

# Silent War and Bitter Peace: The Revolution of 1918 in Austria

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**M**Y SUBJECT TODAY IS the Austrian Revolution of 1918 and its aftermath, a staple subject in the general history of the empire and the republic, but one that has not seen vigorous historiographical discussion for a number of years. In a recent review of new historiography on the French Revolution, Jeremy Popkin has argued that recent neoliberal and even neo-Jacobin scholarship about that momentous event has confirmed the position of the revolution in the “genealogy of modern liberalism and democracy.” The endless fascination engendered by the French Revolution is owing to its protean nature, one that assayed the possibilities of reconciling liberty and equality and one that still inspires those who would search for a “usable liberal past.”<sup>1</sup> After all, it was not only a watershed of liberal ideas, if not always liberal institutions and civic practices, but it was also a testing ground for the possibility of giving practical meaning to new categories of human rights.

## The Question of the Revolution

### *Memory and History*

Does the Austrian revolution, or any of the Central European revolutions of 1918, manifest a similar valence? Today the revolution as a historic construct presents a rather forlorn appearance, a seemingly isolated instance of

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*Austrian History Yearbook* 34 (2003): 1–56.

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<sup>1</sup>Jeremy D. Popkin, “Not Over After All: The French Revolution’s Third Century,” *Journal of Modern History* 74 (2002): 801–21. For assistance and advice on various aspects of this essay, I would like to thank Jonathan Gumz, John Deak, Thomas Grischany, Lothar Höbelt, Derek Hastings, Margarete Grandner, and Siegfried Weichlein.

institutional turmoil bracketed by the collapse of the empire and the party gang wars of the later 1920s. Even though the history of the Austrian revolution is complex, any attempt to associate it with a liberal tradition (parallel to the French case) would seem to run up against a basic problem of twentieth-century Austrian history, namely, the seeming lack of a liberal tradition to begin with. If such a liberal tradition does not exist, then how can we craft historical narratives to explain it?

How momentous was the revolution? Some recent historiography has tended to downplay its transformational significance. For example, Gerhard Botz has argued that the revolution was marked by a combination of self-limiting behavior on the part of the revolutionaries, and the quick emergence of “counterrevolutionary forces” that “surpassed and exhausted the possibilities for a stronger, democratic and Socialist new order in Austria.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Margarete Grandner argues that the “Austrian revolution” (in quotation marks) was, aside from the change from monarchy to republic, marked by continuities in the ways the working class was treated, and that Socialist leaders were part of this stream of continuity, with even the social legislation of the early republican period deeply confined to the imagination of the war period.<sup>3</sup>

What would a real revolution have looked like? Lacking violent change, does this mean the Austrian revolution was not a real revolution? Was Arno Mayer correct in asserting (about the French and Russian revolutions) that revolution is “intrinsically tempestuous and savage” and that one cannot have a (real) revolution without “violence and terror”?<sup>4</sup> Or was the Czech historian Jan Křen right when he observed that “revolutions conducted through violence often give rise to heroic legends, but they rarely bring forth new democratic values”?<sup>5</sup> In fact, those who search for the preconditions for a radical class revolution in Vienna in the fall of 1918—notwithstanding the fledgling *Räte* movement and the small pockets of Communist sympathizers—have much to contend with. Given the fragility of the new Austria’s demographic and social conditions, that Ferdinand Hanusch was able to push through as much social legislation as he did was itself a remarkable accomplishment.<sup>6</sup>

One way to appreciate the salience of the Austrian revolution might be to set it in the comparative context of the German revolutions of 1918. For

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<sup>2</sup>Gerhard Botz, “Handlungsspielräume der Sozialdemokratie während der ‘Österreichischen Revolution,’” in *Festschrift Mélanges Felix Kreissler*, ed. Rudolf Altmüller et al. (Vienna, 1985), 16. In contrast, Reinhard Owerdieck suggests that the key players could not escape from the imperial milieu in which they had worked so assiduously, boldly stating that “die Parlamentarier der Provisorischen Nationalversammlung fühlten sich zunächst als Reichsratsabgeordnete und sahen in Deutschösterreich eine Art Fortleben des alten Staates.” Reinhard Owerdieck, *Parteien und Verfassungsfrage in Österreich. Die Entstehung des Verfassungsprovisoriums der Ersten Republik 1918–1920* (Munich, 1987), 38.

<sup>3</sup>Margarete Grandner, *Kooperative Gewerkschaftspolitik in der Kriegswirtschaft. Die freien Gewerkschaften Österreichs im ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna, 1992), 441–42, as well as 394.

<sup>4</sup>Arno J. Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions* (Princeton, 2000), 4, 23.

<sup>5</sup>Jan Křen, *Die Konfliktgemeinschaft. Tschechen und Deutsche 1780–1918* (Munich, 1996), 395.

<sup>6</sup>On Hanusch and his legislation, see Otto Staininger, ed., *Ferdinand Hanusch (1866–1923). Ein Leben für den sozialen Aufstieg* (Vienna, 1973).

example, Klemens von Klemperer has argued that Austria, unlike Germany, was able to avoid both challenges from the army and a regime question, since the former imperial army was in total dissolution and since Austrian bourgeois parties quickly accepted and even welcomed the republic. Similarly, Lothar Höbelt and Ernst Hanisch have suggested that whereas postwar Germany found itself bitterly divided over questions of who lost the war, leading to the so-called stab-in-the-back legend and the myth of the *Novemberverbrecher*, in Austria these issues were almost irrelevant, since Austrians of all parties fiercely denied any legal connection with the empire and were faced with a rapid process of federalization that stripped the state of much of its authority.<sup>7</sup> On another front, Hans Mommsen has argued that Austrian Socialists avoided a divisive split during the war—which their German counterparts succumbed to—and that the hard-won unity between their left and right wings that they preserved in 1917–18 was of long-term benefit to Austria, both in creating a powerful Social Democratic Party that was able to exercise great influence between 1918 and 1920 and in enabling that party to participate in the reconstruction of Austria after 1945.<sup>8</sup> In this reading, the Austrian revolution, or at least the Socialist side of it, afforded fruitful long-term possibilities, if not short-term success.

Granted the logic of the arguments of those who put the revolution in quotation marks, it is well to recall Hans Kelsen's famous dictum about the discontinuity of the new state and its lack of any constitutional connection with the empire. This simple proposition might be dismissed as a lawyer's statement, but it conveyed much reality.<sup>9</sup> In reading the memoir literature, letters, and diaries of those who lived through these weeks, for example, one is struck with the deep sense of cultural discontinuity, institutional chaos, and personal trauma. As Hans Loewenfeld-Russ put it in a later memoir on

<sup>7</sup>Klemens von Klemperer, "Die Revolution von 1918–1920 und der österreichische Konsens. Oder: Der pragmatische Stil in der österreichischen Politik," in *Studien zur Zeitgeschichte der österreichischen Länder*, vol. 1, *Demokratisierung und Verfassung in den Ländern 1918–1920* (St. Pölten, 1983), 13–14; Lothar Höbelt, "Deutschösterreich und die Sudetendeutschen 1918–1919," in *Das Jahr 1919 in der Tschechoslowakei und in Ostmitteleuropa*, ed. Hans Lemberg and Peter Heumos (Munich, 1993), 160–61. Höbelt believes that real power was quickly drained off into the Crownlands, whose regional parties became "Gründerväter der Republik" (161). See also Ernst Hanisch, "Einleitung," in *Handbuch des Politischen Systems Österreichs. Erste Republik 1918–1933*, ed. Emmerich Tálos et al. (Vienna, 1995), 6.

<sup>8</sup>See Hans Mommsen, "Victor Adler und die Erste Republik Österreich," in *Österreich. November 1918. Die Entstehung der Ersten Republik. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 24. und 25. Oktober 1978*, ed. Isabella Ackerl and Rudolf Neck (Munich, 1986), 21, 24–25; as well as Mommsen's comments on pp. 191–92. Hans Hautmann has suggested that revolution in Austria may have accomplished more than its bigger counterpart in Germany, in part because the Arbeiterräte movement in Austria began earlier, had a stronger class identity, and was less open to the political influence of the errant bourgeoisie. By this line of reasoning, the Austrian revolution may have enjoyed a more radical character. Hans Hautmann, *Geschichte der Rätebewegung in Österreich 1918–1924* (Vienna, 1987), 227.

<sup>9</sup>See Hans Kelsen, "Die Verfassung Deutschösterreichs," *Jahrbuch des öffentlichen Rechtes der Gegenwart* 9 (1920): 248–49; and Karl Renner's comment on Kelsen's findings about the new state's international status in "Staatsrat. Protokoll der Sitzung vom 9. November 1918," *Archiv der Republik*, hereafter cited respectively as SR and AdR.

his activities during the revolution, “for those who like myself experienced the first weeks after the collapse in a responsible administrative office, it appears in retrospect almost a miracle that, in the face of the despair and the destitution of the people after a four-year-long war, the situation did not result in bloody disturbances.”<sup>10</sup>

Inevitably, as Klemperer has reminded us, much about the revolution was improvisational. In such crises, instinct and cunning, coupled with professional experience, took hold, guiding the most capable leaders. Others, faced with the collapse of their moral as well as political worlds, froze up. As one dispirited regional official told Loewenfeld-Russ in late October, when the latter asked him what he thought the future might bring, “I have never lived through a revolution, and so I have no idea what will happen.”<sup>11</sup> Nor did this sense of shock and trauma dissipate easily. When Franz Schumacher, the representative of Tirol at the peace conference in St. Germain returned home in August 1919 in the former imperial train that had been used by the emperor, he wrote in his private diary, “we are traveling home, and we are bringing the debris of a collapsed empire with us.”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Rudolf Neck has observed that many of the early memoirs of the revolutionary period were marked by great emotions and that these days are described by many writers as the darkest in their lives.<sup>13</sup>

To understand the meaning of the revolution, we must begin in the empire, for the choices faced by the revolution flowed from the empire. After reflecting on the significance of the last year of the monarchy and on its collapse, and on several of the key revolutionary institutions that succeeded it, I will examine three key programmatic challenges faced by the new regime, all of which involved invocations of rights and each of which determined the revolution’s final course. Finally, I will consider how the revolution was officially ended, in the Constitution of 1920.

### *The Crisis of the Late War—the Collapse of the State*

In defending himself at his trial in May 1917 for having murdered Austrian Minister-President Karl Stürgkh, Friedrich Adler’s self-defense focused on his right to use force against the state. Adler felt he had acted against a state that was criminal in nature: “[T]he ministry has torn up the constitution, the ministry has ceased to care about the laws, and there was no other way other than force.” Adler’s self-portrait was thus of someone in a war—a war of the government against the people.<sup>14</sup> Adler’s remarks, offered though they were

<sup>10</sup>Hans Loewenfeld-Russ, *Im Kampf gegen den Hunger. Aus den Erinnerungen des Staatssekretärs für Volksernährung 1918–1920*, ed. Isabella Ackerl (Vienna, 1986), 137. These observations date from the period after 1938, but were published only in 1986.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>12</sup>Reprinted in Richard Schober, *Die Tiroler Frage auf der Friedenskonferenz von Saint Germain* (Innsbruck, 1982), 480.

<sup>13</sup>Neck, “Das Jahr 1918—Einleitende Bemerkungen,” in *November 1918*, 13.

<sup>14</sup>J. W. Brügel, ed., *Friedrich Adler vor dem Ausnahmegericht. 18 und 19. Mai 1917* (Vienna, 1967), 85; see also 71, 84, 129.

in awkward circumstances, might in fact be taken as a preview of the subsequent relationship of Austrians to their government in the last eighteen months of the war.

