conservative, Germans in Lower Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola were political conservatives and embraced the right-wing. What

explains this situation, where one would expect city-dwellers to be more liberal or socialist, is that the Germans of Slovenia were islands of Germandom surrounded by a sea of Slovenes. They were also largely the beneficiaries of industrialization and of capitalism. For them, the concept of an onrushing “horde” of barbarous, uncultured Slavs held real meaning, as much as the threat of international communism did. Of course, Germans in Slovenia could have had no idea of Hitler’s true intentions to use them as a pawn in his territorial ambitions.

The extent of support for the Nazis among German-speakers in Slovenia attests to the enduring and deeply-felt legacy of the Habsburg Empire and World War I. German perceptions of social policies implemented by a Slovene government that banned the German language and closed German-language schools as being a “culture war” whose purpose was to physically and spiritually eliminate the German presence in Slovenia was a continuation of the decades of prior cultural struggles that had so marked the region, and was itself a product of the increased nationalism that spread in the last decades of the Habsburg Empire.⁴⁵⁵ Just as the experiences of the Great War served to radicalize and heighten Slovene perceptions of Germans as oppressive overlords bent on destroying Slovene culture, so too was the German perspective of Slovene intentions warped by those same experiences.

As well, the bloody senselessness of the industrial killing of World War I hardened some German-speakers into wanting to avoid another such war at all costs, no

⁴⁵⁵ This type of heightened nationalism between Germans and Slavs was largely absent in the rest of Yugoslavia, whose constituent parts had been under the Hungarian side of the Habsburg Empire. Being geographically-proximate to Austria enhanced the Nazis’ institutional reach into Slovenia as well after the *Anschluss* of 1938, whereas it was more difficult to reach German-speakers farther away in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia.

matter the potential benefits to their own social status. This anti-war sentiment would come to the fore when a violent, revolutionary group of genocidal radical nationalists took power in the German Reich, with promises to purify the nation through destruction of others. In addition to its effects on the emotions and perceptions of Germans in Slovenia, the Great War had obvious geo-political consequences that had a large impact upon the minorities' relationship to the majority. How the Austrian Republic treated its Slovene minority was out of the control of both Germans and Slovenes across the border, but it nonetheless served to influence minority policies. The League of Nation's failure to properly enforce minority treaties in the countries of Eastern Europe did much to undermine faith and respect in the international community, making an embrace of Nazi Germany's hostility to that body neither inevitable nor justifiable, but understandable. Germany's descent into dictatorship, itself one of the consequences of the war, represented an extremely grave existential threat to Yugoslavia and Slovenia, who both reacted in ways that are understandable – but this occurrence was, as well, out of the control of the residents of Lower Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola.

Interwar Slovenia also demonstrates the power of policy, and its sometimes-unintended consequences. By closing German-language schools and restricting who could teach these courses, the Slovene government believed it was acting in the national interest of the majority of its citizens. But one repercussion of these policy decisions was that German-language teachers were not there to push back against young peoples' inclination towards the more radical proposals embedded in National Socialist ideology. The closing of these schools and course led exasperated and desperate parents to send their children to study in neighboring Germany and Austria – decisions that would have

grave implications for Yugoslavia after these young students came back from the Third Reich with deeply-held, radical beliefs about German nationalism.

As prior scholarship has shown, Germans in Slovenia reacted negatively to minority policies and were not entirely supportive of National Socialism. But I have shown what the nature of this negative reaction was and why many Germans were both supportive and skeptical of the Nazis. Pan-German nationalism that wanted all Germans united in one nation state was but one of a variety of ideologies through which German-speakers in Slovenia identified themselves. While certain nationalist activists despaired the extinction of the German physical and spiritual presence in Slovenia, others merely wished for their children to know the language of their parents. Some German nationalists viewed the minority policies of interwar Slovenia as being propagated by a tyrannical, prejudiced Slovene government who sought the destruction of Germandom, but others viewed those same policies as frustrating obtuseness, a refusal to allow the superior Germanic culture to help advance Slovene society for all. Though many Germans embraced the Nazis after they came to power, others saw a potential threat to their Christian identity. The persistence of non-nationalist and non-Nazi identities remained after 1933 through to the invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941.

While I have argued that there were multiple German identities and nationalisms in interwar Slovenia, I cannot say for certain how many Germans were Pan-Germans, Catholics, Austrians, or indifferent – clearly, all of these identities, loyalties, and nationalisms were present, with the most prevalent one being Pan-Germanism. How many Germans in interwar Slovenia were Nazis and how many were not? It is very difficult to come to a definitive conclusion. It is most probable that a clear majority were

at the least somewhat supportive of many aspects of National Socialism, though not enough to wholeheartedly endorse brutal treatment of Slovenes or accept removal from their homes for *Lebensraum*. I have shown the ways in which National Socialism was appealing to Germans outside the Reich, as well as the ways that its appeals were portrayed and rejected.