Recent scholarship, particularly the work of Mark Cornwall, Manfred Rauchensteiner, Richard Plaschka, and others has demonstrated how fragile the relationship was between the army and civil society throughout the war, and how drastically affairs unraveled for the army after 1917.<sup>15</sup> Calls from leading generals for a punitive militarization of the disloyal homeland grew in intensity in the last two years of the war, and they were soon reciprocated by a flood of desertions by hungry, ill-clothed, and disillusioned conscripts unwilling to follow the precepts of their commanders.<sup>16</sup>

Ironically, the devolutionary process that Mark Cornwall has well documented for the periphery was also occurring in the center of the empire. Recent scholarship has demonstrated the extent to which the first three years of the war generated serious stresses on the civil population of Vienna, especially on the elderly and on women and children. Shortfalls in food, the confusion and misinformation engendered by censorship, changing gender roles, the politicization of youth, the impact of war wounded and other veterans as well as prisoners on homeland society—Maureen Healy has analyzed such processes in detail in her important recent dissertation.<sup>17</sup> Yet, as bad as the situation was in the earlier years of the war, things changed drastically for the worse in later 1917. Certainly, a single turning point is difficult to identify, but the seven months between the recall of parliament in May 1917 and the massive strikes of January 1918 revealed an increasingly beleaguered government, often at odds with itself over how to run the state.<sup>18</sup> The pressures felt by ordinary people to secure everything from adequate food supplies to adequate news met with a growing level of tendentious behavior by civil and military elites. As commodities of all kinds grew scarcer, crimes against property and persons became even more acute during the winter of 1917–18.<sup>19</sup> By

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<sup>15</sup>Richard Georg Plaschka, Horst Haselsteiner, and Arnold Suppan, eds., *Innere Front. Militärassistentz, Widerstand und Umsturz in der Donaumonarchie 1918*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1974); Mark Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (New York, 2000); Manfred Rauchensteiner, *Der Tod des Doppeladlers. Österreich-Ungarn und der Erste Weltkrieg* (Graz, 1993).

<sup>16</sup>With distrust between war front and home front growing more acute, Cornwall has shown how desperate the army leadership was by early 1918. See Mark Cornwall, "Morale and Patriotism in the Austro-Hungarian Army, 1914–1918," in *State, Society, and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, ed. John Horne (Cambridge, 1997), 174; and idem, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary*, 405–15.

<sup>17</sup>Maureen Healy, "Vienna Falling: Total War and Everyday Life, 1914–1918" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2000).

<sup>18</sup>One example of this process was the confused, inept way in which the government implemented the Minister of Internal Affairs Friedrich Toggenburg's plea in late 1917 that censorship of foreign reading materials should be eased for responsible opinion shapers. See Z. 23147, Nov. 24, 1917; Z. 515, Jan. 8, 1918; Z. 2140, Jan. 23, 1918; Z. 6688, Mar. 19, 1918, MI Präs., Carton 1668, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, hereafter cited as AVA.

<sup>19</sup>See Z. 19327, Mar. 29, 1918, MI Präs., Carton 1889, AVA, commenting on how "in den letzten Monaten die Einbruchsdiebstähle ausserordentlich gehäuft haben." Franz Exner, *Krieg und*

1918, it was commonplace to see hungry, miserable soldiers on leave trying to obtain food at public food kitchens or begging for food door to door. The city was also filled with deserters who had been apprehended but managed to escape into the neighborhoods of the city and then became a prime source of petty crimes. Not surprising, the police reported that permanent residents found such sights and events extremely disturbing.<sup>20</sup> The city as a community felt itself isolated and ignored.<sup>21</sup>

Along with complaints about individual and group welfare came everyday challenges to the boundaries of decorum.<sup>22</sup> Given the cascade of rumors and jokes deriding the young emperor, his wife, and his government, and predicting the defeat of the Central Powers that were in circulation by the winter and spring of 1918, it seems as if respect for imperial authority was a vanishing commodity.<sup>23</sup> So acute had the situation become by July 1918 that the minister of internal affairs issued confidential orders to all provincial governors urging them to have their subordinate authorities search out those responsible for the “vicious” rumors about the emperor.<sup>24</sup>

Such trends toward civic disintegration were accelerated by the outcome of the last great offensive of the war in mid June 1918. Within days, the offensive across the Piave River in Venetia proved a huge disaster, with over 140,000

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*Kriminalität in Österreich* (Vienna, 1927), 18–21, reports that total crimes cited before first-level criminal courts doubled between 1916 and 1918.

<sup>20</sup>Z. 6356, Mar. 16, 1918, Carton 2131; Z. 9724, Apr. 25, 1918, MI Präs., Carton 1889, AVA. In his memoirs, Richard Schüller recalled that by the late summer of 1918, Austria’s food production had seriously decreased and that the harvest of 1918 was less than half of that of 1913. Given import restrictions from Hungary and elsewhere, Schüller estimated that Austria had only about 25 percent of the necessary basic food supplies for 1918–19. Jürgen Nautz, ed., *Unterhändler des Vertrauens. Aus den nachgelassenen Schriften von Sektionschef Dr. Richard Schüller* (Vienna, 1990), 219.

<sup>21</sup>A local Christian Social leader, Johann Körber, spoke for many of his fellow citizens when he complained at a political rally in late June 1918 that in its helplessness to secure its needed provisions, the city of Vienna was being treated by the government as if it were some obscure town. Z. 15784, June 26, 1918, MI Präs., Carton 1648.

<sup>22</sup>The story of Josef Tuttnauer illustrated the grief experienced by many common people. An unemployed clerical worker with a wife and two small children, Tuttnauer was hospitalized in a municipal hospital for a respiratory infection. In April 1918, he wrote a letter to the Statthalter of Lower Austria, Oktavian Regner von Bleyleben, accusing the government of intentionally murdering millions of people, warning Bleyleben and Mayor Weiskirchner that what happened to Karl Stürgkh would happen to them, and threatening to kill his children rather than let them “die a thousand times” by starvation. See the police memorandum on the case, May 25, 1918, St. series 1918, Carton 16, Archiv der Bundespolizeidirektion Wien, hereafter cited as AdPDW.

<sup>23</sup>For the history of rumors in the war, see Healy, “Vienna Falling,” 164–73; and Gustav Spann, “Zensur in Österreich während des I. Weltkrieges 1914–1918” (Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1972), 360–68. Healy notes that one difference between rumors in the first years of the war as opposed to those of 1918 was that the latter gained much more attention from governmental agencies (170). Surely this may have reflected the relative weakening and worsening of the situation of the government in general and the dynasty in particular.

<sup>24</sup>Z. 15231, July 4, 1918, MI Präs., Carton 2078. For commentaries on the rumors, see Franz Brandl, *Kaiser, Politiker und Menschen. Erinnerungen eines Wiener Polizeipräsidenten* (Leipzig, 1936), 248–50; Fritz Fellner, ed., *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs 1908–1919. Das politische Tagebuch Josef Redlichs*, 2 vols. (Graz, 1953–54), 2:284; Peter Broucek, ed., *Ein General im Zwielicht. Die Erinnerungen Edmund Glaises von Horstenau*, vol. 1, K. u. k. Generalstabsoffizier und Historiker (Vienna, 1980), 472.

Austrian soldiers dead, wounded, missing, or captured. Glaise von Horstenuau remembered that "a great storm of outrage swept through the whole Empire."<sup>25</sup> Piave led to a profound questioning of the authority of the state. Illustrating this outrage were the speeches given at the famous secret sessions of the Abgeordnetenhaus in late July 1918. The protocols of these debates have survived only in fragmentary form in the archive of the Austrian parliament, but their arguments are clear. True to form, Social Democratic representatives Karl Leuthner and Albert Sever excoriated the army leadership.<sup>26</sup> What is surprising, however, is that Leuthner's fulminations were matched by those of bourgeois representatives such as Johann Mayer and Karl Niedrist of the Christian Socials. Mayer complained that "after each defeat we are consoled with the hope for the next victory, and the slogan 'buy war bonds!' is screamed in our ears. On top of that everything is requisitioned, and no one has anything to eat, and almost nothing to live on. Still, the worst of it are the military leaders. Their incompetence is disgraceful, their recklessness in spilling the blood of our sons and brothers is the worst provocation."<sup>27</sup>

Piave produced a backlash against the dynasty as well. The increasingly ineffectual and pathetic role of the young emperor was targeted by many as a root cause of the imminent collapse.<sup>28</sup> Even strong defenders of the monarchy, such as Ignaz Seipel, concluded that Karl's leadership was indecisive, evasive, and lacking in serious effect.<sup>29</sup> The discrediting of the dynasty would become a key factor in the subsequent revolution. Count Wedel reported to

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<sup>25</sup>Glaise von Horstenuau, *Ein General im Zwielflicht*, 477. On the battle and its aftermath, see Peter Fiala, *Die letzte Offensive Altösterreichs. Führungsprobleme und Führerverantwortlichkeit bei der öst.-ung. Offensive in Venetien, Juni 1918* (Boppard am Rhein, 1967), 121–43; *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg 1914–1918*, vol. 7, *Das Kriegsjahr 1918* (Vienna, 1938), 184–86, 235–364; Rauchensteiner, *Der Tod des Doppeladlers*, 553–77; Karel Pichlík, "Der militärische Zusammenbruch der Mittelmächte im Jahre 1918," in *Die Auflösung des Habsburgerreiches. Zusammenbruch und Neuorientierung im Donauraum*, ed. Richard Georg Plaschka and Karlheinz Mack (Vienna, 1970), 254–56; and Lawrence Sondhaus, *Franz Conrad von Hötendorf: Architect of the Apocalypse* (Boston, 2000), 208–11.

<sup>26</sup>Leuthner warned: "Meine Herren! Wir stehen leider nicht vor dem Ende des Krieges, aber wir stehen zweifellos vor dem Zusammenbruch eines Systems. In allen Fugen kracht es, überall wird fühlbar, dass es so nicht weitergeht, dass so oder anders das Ende herannaht." *Protokoll über die geheimen Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des Reichsrates am Dienstag den 23., Mittwoch den 24. und Donnerstag den 25. Juli 1918*, Session 81, p. 55. For the background, see Rauchensteiner, *Der Tod des Doppeladlers*, 578–81.

<sup>27</sup>*Protokoll*, Session 82, p. 4. I am grateful to John Deak and Thomas Grischaný for their transcriptions of these speeches. These harsh criticisms of the army and the cabinet were reconfirmed in testimony before the National Assembly in December 1918 by Christian Social and Social Democratic politicians such as Niedrist and Leuthner when legislation was enacted to create an investigative commission on the military failures during the war. See the *Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen der Provisorischen Nationalversammlung für Deutschösterreich, 1918 und 1919* (Vienna, 1919), 380–93, hereafter cited as *PNV*.

<sup>28</sup>Josef Redlick reports that by the early summer of 1918, the emperor had "schon in diesem Zeitpunkt das Vertrauen der breiten Massen Deutschösterreichs verloren." *Österreichische Regierung und Verwaltung im Weltkrieg* (Vienna, 1925), 279. See also Rauchensteiner, *Der Tod des Doppeladlers*, 581.

<sup>29</sup>In an unpublished account written in August 1919, Seipel later reflected that Karl was more interested in maintaining his dynastic status than in seriously reforming his state, and that this led to equivocation and lack of fundamental change. See "Rückblick auf die Politik vom Umsturz

Berlin on October 26 that most people he encountered viewed Karl as “unfit to govern” and the other archdukes as mere “drones” of the state.<sup>30</sup>

In the wake of the revolutionary strikes of January 1918, one might have expected the Social Democrats and their unions to take the lead in organizing social and political protests, especially as the food crisis worsened during the summer months.<sup>31</sup> True, left-wing disillusionment with the war grew apace, but the Austrian working class seemed unable to mount a similar, system-wide series of protests; nor were they encouraged to do so by their party leadership, which seemed almost immobilized by the early summer of 1918.<sup>32</sup> More remarkable and as fateful for the survival of the monarchy was the slow devolution of political authority among non-Socialist client groups and voter ranks, especially those associated with white-collar work and commercial interests. Indeed, as Hans Hautmann has suggested, acute social outrage and bitterness in 1918 went far beyond working-class circles.<sup>33</sup> In May and June 1918, a controversy that occurred within the ranks of the Viennese police force signaled this slide. A local German nationalist politician, Leopold Waber, who had been elected in the anti-Christian Social landslide in 1911, put himself forward as a special spokesman on behalf of the police. In so doing Waber crossed a sacred boundary in prewar politics, which dictated that electoral politics should not directly involve members of the army or the police in its purview. Waber organized various well-attended special rallies for members of the police force, under the aegis of a cover organization, the *Deutscher Volksbund*, during which he presented himself as a special agent for their interests, especially the need for salary increases and other job benefits in the face of their personal deprivations.<sup>34</sup> True to form,

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bis zum Friedensvertrag,” Aug. 31, 1919, reprinted in Friedrich Rennhofer, *Ignaz Seipel. Mensch und Staatsmann. Eine biographische Dokumentation* (Vienna 1978), 764–65; see also 76, 115–16, 135, 137.

<sup>30</sup>A45541, Oct. 26, 1918, Oest. 103/Bd. 9, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, hereafter cited as PAAA.

<sup>31</sup>Karl Renner informed the Social Democratic Party leadership in early July that Austria was now wholly dependent upon imports from Hungary and Rumania, that these shipments would now be priced much higher than domestic production, and that the Ernährungsamt had decided to pass the costs along to consumers, which meant a substantial increase in bread and cereal prices. Sugar prices were also about to double. Renner feared great unrest on the part of the working class. See Renner to the Parteivorstand, July 6, 1918, S. D. Parteistellen, Carton 117, Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, hereafter cited as VGA.

<sup>32</sup>For Social Democratic strategy in the spring and summer of 1918 see Hautmann, *Geschichte*, 210–24; Berthold Unfried, “Arbeiterprotest und Arbeiterbewegung in Österreich während des Ersten Weltkrieges” (Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1990), 206–7, 232–36; and Hans Mommsen, “Victor Adler und die Politik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie im Ersten Weltkrieg,” in *Politik und Gesellschaft im Alten und Neuen Österreich. Festschrift für Rudolf Neck zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Isabella Ackerl, Walter Hummelberger, and Hans Mommsen, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1981), 1:402–7.

<sup>33</sup>Hautmann, *Geschichte*, 216, 219. See also Schober’s report on the city council meeting of June 18, 1918, in Neck, ed., *Arbeiterschaft und Staat im Ersten Weltkrieg 1914–1918*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1964–68), 2:616–20.

<sup>34</sup>See, for example, the detailed police report on his speech given in Währing on June 3, 1918 to an audience of 500 officials, Z. 13462, MI Präs., Carton 1648. A comment on this report, written within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, suggested “Vom Standpunkte der Aufrechthaltung der Disziplin in den Wachekorps u. der Fernhaltung politischer Einflüsse von diesen Korps ist diese Tätigkeit des Abg. Dr. Waber bedenklich, wenngleich er bestrebt ist, loyal vorzugehen.”

the newly appointed police president of Vienna, Johannes Schober, found the fascination of individual members of his police force with Waber's association unseemly and dangerous for their professional discipline.<sup>35</sup> When Schober tried to discourage participation by his officers, he found that even more policemen attended Waber's rallies and joined the *Deutscher Volksbund*—as many as 4,000 officers of the Viennese police were members of Waber's group. Schober eventually sanctioned two of the police officials who were the ringleaders, much to Waber's chagrin, but the conflict was that it showed that conventional boundaries of the Josephist state had been breached, both because of grave social unrest among its officials and because professional politicians now sensed the weakness of the imperial bureaucracy as an entity claiming to be beyond politics.<sup>36</sup>

Shortly before these incidents, the police reported on *Mittelstand* unrest in general:

The most bitter complaints [in the city] come from the *Mittelstand*. Especially those on fixed salaries point again and again to the fact that the most difficult burdens have been dumped on them. The wealthy are in the position to acquire food and other materials, even if they have to pay more to do so, and the working class, whose wages are continually increased and who also receive all sorts of food provisions, are also taken care of. Only the *Mittelstand* feels itself lacking any support whatsoever. Oppressive poverty reaches already into the so-called better circles of the *Mittelstand*, and the disgust about these already unbearable conditions grows daily.<sup>37</sup>

In April 1918, a collection of *Beamten* and teacher associations and clubs put together a trenchant petition that made invidious comparisons between their own situation and that of the working class, complaining that because their social status and that of their families did not permit them to join cooperative

<sup>35</sup>For Schober's early career see Rainer Hubert, *Schober. 'Arbeitermörder' und 'Hort der Republik.' Biographie eines Gestrigen* (Vienna, 1990).

<sup>36</sup>Schober's ire was especially directed at two police officials, Otto Minich and Anton Lissner, who helped Waber recruit members. Schober officially sanctioned both men by bringing them before disciplinary commissions, which found them guilty and recommended their dismissal from the force. In protesting what he considered to be Schober's autocratic behavior to the Lower Austrian Statthalter, Waber argued that Schober's attempts to prevent the police from attending his rallies were the best possible publicity. See Z. 20556, Sept. 7, 1918; and Z. 21690, Sept. 22, 1918, MI Präs., Carton 1889. It was a double irony of the history of the First Republic that Leopold Waber ended up representing the *Grossdeutschen* in Schober's first cabinet as Minister of Internal Affairs and Education, having been appointed in June 1921, and that, later in his life, Schober would be accused of the same kind of politicization that he so caustically imputed to Waber. See Hubert, *Schober*, 370–72, as well as 78, 80–81, 166.

<sup>37</sup>Z. 9852, Apr. 27, 1918, MI Präs., Carton 2131. Nor were the police the only *Mittelstand* group that became involved in social protests. In late April 1918, a protest gathering of public school teachers from all districts of the city took place at the Rathaus. Approximately 1,000 teachers showed up outside the offices of Mayor Richard Weiskirchner, angry that an extra salary allowance that had been promised them had not yet been paid out. Urgently summoned Christian Social ward leaders were able to disperse the crowd, but in a city where teachers were a well-oiled part of the political machine, this was an insurgent event. Z. 9701, Apr. 23, 1918, Carton 2131.

food kitchens or consumer clubs, they were disadvantaged in relation to the members of cooperatives "in a most crass manner."<sup>38</sup>

In the summer and early autumn more protest meetings of angry state officials and other lower-middle- and middle-class groups took place. Heinrich Mataja caught their mood when he asserted at one such rally on June 12,

[W]e have no more time to wait for the parliament. If the government does not fulfill our wishes, no politician can accept responsibility for what may happen in the near future.... We are at the last moment. The government should take note of the emotional state that is present in this rally. No one will be able to dam up the ever swelling movement that is breaking forth.<sup>39</sup>

Taken together, these protests by lower- and middle-ranking state officials, tradesmen, teachers, and property owners (now joined by the police) have an uncanny resemblance to the later 1880s and early 1890s, when the middle class "glue" that held together the empire's administrative and political systems—the *Beamten*, property owners, police, teachers, clergy—had slowly begun to dissolve. This time, however, the conditions were much worse, and the larger institutional context was incriminated in the collapse of authority and legitimacy.<sup>40</sup>

The bellwether of all of these symptoms was the growing frustration within the Christian Social Party, which had spent twenty-five years styling itself as the defender of *Mittelstand* interests. Mayor Richard Weiskirchner found himself targeted by those within the party who were dissatisfied with his responses against the government. Weiskirchner in turn was increasingly given to aggressive rhetoric, accusing the state of bankrupt administration and the like.<sup>41</sup> As life became more difficult, local politicians with a keen sense of public anger invested in new/old symbols of blame mongering. The Christian Socials eagerly revived their anti-Semitic roots, dusting off a level of anti-Semitic rhetoric that had not been regularly heard since the later 1890s. Not surprising, the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde reacted sharply to this blatant revival of popular anti-Semitism, sending a formal protest to the imperial government in late July 1918.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup>Z. 9660, Apr. 12, 1918, MI Präs., Carton 1588.

<sup>39</sup>See Z. 14005, June 12, 1918, Carton 1648. See also Z. 13461, June 5, 1918; Z. 13462, June 7, 1918; Z. 14099, June 14, 1918; Z. 15784, July 5, 1918; Z. 16160, July 6, 1918; Z. 16241, July 7, 1918, Carton 1648; as well as Z. 22014, Sept. 20, 1918, and Z. 20118, Sept. 1, 1918, Carton 1649.

<sup>40</sup>Calls for unionization of the state officials, for example, were heard. See, for example, Z. 16160, July 6, 1918, Carton 1648.

<sup>41</sup>See the reports of his speeches in Z. 9852, Apr. 27, 1918, Carton 2131; Z. 9699, Apr. 20, 1918, Carton, 1647; Z. 13461, June 5, 1918 and Z. 14099, June 13, 1918, Carton 1648.

<sup>42</sup>Z. 18239, July 29, 1918, Carton 2079. Six months earlier, Leopold Kunschak had insisted that anti-Semitism was not just a principle of his party's ideology, but that it was also widespread in the general population, waiting to be articulated: "Der heutige Antisemitismus sei nicht das Produkt einer Hetze, der Presse, oder reiner Parteiarbeit, sondern er wachse aus den Verhältnissen heraus." Z. 24621, Dec. 11, 1917, Carton 1646. Police reports on the mood of the populace noted this revival of popular anti-Semitism in the spring and summer of 1918, reporting that popular anti-Semitism was evident in the emotions of angry consumers and wage earners

Richard Schober and other scholars have noted how quickly and decisively Christian Social leaders in Tirol and other Crownlands jettisoned the monarchy in favor of a republican *Volksstaat* in November 1918.<sup>43</sup> This had precedents in the later part of the war in the neighborhoods of Vienna in June, July, and August 1918 as well. If Friedrich Adler was correct that the main sources of coercive legitimacy in prewar Austria were the dynasty and the bureaucracy, the war had corroded these institutions by 1918 to the point where the state was in mortal conflict with those who most closely fit the image of its "people," namely the Viennese themselves. Yet, and this is a very forceful yet, the government continued to function, but in so doing it slowly stripped itself of most of the legitimacy of the liberal state of 1867. Josef Redlich shrewdly caught this when he noted in his diary on October 21, "[T]he strangest feature [of the current situation] is that the military, the police, and the administrative bureaucracy have up to now continued to function beyond reproach, even in the Slavic lands: the 'state,' therefore, has now returned totally to its true nature as the function of a historical apparatus of coercive power."<sup>44</sup>

Czech and Hungarian historians have long stressed a slow dissolution of the empire from within, as it concerns their nations and peoples, citing social, economic, and political variables that led to the final breakdown.<sup>45</sup> This was also true of the German Austrians. In fact, by 1918 the government had maneuvered itself into waging what can accurately be called a silent war against its own citizens.<sup>46</sup> The last gasp of the old regime occurred in a

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standing for hours in long lines waiting hopelessly for small bits of food. See Z. 6356, Mar. 16, 1918; Z. 8687, Apr. 13, 1918, Z. 10444, May 4, 1918, Carton 213.

<sup>43</sup>Schober, *Tiroler Frage*, 140–41.

<sup>44</sup>Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre*, 2:305. Ernest von Koerber went further in an interview with a German journalist on October 4, who reported that: "Wir sprachen dann noch über die allgemeinen Zerfallserscheinungen. Es wurden festgestellt: die Staatsfeindschaft der Slaven, aber auch die Gleichgültigkeit der Deutschen, so dass der Staatsgedanke völlig verdunkelt erscheint und niemand sich mehr um das staatliche Sein oder Nichtsein kümmert. Die Menschheit in Österreich ist physisch und seelisch so zermürbt, dass sie nur den Frieden will und alles andere der Zukunft, und wenn sie auch dunkel und ungewiss ist, überlassen will.... Das alles ist Verfall.... Wir [the Austrians] haben garnichts, keinen Staat, keinen festen Grund und keine Richtlinien. Ich wundere mich, wie die Herren an der Spitze so ruhig den Ereignissen gegenüber stehen." "Unterredung mit Excellenz von Koerber 4. 10. 18," in Wedel to Max von Baden, A42096, Oct. 6, 1918, Oest. 70/Bd. 53, PAAA.

<sup>45</sup>See Jurij Křížek, "Die Kriegswirtschaft und das Ende der Monarchie," and Péter Hanák, "Die Volksmeinung während des letzten Kriegsjahres in Österreich-Ungarn" in *Die Auflösung*, 43–52, 58–66; Křen, *Konfliktgemeinschaft*, 353ff.; and Cornwall, "The Dissolution of Austria-Hungary," in *The Last Years of Austria-Hungary: Essays in Political and Military History 1908–1918*, ed. Cornwall (Exeter, 1990), 117–42, esp. 140. This was certainly confirmed by paranoid evaluations of the Austrian High Command. See Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary*, 372–73 and passim.