What did it mean to be German in East Central and Southeastern Europe in the first half of the twentieth century? One can choose one's own identity and even nationality, or have it chosen for them by others.⁴⁵⁶ The case of the Germans of Slovenia is a good example of the varieties of German identity and nationalism that were present in the successor states of Eastern Europe in the interwar period.⁴⁵⁷ There were Pan-German nationalists, self-identified Germans with strong regional or religious identities, and indifferent or apathetic German-speakers who may or may not have felt strongly about the German language and culture. Certain German and Slovene nationalists wanted to identify all German-speakers as having one, unified identity, loyalty, and nationalism. This outside pressure was ramped up with the coming to power of the Nazis, whose own views of German nationalism combined with foreign and domestic policy to devastating

⁴⁵⁶ The concept of being able to choose one's ethnic identity, or have others choose it for you, still holds meaning today. In ethnically- and racially-diverse countries that are becoming ever more heterogeneous, such as the United States, Canada, or Great Britain, social perceptions of difference can have real-world impacts upon public policy and even result in violence. See Miri Song, *Choosing Ethnic Identity* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 6-19. The rise of "multiculturalism" in European states has also given rise to the possibility for anti-immigrant, anti-minority prejudice to result in a resurgence of extreme, far-right political parties – with potentially unforeseen societal consequences. See Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Ethnicities and multiculturalisms: politics of boundaries", in Stephen May, Tariq Modood, and Judith Squires, eds., *Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Minority Rights* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 27-49.

⁴⁵⁷ While I have placed my thesis in the context of German identity and nationalism in Eastern Europe, there were (and still are) as well German-speaking minorities in Western Europe. For more on the varieties of German identity among that population, see Stefan Wolff, ed., *German Minorities in Europe: Ethnic Identity and Cultural Belonging* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 13-72.

effect. As nationalism became intertwined with the nation-state and its policies, it became ever more difficult to remain indifferent to one's ethnic or national identity.

Yugoslavia had almost no political parties that were not considered representative, in some way, of a particular nationality.⁴⁵⁸ Germans were supposed to vote for the German party, Croats for the Croatian party, and so on. When a country declares itself a nation-state and then pursues this declaration by means of singling out non-members of that nation – minorities made up an incredibly large part of Yugoslavia's population – the potential for social disintegration, ethnic tension,⁴⁵⁹ and intolerance to increase becomes a danger to the successful functioning of that country.⁴⁶⁰ As well, the wider historical context of the geo-political implications of interwar Europe had a large impact upon Yugoslav and Slovene domestic and foreign policies, and views and considerations of their German minorities. This points to a broader understanding of the ways in which future ethnic conflict and violence can be avoided; certainly what heightened the mutual antagonisms and distrust between Slovenes and Germans was, aside from the historical context, the legal structures that forced the two ethnic groups into one or the other camp. In a multiethnic state, the possibility for social and ethnic

⁴⁵⁸ The Democratic Party sought to broaden its appeal across ethnic lines and unite Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs against the Radicals, though this effort was largely unsuccessful. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 131.

⁴⁵⁹ The reality of this potential can certainly be seen in the dissolution of the second Yugoslavia in the 1990s, with its attendant ethnic cleansing, massacres, and brutal violence. Though the case of Yugoslavia, with its ethnic and religious problems, has been attributed to be unique to the Balkans, Cathy Carmichael argues that ethnic cleansing is intimately tied-up with nationalism, and not restricted to any one particular region in Europe. See Cathie Carmichael, *Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans*, 108-114.

⁴⁶⁰ One reason why linguistically-diverse countries such as Canada and Switzerland have not seen the same level of political instability, ethnic cleansing, or ethnically-based social problems as Yugoslavia or Belgium is due to the former's universal and inclusionary institutions; whereas both Francophones and Anglophones in Canada, and German-, French-, and Italian-speakers in Switzerland, can consider themselves equal citizens (Canadians and Swiss, respectively), Yugoslavia and Belgium have found it much more difficult to construct such a neutral, positive identity for its citizens. Political parties in Canada and Switzerland are, for the most part, not restricted by ethnicity or language, while in Belgium, for example, there are no country-wide political organizations that both Walloons and Flemish are *legally allowed* to vote for.

division to erupt only increases if the various ethnicities suspect the worst intentions among each other. One solution, therefore, is to construct a social framework that legally provides for universal, united feelings of belonging, in addition to arriving at a mutually-acceptable level of tolerance and protection of minorities. But the key in such a process is for all involved to act in good faith, and to believe that everyone else is doing the same.

Admittedly, I cannot read Slovene-language sources, and as such, there may be additional scholarship or sources that I have been unable to include in my analysis that may alter my findings. Nonetheless, there is much to be researched still for this area of study. Future scholarship can examine more closely the role of religion in the Germans of Slovenia, or among the German minorities of Eastern Europe for that matter. What actually changed when German-language instruction became Slovene-language? What were the social textures of life for German-speakers in Slovenia – what did they talk about in cafes, restaurants, club meetings, and journals and diaries? Of paramount importance in this and future studies of the region is that its history of diversity, both good and bad, should not be forgotten or misunderstood.

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