<sup>46</sup>The reports of German ambassador Botho Wedel are surprisingly candid on this issue. In early July 1918, Wedel reported a general sense of hopelessness among the political elites: "Die schwankende, unsichere Politik an Höchster Stelle, die wirtschaftliche Not, die inneren Wirren und vor allem die misslungene Offensive haben eine Stimmung erzeugt, die als 'apathische Hoffnungslosigkeit' am treffendsten bezeichnet wird.... Man rechnet nur noch mit zwei Möglichkeiten: Rettung durch Deutschland oder Untergang." A29780, July 11, 1918, Oest. 70/Bd. 53, PAAA.

secret telegram sent by the Ministry of Internal Affairs on October 28 to all provincial governmental offices, ordering them to secure “all files involving matters relating to state security” in their regional capitals—to prevent their falling into the wrong hands and thus to help to facilitate positive relations with the “factors of future state governance”—and to make arrangements to ship them to Vienna under tight security.<sup>47</sup> How effective this order was may be doubted, but it was an appropriate symbolic terminus to a war regime that had consistently sought to hide critical information from its own political elites.

It is impossible to comprehend the drama and meaning of the dramatic events of late October and early November 1918 without recognizing that the collapse they triggered was not merely caused by other ethnic groups in the monarchy, or by foreign powers, as much as by an implosion within the state itself.<sup>48</sup>

### *The October Revolution in Vienna*

On October 21, 1918, this implosion led naturally to a transfer in power that, in turn, launched the formal and official part of the Revolution of 1918. The revolution was in fact two revolutions—a high political revolution, wrought by and against ex-imperial elites (these were often the same class of people), and a cascading series of popular upheavals reflecting actually existing social conditions in the city.

Police reports on the mood of the populace in their districts in the last weeks of October stress the exhaustion and bitterness of the people, a single-minded desire for an end of hostilities, and hunger.<sup>49</sup> In addition to a frightened and exhausted civil population, the city was also flooded with masses of ex-soldiers. In addition, the city was also filled with refugees and former prisoners of war. The regular army garrison having deserted, Schober's police were left to try to maintain control in a very risky situation.<sup>50</sup> Still, the poor weather seems to have put a damper on outdoor rallies, and the general

<sup>47</sup>Z. 24181, Oct. 29, 1918, MI Präs., Carton 1912.

<sup>48</sup>This implosion meant that the valence of the state ceased to exist. Hans von Voltelini, the Austrian jurist and legal historian, had asserted in 1901 that “In dem österreichischen Staate allein finden sich die einzelnen Nationen zusammen.” Voltelini's proposition was meant to justify the study of *Reichsgeschichte* as the universal study of the public law of the Austrian state, but his insight may be adapted to explain the outcome of 1918 as well—it was not so much that the individual nations had destroyed the state, as that the state had destroyed itself, thus releasing the individual nations from its orbit. Hans von Voltelini, “Die österreichische Reichsgeschichte, ihre Aufgaben und Ziele,” *Deutsche Geschichtsblätter. Monatsschrift zur Förderung der landesgeschichtlichen Forschung* 2 (1901): 107.

<sup>49</sup>The reports, in rough handwritten copies, are in the AdPDW, “Stimmungsberichte 1918.” See especially the reports of October 17, 1918 from Josefstadt, Landstrasse, Wieden, and Floridsdorf.

<sup>50</sup>The police noted that the imperial badges and medals worn by discharged officers and soldiers generated great popular hostility. At the same time, most of the regular troops under General Johann Mossig's command had deserted their posts. By November 1, Mossig had four companies of men left under his command. Brandl, *Kaiser*, 255–58; Plaschka et al., *Innere Front*, 2:320–28. See also Z. 24513, Nov. 1, 1918; Z. 24514, Nov. 1, 1918; and Z. 24515, Nov. 2, 1918, MI Präs., Carton 2131.

physical exhaustion of the population led to little violence. Above all, there was widespread desperation and anxiety about food.<sup>51</sup> Malnutrition was further complicated by an influenza epidemic that reached its high point in the weeks just before the revolution, leading to thousands of deaths, a crisis made even worse by the lack of medical supplies and doctors.<sup>52</sup>

In the face of this catastrophe, it is difficult to credit arguments to the effect that, on the highest level of political action, the men who acted on October 21 did not mean to create a fundamentally new state.<sup>53</sup> No responsible leader, and certainly not leaders of the caliber of Karl Renner, Victor Adler, and Otto Bauer, would have failed to appreciate that this was an ominous situation, made worse by the collapse of imperial authority.<sup>54</sup> The desperation, but also the sense of moral and ecological confusion, can be seen in Loewenfeld-Russ's letters to his father from late October 1918, describing how difficult it was to try to go about one's daily life, how great were the uncertainties and the stress engendered by the social and military confusion and the overturning of routines.<sup>55</sup> Aside from the local police, authority had virtually disappeared, no one could issue or follow orders, paper became meaningless, officials lost any sense of their official selves.<sup>56</sup> Vienna had been abandoned,

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<sup>51</sup>Loewenfeld-Russ, *Im Kampf*, 120–21. In late October, a typical adult received, per week, .25 kilo of flour, .5 kilo of potatoes, 2 dkg of margarine, and 12.5 dkg of meat, as well as .75 kilo of sugar per month. *Ibid.*, 110. This meant that the daily caloric level for adults in Vienna, as provided for by basic rationed food, was down to approximately 700 per day. Arnold Durig, "Physiologie als Unterrichtsgegenstand. Erhebungen über die Ernährung der Wiener Bevölkerung," *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift*, Nov. 2, 1918, p. 1940.

<sup>52</sup>For the medical situation, see *Neue Freie Presse*, Oct. 20, 1918 (M), p. 8; and *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Oct. 20, 1918, pp. 6–7; Oct. 25, 1918, p. 6, hereafter cited as *NFP* and *AZ*. Deaths owing to influenza rose from 364 in the week of September 29–October 5 to 814 in the week of October 6–12, to 1,468 in the week of October 13–19.

<sup>53</sup>See, for example, Klaus Berchtold, *Verfassungsgeschichte der Republik Österreich*, vol. 1, 1918–1933. *Fünfzehn Jahre Verfassungskampf* (Vienna, 1998), 14, 16.

<sup>54</sup>It has been suggested that the willingness of Heinrich Lammasch to cede authority to the new government on October 30 enabled a smooth, and thus peaceful transition in power. For example, see Berchtold, *Verfassungsgeschichte*, 23. Certainly, Lammasch saw it as his responsibility to assist in a smooth transition, but this was not an option, and Lammasch admitted to Seitz that the capacity of public officials to be able to serve the new state was a foregone conclusion (a *Selbstverständlichkeit*). Three days later, Seitz reported that he, Dinghofer, and Renner had had a long conversation with Lammasch on the night of November 1 about transferring control of the ministries during which Lammasch noted that many of the k.k. ministers found their position "untenable," and the idea emerged to send the state secretaries immediately into the ministries. *SR*, Oct. 31, and Nov. 2, 1918.

<sup>55</sup>See letters of Oct. 10, Oct. 20, Oct. 21, and Oct. 23, 1918, in Loewenfeld-Russ, *Im Kampf*, 105, 108–12. For a description of the lack of reality of members of the Herrenhaus in these days, see Robert Freissler, *Vom Zerfall Oesterreichs bis zum tschechoslowakischen Staate* (Zoppot-Berlin, 1921), 60–61.

<sup>56</sup>"Man hat die Empfindung, im luftleeren Raum zu amtieren, den Boden unter den Füßen zu verlieren. Jede Arbeit scheint einem überflüssig, weil durch den Gang der Ereignisse überholt. Österreich scheint durch eine russische Elendszeit durch zu müssen, es wird ihm nicht erspart bleiben, wenn auch später der Staat in anderer Form wieder aufstehen wird. Diejenigen aber, die diese schreckliche Zeit jetzt mitmachen müssen, und wir stehen erst am Beginn, fiebern jede Stunde, die der Tag bringt.... Ich habe nur die Sehnsucht: fort, wenn es ginge." Letter of Oct. 20, 1918, Loewenfeld-Russ, *Im Kampf*, 109.

its inhabitants hiding behind locked doors while disorderly masses were running toward and through it; the city was beset by a "terrible chaos."<sup>57</sup>

Ironically, the collapse of the army in late October gave local Social Democrats the extraordinary opportunity to organize the Volkswehr, which, in turn, helped to safeguard the centrist political revolution against the possibility of left-wing social upheaval. True, the Staatsrat authorized the creation of the Volkswehr, and on November 8, 1918, General Adolf von Boog took an oath (drafted by Karl Renner) as its first commander in which he was charged with keeping "the organized military forces of the state as a general and public institution free of the political and economic antagonisms within our nation," but both Christian Socials and German Nationals felt deep apprehensions, seeing the Viennese Volkswehr as a Social Democratic "party guard."<sup>58</sup> This image of a revolutionary army that was both officially chartered (and thus nominally bipartisan) and yet party-anchored illuminated the incongruous nature of the revolution. To the extent the revolution in Vienna would have the chance to sustain a more moderate and centrist course, above the enormous turmoil of everyday life, much was owing to Social Democratic mastery of the new Volkswehr. Yet, in the eyes of other members of the new national coalition, this was a bitter and problematic state of affairs. It was not surprising that the triggering issue over which the coalition between the Social Democrats and the Christian Socials finally broke apart in June 1920 was the question of the politicization of coercive force.<sup>59</sup>

In view of the massive social dislocations, the efforts of Karl Renner and other party leaders to re-create a new centrist "state" overnight take on greater meaning. It was not just a question of replacing the monarchy with a republic; rather, it was a question of re-creating a state with sufficient bipartisan legitimacy to be able to exercise power above and beyond the anarchy of the social moment. The only agents capable of this task were the major political parties. Very early in the process of devolution, Heinrich Mataja, a leading Christian Social deputy from Vienna, had insisted at a private meeting of his party's leadership that "it is totally impossible for the imperial offices to be responsible for making peace. The main emphasis now lies with the political parties."<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup>Letters of Oct. 21, 1918, Oct. 23, 1918, and Nov. 5, 1918; *ibid.*, 110–12, 120–21. Robert Freissler, who was present at the Staatsrat meeting on November 11, later recalled that "jeder war sich klar darüber, dass die einzige Möglichkeit, den Staat und seine Einrichtungen vor Zertrümmerung zu bewahren, in dem augenblicklichen Bekenntnisse zur Republik lag." *Vom Zerfall*, 71.

<sup>58</sup>Compare Boog's "Feierliche Angelobung" in SR, Nov. 8, 1918, with the comments of Karl Vaugoin in *Reichspost*, Nov. 17, 1919 (M), p. 3, hereafter cited as *Rp*. See also Julius Deutsch, *Aus Österreichs Revolution. Militärpolitische Erinnerungen* (Vienna, 1921), 14–33; Ludwig Jedlicka, *Ein Heer im Schatten der Parteien. Die militärpolitische Lage Österreichs 1918–1938* (Vienna, 1955), 12–30; and especially F. L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe, 1918–1919* (Berkeley, 1972), 78–107.

<sup>59</sup>See Anton Staudinger, "Christlichsoziale Partei und Heimwehren bis 1927," in *Die Ereignisse des 15. Juli 1927. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 15. Juni 1977*, ed. Rudolf Neck and Adam Wandruszka (Vienna, 1979), 110–36, esp. 114–19; and Norbert Leser, "Der Bruch der Koalition 1920—Voraussetzungen und Konsequenzen," in *Koalitionsregierungen in Österreich. Ihr Ende 1920 und 1966. Protokoll des Symposiums 'Bruch der Koalition' in Wien am 28. April 1980*, ed. Neck and Wandruszka (Munich, 1985), 40.

<sup>60</sup>"Klub-Sitzung am 1. Okt. 1918," Christlichsozialer Parlamentsklub, AdR.

If the old state had ceased to function, what territorial object were the political parties taking charge of? As late as the end of September, it is clear that many individual politicians still hoped the monarchy—in the territorial and geopolitical sense—might be salvaged. At a meeting of the Social Democratic Party Executive on September 20 to plan the upcoming party congress, Karl Seitz urged, for example, that the party focus on trying to sustain the empire, modified by structural reform, rather than assuming the inevitability of its revolutionary collapse.<sup>61</sup> Yet, the month of October brutally dashed any of these hopes. Wilson's note of October 19 was most decisive, since its recognition of Czechoslovakia as a *de facto* belligerent government called into question the existence of Austria-Hungary.<sup>62</sup>

When the representatives of the Social Democrats, Christian Socials, and German Nationals met to coordinate the plans for the Provisional National Assembly that met the next day, October 21, they refused to accept the imperial government's interpretation that they were functioning as subunits of the Abgeordnetenhaus under the aegis of the emperor's Manifesto of October 16. Rather, even though they were acting as a consequence of their capacity as members of the imperial parliament, as elected in June 1911, they insisted that they, like the other national groups, were about to create a new political order, and that they were already a government with executive authority.<sup>63</sup>

A number of scholars have argued that the Social Democrats were the only party with moral authority among the masses, and this alone carried them to the hegemony they seized in early November 1918.<sup>64</sup> Yet, what was the nature of this hegemony? Granted, the Social Democrats had the moral upper hand, but the revolution of late October began as an exercise in national, not social, *Selbstbestimmung*. Even the major resolutions of the Social Democratic Party

<sup>61</sup>"Protokoll der Sitzung der Reichsparteivertretung vom 20. September 1918," VGA.

<sup>62</sup>Redlich reported in his diary that the court lost all hope in the days that followed. Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre*, 2:306. Wedel reported to Berlin that in the days after Wilson's response, talk of an Anschluss had escalated considerably. A44949, Oct. 22, 1918, Oest. 95/Bd. 25, PAAA. He also reported hearing favorable comments about a republic in *bürgerlich* circles, as well as among the Social Democrats, the former thinking that this would position Austria well at the peace conference, given Wilson's views.

<sup>63</sup>See *NFP*, Oct. 18, 1918 (M), p. 2: "Von den deutschen Abgeordneten wird hiezu ausdrücklich bemerkt, dass diese Nationalversammlung unabhängig von dem kaiserlichen Manifest erfolgt. Die Deutschen konstituieren sich auf Grund ihres Selbstbestimmungsrechtes als Nation und warten alles übrige ab." Wedel saw these claims of sovereignty as reflecting a push by the Social Democratic leadership led by Renner between October 18 and 20 that was, in turn, pushed by its own left wing and by the Czech Social Democrats. A44305, Oct. 20, 1918, Oest. 103/Bd. 8, PAAA. Wedel subsequently (A 44539, Oct. 21, 1918, Oest. 103/Bd. 8) insisted that the one positive value of the Manifesto—which was otherwise considered ridiculous in Vienna—was that it legitimated the National Assembly by lending it a cover of respectability ("Die Revolution ist durch das Manifest legitimiert.") Loewenfeld-Russ pointed out, however, that some basic institutional overlaps were expected, since while the Lammasch cabinet was viewed as a liquidation regime, it was hoped that Lammasch would coordinate the devolution process between and among the new states. This quickly proved, however, to be an impossibility (142).

<sup>64</sup>See Neck, "Das Jahr 1918—Einleitende Bemerkungen," 15; Walter Goldinger, "Der geschichtliche Ablauf der Ereignisse in Österreich von 1918 bis 1945," in *Geschichte der Republik Österreich*, ed. Heinrich Benedikt (Vienna, 1954), 27, 32–33.

Congress held on October 31 and November 1 that were published in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* dealt with national self-determination and not social or class issues.<sup>65</sup>

In fact, the Social Democrats found themselves mired in an incremental logic of events that forced them to recognize the national revolutionary copartnership of the Christian Socials and the German Nationals, the primary spokesmen for the German-Bohemian lands. This is what Otto Bauer meant when he wrote to Friedrich Adler on October 24 that the agenda of the upcoming party congress would likely be “state and nations”-oriented, even though Bauer admitted that many among the masses did not understand this preoccupation with what they held to be “nationalism and the like.”<sup>66</sup> Moreover, as Hans Mommsen has reminded us, as late as November 9 in his last speech to the Staatsrat, Victor Adler presumed that Max von Baden’s coalition government in Berlin would survive, and that this was clearly the model that he and his fellow Austrian Social Democrats felt they had to use.<sup>67</sup> Of course, that same day, Max von Baden’s government collapsed, and the next day, Friedrich Ebert and Majority Social Democrats constituted an all-socialist government with the Independents. Yet the Austrian Social Democrats never seriously contemplated the unilateral exercise of power. In fact, at the Staatsrat session on the morning of November 11, Karl Renner and Karl Seitz used the urgency of Social Democrats remaining in the tripartite coalition as the threat to force the declaration of a republic, and this tactic certainly helped to achieve that objective.<sup>68</sup> In contrast to Germany, where an all-socialist cabinet (the *Rat der Volksbeauftragten*) was officially installed on November 10, in Austria the new revolutionary regime remained a multiparty coalition based on two

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<sup>65</sup>See AZ, Nov. 2, 1918, p. 1. This congress also provided fascinating examples of “instant” history, with Otto Bauer, Max Adler, and Karl Seitz addressing the faithful to give meaning to the chaos in which the party found itself. Whereas most of the delegates probably sought to learn about the future socialist society, Seitz and Bauer seemed preoccupied with new understandings of the Austrian political past and, in Bauer’s case, with the urgency of an Anschluss with Germany. Seitz, in turn, sketched a fascinating reimagining of Austrian history that now saw the empire as having been destined to fail from the very beginnings of its existence. See *Stenographisches Protokoll, Parteitag 1918*, 90–176, VGA.

<sup>66</sup>Bauer to Friedrich Adler, Oct. 24, 1918, in Otto Bauer, *Werkausgabe*, 9 vols. (Vienna, 1975–80), 9:1045–47.

<sup>67</sup>Hans Mommsen, “Victor Adler und die Erste Republik Österreich,” 17; SR, Nov. 9, 1918.

<sup>68</sup>SR, Nov. 11, 1918. Renner: “Es haben sich in Deutschland die zwei Fraktionen der Sozialdemokratie, die Rechte und die Linke, vereinigt und die Regierung gemeinsam übernommen. Die Folge dieser Ereignisse bei uns ist, dass das ganze Proletariat einmütig dieselbe Politik von uns fordern wird. Dadurch ist unsere Stellung hier auf das Äusserste bedroht. Es liegen polizeiliche Berichte vor, welche die Existenz dieses Staatsrates berühren.... Der Staatsrat beruht auf einer Koalition des Bürgertums, des Bauernstandes und der Arbeiterschaft, um uns aus der Katastrophe herauszuführen. Da in Deutschland alle sozialdemokratischen Parteien sich vereinigt und die Regierung übernommen haben, ist die erste Forderung, die vom Proletariat an uns gerichtet werden wird, dass wir hier das Gleiche tun. Sie wissen, wie stark die Tendenzen der Arbeiterschaft dahin gerichtet sind, eine Koalition mit bürgerlichen Parteien nicht zuzulassen. Meine Partei hat heute früh eine dringende Beratung abgehalten, und ist zu dem Beschlusse gekommen, dass diese Koalition so lange als möglich aufrechtzuerhalten ist, weil sie die einzige Garantie ist, uns vor der Anarchie zu bewahren.”

large bourgeois parties plus the Social Democrats. And, as Jacob Ahrer was later to observe, no one in November 1918 could have imagined that the “liberal element, that is the German Nationals,” were on the verge of disappearing as a major force in Austrian politics.<sup>69</sup>

In an act of consummate irony, the Provisional National Assembly that met on October 21, 1918 used the Lower Austrian Landhaus as its venue, whose courtyard had been the launching point of the Revolution of 1848. The Social Democratic Party Executive had urged that this assembly function as a “real parliament, which should also be reflected in the external format of the meeting, the way in which the Präsidium was appointed, the election of committees, and forms of official reportage, etc.”<sup>70</sup> The main institutional outcome of the session on October 21 was the creation of a twenty-member executive committee (Vollzugsausschuss), which served as the transitory leadership of the revolutionary state for the next nine days, when it was succeeded by the institutional framework adopted on October 30.<sup>71</sup> But governments, and above all revolutionary governments, need extraordinary leaders as well as compelling ideas. Who, in the end, would lead this strange revolution?

### *Renner and the Founding of the Democratic Republic*

When the dust settled, it was Karl Renner who led the government. Why?<sup>72</sup> Traditionally, one answer to this question has involved the fact that Social Democrats either claimed or had imposed on them the moral leadership of the revolution.<sup>73</sup> This may explain why the Social Democrats could claim to lead the government, but it says nothing about Renner himself.

<sup>69</sup>Jacob Ahrer, *Erlebte Zeitgeschichte* (Vienna, 1930), 47.

<sup>70</sup>“Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes am 17. Oktober 1918,” VGA. Victor Adler made it clear on October 21 that what was being formed was a government with full sovereign powers, which also included taking power over the *Verwaltung*. PNV, 7.

<sup>71</sup>The Provisional National Assembly consisted of 210 members, all German-based deputies elected in 1911. It determined that it would be both the originator and the executor of its own legislation, but entrusted day-to-day governmental authority to the Vollzugsausschuss (which was renamed the Staatsrat on October 30), to be chaired by three rotating presidents, each drawn from one of the political parties. The origins of this structure are embedded in the murky history of Social Democratic leadership in late October 1918. On October 17, the party Executive (at which Renner was present) commissioned Otto Bauer to draft a proposal to organize the transitional government that would be voted on by the National Assembly on October 21. See “Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes am 17. Oktober 1918,” VGA. Bauer then formulated the proposals that were adopted on October 21. This has led historians to the conclusion that Bauer was implementing his own ideas. But if Georg Schmitz is correct that Karl Renner had already begun work on his constitutional *Entwurf* by October 16, a document that also contains the idea of an executive committee or Staatsrat (especially Sections 18 and 40–41), it is possible that Bauer in fact took this idea from Renner. See note 92, below.

<sup>72</sup>Twenty-five years ago, Rudolf Neck called for a study of the origins and details of Renner’s *Koalitionspolitik* (Neck, “Das Jahr 1918—Einleitende Bemerkungen,” 15), a desideratum that is still outstanding.

<sup>73</sup>For example, Loewenfeld-Russ commented to his parents in early December that “[d]ie Verhältnisse bringen es sich mit, dass die Sozialdemokraten, die auf die Massen den grössten Einfluss haben, eine Art führende Stellung einnehmen. Dies kommt auch dadurch zum Ausdrucke,

That it was Karl Renner who became the principal spokesman for and leader of the new government was one of the great ironies of the revolution. During the war, as Friedrich Adler perceptively observed in *Der Kampf* in 1916, there were actually two right wings in the Austrian Socialist Party, one that was clearly pro-German, the other more pro-Austrian.<sup>74</sup> Renner represented the second, and his enthusiasm for a possible reconciliation between war socialism and the proletariat led to uneasiness within the left-oriented members of the executive and the party intelligentsia. And, as the political and economic situation unraveled in 1917–18, Renner became the target of abuse from radical, left-wing elements in the party.<sup>75</sup> As late as November 1918, in the midst of the revolution, Max Adler would send a letter to the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, emphasizing that the party's left wing had finally won out and that a political strategy involving the "Erneuerung Österreichs" (a clear dig at Renner) was totally discredited.<sup>76</sup> Max Adler's problem, of course, was that his sometime nemesis was not dead and buried, but alive and well, and was on the verge of becoming the most important politician in the very young Austrian Republic.

Georg Schmitz has argued that Renner's personal capacities were crucial to his success in late October, especially his organizational prowess and his love of the law which put him "in his element."<sup>77</sup> Certainly, Renner had a vast knowledge of Austrian political and legal history and the capacity to synthesize very large amounts of complex information quickly. Renner was also one of the few Socialists about whom speculation flourished during the war concerning his potential for becoming a minister. In late June 1917, Minister-President Heinrich Clam-Martinic invited Renner to join a coalition government, a proposal that was immediately vetoed by his party's

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dass Renner als Kanzler den Vorsitz im Kabinett (=Ministerpräsident) inne hat. Er ist von einer bewundernswerten Arbeitsintensität." Letter of Dec. 1, 1918, *Im Kampf*, 132. Walter Goldinger has also insisted that Renner did not scheme to get the job he ended up with, but that a simple "force of circumstances" led him to become the equivalent of a German-Austrian minister-president. See Goldinger, "Der Staatsrat 1918/19," in *November 1918*, 57. Eduard März and Fritz Weber also argue for a kind of natural Social Democratic superiority in October 1918, in "Sozialdemokratie und Sozialisierung nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg," in *November 1918*, 102. In contrast, Ernst Victor Zenker accused Renner of having schemed his way into a position that was never authorized by the National Assembly. See his *Ein Mann im sterbenden Österreich. Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben* (Reichenberg, 1935), 141.

<sup>74</sup>"Mutwilliger Streit oder politischer Gegensatz?" *Der Kampf* 9 (1916): 149, n. 1.

<sup>75</sup>Friedrich Adler's famous attack on Renner during his murder trial in May 1917 (Renner as "einen Lueger in der Sozialdemokratie") was notable in this regard. See *Friedrich Adler vor dem Ausnahmegericht*, 96. But see also Z. 14004, June 11, 1918, Carton 2131. Renner had temporarily withdrawn from politics after the Adler murder trial to concentrate on the cooperative movement. He was deeply involved, however, in controlling the potential radicalism of the *Arbeiter-räte* movement that emerged in early 1918. See Hautmann, *Geschichte*, 120–21, 172–73, 203, 206–7, 209, 215, 217; and Jacques Hannak, *Karl Renner und seine Zeit. Versuch einer Biographie* (Vienna, 1965), 311.

<sup>76</sup>AZ, Nov. 3, 1918, p. 5. Adler's comments came in the form of a correction to the abbreviated coverage that the AZ devoted to his speech at the party congress.

<sup>77</sup>Georg Schmitz, *Karl Renners Briefe aus Saint Germain und ihre rechtspolitischen Folgen* (Vienna, 1991), 133–35.

leadership.<sup>78</sup> Glaise von Horstenau reported that he had recommended Renner to Emperor Karl as minister-president in mid October 1918 to replace Hussarek. According to Glaise, Renner consulted with the party executive, who refused to authorize this, but Renner himself “seemed not adverse to doing it.”<sup>79</sup> We also know that Count Ernst Silva-Tarouca had sounded out Renner on October 11, 1918 about possible membership in a cabinet to be headed (so he thought) by himself, but this scheme collapsed of its own weight.<sup>80</sup>

Throughout the war, Renner was preoccupied with theoretical projects on behalf of imperial reform. His last great effort was a revised edition of his earlier 1904 work on nationalism, completed in December 1917 and published as *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen in besonderer Anwendung auf Oesterreich*. In this book he reiterated his older ideals about personal autonomy, which he saw as a way to reconcile the nations with a strong and legitimate state, and he renewed his earlier attacks on the Crownlands as the enemy of that state. Renner was especially concerned with the pretensions of the regions and their capacity to undercut the state by exacerbating national discord.<sup>81</sup> As he put it succinctly, “the Crownlands are the internal enemy of the Habsburg Monarchy.”<sup>82</sup> In contrast, Renner privileged the state and its law as the prior and necessary ordering principle of public life. As Renner put it

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<sup>78</sup>“Protokoll der Sitzung des Deutschen Parteivorstandes am 21. Juni 1917,” VGA. Clam’s successor, Ernst von Seidler, then approached Victor Adler directly in early August, twice visiting him at a local sanatorium to gain Socialist participation in a new cabinet. Adler flatly rejected the offer. See “Protokoll der Sitzung des Deutschen Parteivorstandes am 8. August 1917.” The Saxon legate Alfred Nostitz reported to Dresden in May 1917 that Renner was “einer der klügsten politischen Köpfe Österreichs” and that “es ist nicht unmöglich, dass man ihn eines schönen Tages sogar noch als österreichischen Minister sieht.” See Alfred Opitz and Franz Adlgasser, eds., “Der Zerfall der europäischen Mitte.” *Staatenrevolution im Donauraum. Berichte der Sächsischen Gesandtschaft in Wien 1917–1919* (Graz, 1990), 34–35.

<sup>79</sup>Glaise von Horstenau, *Ein General im Zwielicht*, 499. For rumors about Social Democratic participation in the cabinet in mid October, see also Loewenfeld-Russ, *Im Kampf*, 105.

<sup>80</sup>Josef Polišenský, “Die Auflösung des Habsburgerreiches im Herbst 1918 nach den Briefen des Ackerbauministers Silva-Tarouca,” in *Die Auflösung*, 134. A third instance involved Alexander Spitzmüller. Commissioned by the emperor in a parallel action to canvass political leaders, Spitzmüller recounted that he considered Renner as a possible minister-president, along with Prince Friedrich Schwarzenberg, but Spitzmüller gives no indication that the emperor acted or did not act on this proposal. See Alexander Spitzmüller-Harmersbach, “... und hat auch Ursach, es zu lieben” (Vienna, 1955), 263–64. According to Spitzmüller, he had been asked on October 11 and agreed on October 13 to try to negotiate a new cabinet to replace Hussarek. The idea collapsed after Cardinal Piffl intervened with the emperor on October 15.

<sup>81</sup>For Renner, a combination of imperial *Statthaltereien*, historic Crownlands, and regional political parties weakened Austria by delegitimizing the state in the name of national particularism and national discord. See his *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen in besonderer Anwendung auf Oesterreich* (Leipzig, 1918), 202–3, 234, 238, 244–48. Renner felt that this system was also undergirded by a backward, unintellectual *Kleinbürgertum* that did not even represent the true interests of the modern bourgeoisie. See his comments in the *Protokoll der Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Deutschen sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Oesterreich. Abgehalten in Wien vom 19. bis 24. Oktober 1917* (Vienna, 1917), 225–26; and *Selbstbestimmungsrecht*, 243–44.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, 81, 244–48.

almost aphoristically, “only the law brings order and peace.”<sup>83</sup> Imperial Austria’s main weakness was not nationalism, but rather anarchic regionalism.

Austria needed a federal state that would provide a uniform, fair, and just political milieu for the development of the nations as cultural communities. The nations were a necessary means to social cohesion and cultural articulation in a multinational, federal state, but nations needed to be constituted by the law and to exist under the law, a process that would, at the same time, subject them to the law.<sup>84</sup> Austria also needed a total overhaul of its systems of administrative management, so that local and regional governments would become more intelligent and more knowledgeable about economic and social problems. Renner was especially interested in a radical reform of local administration, since he believed that “one must create via democratized local administration the foundation for the whole superstructure of the state.”<sup>85</sup> Significantly, however, for all of Renner’s stress on self-representation, this was not a rehash of nineteenth-century autonomism, which Renner viewed as fatally flawed. In all cases, it was the responsibility of the central state to define competencies and jurisdictions: “[T]he central power has the right in all cases and at all times to decide which jurisdictions are assigned to which executive offices.”<sup>86</sup> The new local and regional governments that Renner envisaged were to be suffused with state law and loyalty, and this would happen because the new central state itself would be a democratic state.<sup>87</sup>

Over the course of the summer of 1918, Renner renewed his interest in constitutional reform, offering to Friedrich Austerlitz in late July 1918 to write a series of essays for the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* on administrative and constitutional reform.<sup>88</sup> The series apparently failed to materialize, but Renner’s compulsive interest in these problems led him to spend part of the second half of October 1918 working on various drafts for a constitution for the new German-Austrian state, prior to any final decision as to whether it would end up as an isolated, nation-based republic or remain within a loose confederation of states. This elaborate but fragmentary document has been analyzed intensively by Georg Schmitz and Wilhelm Brauneder, and both agree that it provided the intellectual origins for the constitutional legislation that Renner drafted on October 28–29 and presented to the Provisional National

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 245, 102.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 69, 107–8, 118, 150.

<sup>85</sup>*Protokoll der Verhandlungen des Parteitag*, 231. For Renner, freedom for the working class could come not only through the factory workplace and the unions; it had to come also through the democratization of administration and government. The war had made the bureaucratic state even stronger (in an interventionist sense), and yet simultaneously it demonstrated the state’s profound structural and operational inadequacies. Renner was certain that the strong state would endure long after the peace, and it was essential that it be infused with democracy, so as to transform it into a state congenial to all of society.

<sup>86</sup>*Selbstbestimmungsrecht*, 170.

<sup>87</sup>See, especially, *Protokoll der Verhandlungen des Parteitag*, 230–31, and *Selbstbestimmungsrecht*, 168–70, 203, 251–52. Even before the revolution, Renner realized that this way of conceiving of state authority would lead to accusations that he was a strong centralist (ibid., 213). Hans Kelsen later framed this issue in the similar way. See his *Allgemeine Staatslehre* (Berlin, 1925), 184.

<sup>88</sup>Renner to Austerlitz, July 25, 1918, S. D. Parteistellen, Carton 17, VGA.

Assembly on October 30.<sup>89</sup> Although many details were changed, it is clear that Renner's constitutional legislation of October 30 was deeply indebted to his earlier *Entwurf*.<sup>90</sup>

On October 30, the Provisional National Assembly approved Renner's structure for a transitional government via an executive council of the parliament (the Staatsrat) and a series of state secretaryships to replace the old imperial ministries.<sup>91</sup> On paper, the twenty-three-member Staatsrat seemed to be the real "government," as Owerdieck has emphatically argued,<sup>92</sup> but in reality, immense power was also located in the new revolutionary ministries, which explains the eagerness of all three political parties to secure representation. When the time came to fill the various state secretaryships, there was an intense jockeying for position.<sup>93</sup> When the Christian Social Party leadership met on October 29 to debate party strategy, Heinrich Mataja insisted that the three most important positions were Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, and Finance, and demanded that the Christian Socials get at least one. Consensus emerged in the club that the Christian Socials preferred Foreign Affairs, and that they would be willing to leave Internal Affairs to the Social Democrats, and specifically to Karl Renner, who was apparently interested in the job.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>89</sup>See Schmitz, *Renner's Briefe*, 33–49; Brauneder, "Karl Renner's 'Entwurf einer provisorischen Verfassung': ein vorläufiger Bericht," in *Staatsrecht in Theorie und Praxis. Festschrift Robert Walter zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Heinz Mayer (Vienna, 1991), 63–95; and idem, *Deutsch-Österreich 1918. Die Republik entsteht* (Vienna, 2000), 40–41. Renner's protoconstitution provided for a bicameral legislature, with an elected lower house and an advisory and appointed upper house. The central government was to exercise considerable legislative and norm-setting power over the *Länder*. Renner clearly understood the regional governments to be subordinate to the central government, not autonomous entities unto themselves. See Brauneder, "Karl Renner's 'Entwurf einer provisorischen Verfassung,'" 78–80.

<sup>90</sup>Schmitz argues that Renner began work on the *Entwurf* on October 16, Brauneder on October 21–22. See Schmitz, *Renner's Briefe*, 45; and Brauneder, "Karl Renner's 'Entwurf einer provisorischen Verfassung,'" 68, 71. Personally, I find an earlier date more plausible for the reason that Renner was traveling to Berlin on October 23–27, and on the evening of the 23rd he had a conversation with Hans Loewenfeld-Russ on a train to Berlin that clearly referenced his constitutional plans (see *Im Kampf*, 112–13, 116–17). Siegfried Nasko and Johannes Reichl are correct when they surmise that Renner's informal comments to Loewenfeld-Russ were in fact a verbal dress rehearsal for the constitution that Renner would draft on October 28, but the fact that his comments to Loewenfeld-Russ came at the very beginning of their joint journey suggested that Renner had been pondering these issues even before he left for Berlin. See Siegfried Nasko and Johannes Reichl, *Karl Renner. Zwischen Anschluss und Europa* (Vienna, 2000), 35–36.

<sup>91</sup>The Staatsrat was the legal successor to the Vollzugsausschuss, which had been created by the Provisional National Assembly on October 21. See *PNV*, 5; and *Staatsgesetzblatt*, 1918, Nr. 1, section 3.

<sup>92</sup>Owerdieck, *Parteien*, 65–76, esp. 71–72.

<sup>93</sup>In fact, an agreement was reached to divide the thirteen state secretaryships by party lines, which meant two went to Socialists, four to the Christian Socials, and five to the German Nationals, with two ending up occupied by senior civil servants. See *AZ*, Nov. 1, 1918, p. 3. Shortly after the meeting of the Staatsrat opened on October 30, Josef Seliger on behalf of the Social Democrats submitted a formal statement insisting on a number of conditions for their participation in the government. One of them was substantial influence in foreign affairs, internal affairs, and military affairs, with the provision that if the party did not gain control of these portfolios, it insisted on representation on the level of undersecretary, so as to provide for its interests.

<sup>94</sup>"Klubssitzung am 29. Okt. 1918," Christlichsozialer Parlamentsklub, AdR.

The Social Democratic parliamentary club protocols from October 30 confirm this assumption, since they explicitly mention that Renner would be nominated for Internal Affairs, but assumed that their party would, in turn, receive only undersecretary positions in Foreign Affairs and in the War Ministry.<sup>95</sup>

On the evening of October 30, the Staatsrat met and divided up the positions. Although the Staatsrat protocols are not detailed, it is clear that a movement had emerged—perhaps pushed along by several sympathetic liberal nationalists—to nominate Victor Adler for Foreign Affairs. Whether Adler and his party colleagues had at the last moment decided to claim this position on behalf of the Social Democrats, or whether Adler's prestige with the Western Allies made him a sure bet with other key bourgeois politicians—most likely a combination of the two—Foreign Affairs was in fact the first position in the new government that was decided upon, even though the Christian Socialists resisted the outcome.<sup>96</sup>

Among the most crucial ministerial positions, this left Internal Affairs and Finance. Since Finance was a political quicksand, the Christian Socialists and the Social Democrats gladly left it to the German Nationals (Otto Steinwender was selected). Having lost Foreign Affairs to the Social Democrats, the Christian Socialists nominated Heinrich Mataja for Internal Affairs, against whom the Social Democrats nominated Renner. A clash thus occurred, but, after a pause in the negotiations, the Christian Socialists won out and received the Internal Affairs post for Mataja. Renner was then given a new job as director of the Chancellery of the Staatsrat (*Leiter der Kanzlei des Staatsrates*), with the right to create a "legislative department" within the Staatsrat.

To be the "director of the Chancellery," as opposed to "state chancellor," was a considerable weakening of the position that Renner had imagined in his *Entwurf*, but he was only at the beginning of his game. A critical turning point was the decision to allow Renner to chair the first meeting of the Cabinet of State Secretaries on the evening of October 31, a position that he then permanently maintained.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, within a day or two of his initial appointment, an interesting evolution in the language and its referents relating to Renner's position began to emerge in the confidential debates within

<sup>95</sup>"Klub Sitzung, 30. 10. 1918," S.D. Parl. Klub, VGA. The handwritten protocols reported that "Unser Wunsch in der Besetzung. Einfluss im Äusseren, Krieg, Inneres, Soz. Fürsorge. Vorschlag Inneres, Renner. Äusseres Unterstaatssekretär. Krieg Unterstaatssekretär. Soz. Fürsorge (Gewerkschaftskomm. bestimmen)." They then cryptically reported that "Einz. Nationale wünschen Adler f. Äusseres."

<sup>96</sup>Gustav Stolper was apparently among the liberals who sought to have Victor Adler appointed foreign secretary. See Gustav Stolper's diary entry of October 29, 1918, reprinted in Toni Stolper, *Ein Leben in Brennpunkten unserer Zeit*. Wien, Berlin, New York. Gustav Stolper 1888–1947 (Tübingen, 1960), 123–24. The date of the entry is slightly misleading, but the meaning of the passage is clear. Karl Seitz subsequently told Stolper that "Christlichsoziale in gestriger Vollzugs-Ausschusssitzung mit erschreckendem Nachdruck Min. d. Äusseren für sich verlangt hätten." Stolper records having approached German Ambassador Wedel, seeking his support for Adler's nomination, which was apparently given.

<sup>97</sup>See AZ, Nov. 1, 1918, p. 3. By November 5, Loewenfeld-Russ was describing in a letter to his father Renner's chairmanship of the cabinet as a political given, with Renner functioning "als Ministerpräsident." *Im Kampf*, 120. See also Nasko and Reichl, *Karl Renner*, 37–38.

the Staatsrat itself, with Renner quickly being addressed as “state chancellor” and given responsibility for policy development.<sup>98</sup>

This subtle change in Renner’s status happened for three reasons. First, the original design for the new government was awkward in that it provided for a five-person group leadership under the direction of the three parliamentary presidents, Karl Seitz, Johann Hauser, and Franz Dinghofer, as well as Renner in his role of “director” and Julius Sylvester as *Staatsnotar*. A separate clause (Section 15) in the constitutional legislation of October 30 provided that one of the state secretaries would be chosen to chair meetings of his fellow state secretaries, when they met as a cabinet. Both of these arrangements were unwieldy. In a time of enormous confusion and stress like a revolution, it was vital that someone be responsible for speaking on behalf of the regime. From the role of speaking, it was natural for Renner to take on the roles of coordinating and priority-setting as well, and via the constitutional revisions of December 19, 1918 and March 14, 1919, these roles were given formal status as well.<sup>99</sup> Policy coordination was something that the new state secretaries would have quickly come to expect, for once they had “settled into” their new jobs, it was clear that they were functioning as ministers, and they would have needed the coordinating leadership that only a chief minister or minister-president could provide.

Second, Victor Adler’s chronic heart condition—Loewenfeld-Russ reported that Adler had difficulty speaking at meetings of the cabinet—and his sudden death on November 11 meant that there was no other senior Social Democratic leader present in the new government to challenge Renner’s authority. The only other plausible Social Democrat—Otto Bauer—was too young, too partisan, and too ideologically tainted to be accepted in such a role by the bourgeois parties.<sup>100</sup> In contrast to Bauer, Renner’s moderate credentials also

<sup>98</sup>Already on October 31 the minutes of the Staatsrat used the title “Staatskanzler” (as opposed to the clumsy title of “Leiter der Staatskanzlei”) to refer to Renner, but they seemed to do so in the restricted sense of naming someone who was literally running an administrative chancellery. Wilhelm Miklas, for example, moved that Renner—in his role as *Staatskanzler* qua director of the office—should provide the Staatsrat with the appropriate draft of an oath that might be administered to high officials guaranteeing their confidentiality. This restricted understanding of the title soon gave way to Renner’s invoking his office to provide clear-cut policy guidelines and policy suggestions to the Staatsrat. Lothar Höbelt has rightly observed that Renner was a “Staatskanzler ohne rechte Exekutivgewalt,” but what was important was that someone emerged who understood the workings of government, who could assert his authority with plausibility, and who was not overwhelmed by the mass of unfamiliar material. See Höbelt, “Deutschösterreich,” 161, n. 7. Both Loewenfeld-Russ and Spitzmüller both observed in their memoirs that many of the new revolutionary leaders were unfamiliar with government, and were sometimes uncertain about how to deal with the challenges they faced. *Im Kampf*, 120, 124, 133; “... und hat auch Ursach,” 312.

<sup>99</sup>See *Staatsgesetzblatt*, 1918, Nr. 139, and 1919, Nr. 180. This evolution was immediately noted by contemporary jurists. See Hans Nawiasky, “Der Aufbau der Regierungs- und Vollzugsgewalt Deutschösterreichs nach der Gesetzgebung der provisorischen Nationalversammlung,” *Zeitschrift für öffentliches Recht* 1 (1919–20): 38, and Leo Wittmayer, “Zu den Voraussetzungen und Grundproblemen der provisorischen Verfassung von Deutschösterreich,” *ibid.*, 87–88.

<sup>100</sup>Once Adler had been selected for the foreign secretaryship, he immediately chose Otto Bauer to be his deputy (*Vorstand des Präsidialbüros*) on October 31. Bauer then succeeded Victor

served him well, since as a right-wing socialist he was a reasonable approximation of a left-wing “liberal.”<sup>101</sup> Trotsky’s famous characterization of Renner—“the man was as far from revolutionary dialectics as the most conservative Egyptian pharaoh”—was exactly what made him an effective leader in this multiparty coalition.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, in his last public remarks before he died, Victor Adler expressed confidence that “we Germans will give the world an example of how to make and implement revolutions in the smoothest, most classic, and simplest way.”<sup>103</sup> If *that* was the kind of revolution Victor Adler wanted, Karl Renner was the man for the job.

Third, given the urgent need for a spokesman for the new regime, there were few alternatives available, especially during the danger-fraught days of early November. In fact, even though they recognized Renner’s successful power grab, the Christian Social leadership felt itself helpless to do anything about his quick and adept expansion of his authority.<sup>104</sup> It has been suggested that the Christian Social leadership was disoriented and confused during these weeks. This is an inaccurate assessment of the party leadership—the Catholic leaders were experienced political professionals; they had a fine sense of their own milieu and that of their enemies, especially the Social Democrats.<sup>105</sup> Contingency and bad luck put them at a disadvantage, but the Catholic milieu that they represented had grown extremely powerful in the two decades before the war, and its power would soon reemerge in a compelling way.

Since Karl Renner was the author of the transitional constitution, it was natural that he presented it to the Provisional National Assembly on October 30.<sup>106</sup> In his maiden speech as revolutionary leader, Renner justified the

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Adler as foreign minister after November 11. See SR, Oct. 31, 1918 and Nov. 2, 1918; as well as AZ, Nov. 3, 1918, p. 2. It is, of course, part of the remarkable contingencies that marked the events of October 30–31 that Bauer ended up in this position, and thus (after Adler’s death) in a position to push Austrian foreign policy in the direction of the Anschluss in late 1918 and 1919. Had the original plan of the Social Democratic parliamentary club been executed—Renner appointed to Internal Affairs, with the party receiving only undersecretaryships in Foreign Affairs and War—the whole history of the early Austrian Republic might have thus looked quite different.

<sup>101</sup>See Loewenfeld-Russ’s comparison in this regard in *Im Kampf*, 112. Certainly, even among his fellow party compatriots, such as Karl Seitz, there was an uneasiness at Renner’s ambitions, but the only Social Democrat who could have controlled these impulses was Victor Adler. See Siegfried Nasko’s interview with Amalia Strauss-Ferneböck about Seitz’s views, cited in Nasko and Reichl, *Karl Renner*, 39.

<sup>102</sup>Leon Trotsky, *My Life: The Rise and Fall of a Dictator* (London, 1930), 180.

<sup>103</sup>SR, Nov. 9, 1918; as well as Max Ermers, *Victor Adler. Aufstieg und Grösse einer Sozialistischen Partei* (Vienna, 1932), 362–63.

<sup>104</sup>In fact, on November 1, the *Reichspost* rejected the idea of any single individual assuming a permanent leadership position, arguing that “[a]n der Spitze der Regierung steht nicht ein Ministerpräsident, sondern einer der Staatssekretäre, wie die Minister nun heissen, wird vom Staatsrate mit dem Vorsitze in der Regierung betraut; hierüber ist bisher noch nicht entschieden worden.” *Rp*, Nov. 1, 1918 (M), p. 3.

<sup>105</sup>Anton Staudinger has rightly argued that the Christian Social parliamentary club’s leadership was reasonably united and represented the opinions of the party in these days. See his comments in *November 1918*, 271.

<sup>106</sup>Loewenfeld-Russ, *Im Kampf*, 141. Renner was assisted by Stefan Licht in preparing some of the legislation passed in late October and early November.

temporary constitution with arguments anchored in his pre-1918 theoretical positions. The state itself, and in this case the revolutionary central state, had to be re-created, since “overnight we have suddenly become a *Volk* without a *Staat*.”<sup>107</sup> Renner then elaborated a three-part structure consisting of the parliament, the *Staatsrat*, and the executive administration, all functioning on a democratic basis, but also multiparty in nature. Supporting this structure was a robust coalition of three great classes, “*Bürger, Bauer und Arbeiter*,” all of which had agreed to set aside ideological discords for a political armistice in order to “preserve the sinking ship of our common social life.” Among Renner’s favorite images of the civic fabric of the state was that it had arisen of necessity based on these three main classes of society. He was sure that, working together, these classes would “save themselves and save their land.”<sup>108</sup> Rather like a new iteration of Sieyès’s Third Estate, Renner imagined a new civic association with sufficient rationality and will to be able to constitute itself as a democratic nation.

Even though his remarks were filled with cautions about the provisional nature of the government, Renner’s evident purpose was to create rhetorically a common democratic civic authority, beyond class rivalries, but fully capable of modulating conflicting interests. This conception of the state as democratic norm, undistracted by partisanship, fully legitimate, powerful, and coherent, strongly recalled similar arguments about the role of the state in mediating national conflicts he had put forth a year before in his *Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen*. Berthold Unfried has argued that Renner’s preoccupations with democratic administrative reform in the monarchy were a way to rationalize away the irreducibility of national conflict. Renner deployed his ideal of democracy in the same way in November 1918 to rationalize away the gridlock of class or social conflict. Both conceptions were deeply rooted in his (perhaps) overly rationalist view that the highest unifying agency of the state was its democratically elected parliament, and that the latter’s law “grinds down all individual interests into one common social interest.”<sup>109</sup> Renner would capture his own assignment well when, in eulogizing Victor Adler in the ninth meeting of the new Cabinet on November 12, he suggested

[T]he freedom of the people has a conflictual nature. There is a wild, anarchic freedom that recognizes no proper order. Victor Adler was at the same time the master of discipline. It was he who, by his calmness, by his moderation, by his personal self-sacrifice accustomed the masses to fall into line, to submit to the whole. And

<sup>107</sup>PNV, 31–34.

<sup>108</sup>PNV, 32, 66, 69. See also the interview published in the *NFP*, Feb. 28, 1919 (A), p. 3, in which Renner suggested that the workers and peasants would now dominate Austria via their two large parties, thus giving the “*arbeitenden Klassen*” control of the state. The German Nationals, in contrast, were a party in decline, sinking in numbers and representing a fragmented bourgeoisie.

<sup>109</sup>Unfried, “*Arbeiterprotest und Arbeiterbewegung*,” 437, 450; *Selbstbestimmungsrecht*, 271–72, 278. See also Hans Mommsen’s comments on Renner’s rationalism in analyzing the nationality problem in *Arbeiterbewegung und Nationale Frage. Ausgewählte Aufsätze* (Göttingen, 1979), 198–200.

in this he can be a model for all the Cabinets to come. Our duty must be to integrate the freedom of the people with the highest unified order of the state.<sup>110</sup>

The Austrian diplomat Richard Schüller later summed up Renner's contributions best when he observed in his memoirs that "he was an able, warm hearted and broad minded man with a good sense of humor ... a good worker, had constructive ideas, and was an excellent speaker." He added that Renner "steered the Austrian Republic through the first two stormy years and succeeded in maintaining the coalition under difficult circumstances. His moderation made him popular with the bourgeois, but did damage to his authority in his own party."<sup>111</sup> Renner understood the new republic as a vibrant matrix of claims about rights (not unlike his understanding of the empire), and the demonstration of those rights was crucial to its legitimacy. In supporting the creation of the republic on November 12, he insisted that

we proclaim that we are not willing to become victims of any kind of foreign domination; we proclaim that we will not relinquish any part of our people within our organic settlement area. When we resolve these things, we are putting it to the test before the whole world and in total candor, to learn if the words democracy and national self-determination [*Selbstbestimmung*] also apply to us, whether the assurances of those who were until recently our enemies contain the truth or not.<sup>112</sup>

Renner's government was not yet a constitution-writing government. Rather, in the first instance, the new state sought to prove its core identity by defending bundles of rights and prerogatives, especially involving decisions about the form of the nation it wished to constitute.<sup>113</sup> The first year of the republic was a remarkable odyssey to define and understand those rights.

### Territories of Rights: Volksstämme, Länder, and Empires

Would the new state succeed? On November 2, Victor Adler admitted to Count Wedel that the new state was powerless, its army in dissolution and with no capacity to defend itself.<sup>114</sup> Three particular challenges were crucial

<sup>110</sup>"Kabinettsprotokoll Nr. 9 vom 12. November 1918," AdR.

<sup>111</sup>*Unterhändler des Vertrauens*, 252. For a similar appreciation by a German National political leader, see Freissler, *Vom Zerfall*, 82–83.

<sup>112</sup>*PNV*, 66.

<sup>113</sup>If the constitution as a permanent ordering of power relations was the ultimate telos of the revolution, many of the decisions that the multiparty coalition government took between November 1918 and February 1919, and again between March 1919 and July 1920, not only shaped the outcome of the final constitutional deliberations, but they slowly began to make claims about what kind of society Austria aspired to become. A common denominator among many of these issues was the question of civil and political rights. For Austrian invocations of the rights of self-determination under the guise of "Wilsonianism" in November, 1918, see Hanns Haas, "Die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika und die Alliierte Lebensmittelversorgung Österreichs im Winter 1918/19," *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 32 (1979): 240.

<sup>114</sup>A46524, Nov. 2, 1918, Oest. 103/Bd. 9, PAAA. Similarly, Loewenfeld-Russ wrote to his parents on November 11 that the new state was living day to day, and he did not foreclose the possibility that, within a few days, it might too collapse. *Im Kampf*, 123.

to the defense of the new state's identity, and in the spirit of Renner's thoughts on November 12, each of them involved different facets of a new rhetorical code of democratic "rights" that was, in turn, a lonely child in an era of haphazardly applied Wilsonianisms.<sup>115</sup> These three challenges also had an uncanny common feature—all involved thorny political conundrums of the (now abolished) empire.

### *Hostages to the North*

Among the crises that the revolutionary regime faced from day one, one of the most important was the fate of the northern provinces. These provinces were in the industrial heartland of the old empire. Although Rudolf Jaworski has questioned how sustainable their long-term economic future would have been, the Austrian delegation at St. Germain insisted in June 1919 on their intrinsic value to Austria's economic viability.<sup>116</sup> But the normative significance of these territories went beyond economic resources. The links between the Crownlands of Austria and of Bohemia went deep into the history of the monarchy; in the eighteenth century, Maria Theresa would refer to them jointly as "meiner teutschen erblanden." At St. Germain in June 1919, Karl Renner would invoke the common bonds that had existed between Germans living in the Bohemian and Alpine lands since 1526.<sup>117</sup> After 1867 the Germans of Bohemia and Moravia saw themselves, and were recognized by the imperial constitution, as a *Volksstamm* (or an ethnic national collectivity viewed as a social community).<sup>118</sup> In 1918, this older, "corporate" conception of nationhood merged with a newer, Wilsonian conception of democratic national rights. Within this matrix of rights, the new

<sup>115</sup>For the array of illusions among Europeans that Wilson generated, see Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Die europäische Reaktion auf Woodrow Wilsons 'New Diplomacy,'" in *Rivalität und Partnerschaft. Studien zu den deutsch-britischen Beziehungen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gerhard A. Ritter and Peter Wende (Paderborn, 1999), 145–62.

<sup>116</sup>Rudolf Jaworski, *Vorposten oder Minderheit? Der sudetendeutsche Volkstumskampf in den Beziehungen zwischen der Weimarer Republik und der ČSR* (Stuttgart, 1977), 15–22. See also the "Comment of the Austrian Delegation on the June 2 Draft of the Conditions of the Peace with Austria," in *The Treaty of St. Germain: A Documentary History of its Territorial and Political Clauses*, ed. Nina Almond and Ralph Haswell Lutz (Stanford, 1935), 205–9, 448–52. By June and July 1919, Renner was most interested in trying to save the areas of southern Bohemia and southern Moravia that were directly adjacent to Upper and Lower Austria. See *ibid.*, 205–6, 277–78, 282–84, 311–12.

<sup>117</sup>See Maria Theresa to Zinzendorf, Apr. 15, 1761, in Friedrich Walter, ed., *Die österreichische Zentralverwaltung*, vol. 3, bk. 2 (Vienna, 1934), 165; as well as Charles W. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618–1815*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge, 2000), 64; and Grete Klingenstein, "The Meanings of 'Austria' and 'Austrian' in the Eighteenth Century," in *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe. Essays in Memory of Ragnhild Hatton*, ed. Robert Oresko, G. C. Gibbs, and H. M. Scott (Cambridge, 1997), 433, 444, 448, 471. See also Renner's note of June 16, 1919, in Almond and Lutz, eds., *The Treaty of St. Germain*, 276.

<sup>118</sup>See Gerald Stourzh, *Die Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten in der Verfassung und Verwaltung Österreichs 1848–1918* (Vienna, 1985), 53–57, 74–75, 244–46; and *idem*, "Die dualistische Reichsstruktur. Österreichbegriff und Österreichbewusstsein 1867–1918," in *Innere Staatsbildung und gesellschaftliche Modernisierung in Österreich und Deutschland 1867/71 bis 1914*, ed. Helmut Rumpler (Munich, 1991), 65–66.

Austrian state claimed, in geopolitical terms, a group of noncontiguous provinces (northern Bohemia had no direct land connection to the Alpine *Länder*), much like a latter-day patrimonial landlord deploying dynastic ties from the late seventeenth century.

The Bohemian lands were also among the most contested battle grounds of late imperial politics, having determined, perhaps more than any other single issue, the fateful course of German *bürgerlich* politics before 1914. The mirage of Wilsonian democracy seemed to give to the German Bohemian politicians what decades of cabinet-level and parliamentary infighting before 1918 was unable to achieve, namely, a national partition of German-speaking areas of Bohemia.<sup>119</sup> This imperial politicum was dumped into the laps of Karl Renner and Otto Bauer, who became, almost overnight, patrons of a new German *démarche* against the old Bohemian *Staatsrecht*.<sup>120</sup> *Die böhmische Frage* circled the Herrengasse for twenty-four hours, leaving the front door of the empire but quickly returning through the back door of the small, impoverished republic.

Following the Czech assumption of administrative power in Prague on October 28, local German leaders in the Bohemian lands accelerated their own timetable for independence, meeting in Vienna on October 29 and 30 to constitute themselves as a new province of Deutschböhmen and a new province of Sudetenland, each of whom elected new provincial governors.<sup>121</sup> The story of these decisions and their intense passions are inscribed in the history (and historiography) of Czechoslovakia, but they also defined the early history of the Austrian Republic.<sup>122</sup>

Czech political leaders in Prague steadfastly ignored any concessions or negotiations, using their status as a new small nation basking (so they fervently hoped) in the sun of Entente approval to encourage ad hoc military

<sup>119</sup>As Jan Křen has pointed out, the poisonous atmosphere between the two national groups that grew up during the war, as well as the shock with which the empire's demise arrived, pushed any consciousness of having a common history and any possibility of compromise and conciliation into irrelevance. Křen, *Die Konfliktgemeinschaft*, 393.

<sup>120</sup>Helmut Rumpler has shown how, in the last days of the Hussarek Ministry, both Kaiser Karl and Hussarek himself were unwilling to send a clear signal as to how a Wilsonian *Selbstbestimmungsrecht* might be applied in Bohemia—which side would be favored. Rumpler, *Das Völkermanifest Kaiser Karls vom 16. Oktober 1918. Letzter Versuch zur Rettung des Habsburgerreiches* (Vienna, 1966), 58–60. The events of late October 1918 had strong precedents in the last year of the war, since on January 22, 1918, Rafael Pacher, on behalf of the Deutschböhmisches Vereinigung, had proposed the creation of an independent Crownland of Deutsch-Böhmen. See *Stenographische Protokolle des Hauses der Abgeordneten*, 1918, pp. 2805–6; and Helmut Slapnicka, "Die Stellungnahme des Deutschtums der Sudetenländer zum 'Historischen Staatsrecht,'" *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 8 (1959): 34.

<sup>121</sup>See Emil Strauss, *Die Entstehung der Tschechoslowakischen Republik* (Prague, 1934), 291–93. At the same time, Upper Austria and Lower Austria were awarded the additions of (respectively) the Kreis Deutsch-Südböhmen and the Kreis Deutsch-Südmähren. See also Paul Molisch, *Die sudetendeutsche Freiheitsbewegung in den Jahren 1918–1919* (Vienna, 1932), 18–21; PNV, 15–17, 92ff.; NFP, Oct. 30, 1918 (M), pp. 4–5.

<sup>122</sup>For the general context, see F. Gregory Campbell, *Confrontation in Central Europe: Weimar Germany and Czechoslovakia* (Chicago, 1975), 47–74; and Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, 287–94. For the events as they played out in one Bohemian town, see Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848–1948* (Princeton, 2002), 153–61.

units to occupy the German-speaking territories, sometimes using force. German diplomatic reports from Prague charted a crescendo of Czech paramilitary forces moving from one city to another, finally occupying Reichenberg in mid December and forcing the German-Bohemian provisional government across the Saxon border.<sup>123</sup> German resistance against the Czech incursions proved, with a few exceptions, rudimentary and ineffective, the Austrian government having no army to assist them and the Reich Germans having no inclination to intervene.<sup>124</sup> In effect, effective armed resistance was impossible.<sup>125</sup>

Conditions in the northern provinces were chaotic, filled with demoralized and fearful people, some of whom were clearly anxious to come to terms with the emergent Czech state. None of the areas that declared their allegiance to the new Austrian state had defensible boundaries; and all of them found it difficult to implement meaningful local government.<sup>126</sup> In Vienna, the new government found itself in a perplexing situation, not in the least because its moral charter compelled it to focus on national rights, whereas its most practical responsibility was to sustain the new nation's economic welfare.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>123</sup>See, for example, the reports in Manfred Alexander, ed., *Deutsche Gesandtschaftsberichte aus Prag. Innenpolitik und Minderheitenprobleme in der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik. Teil 1. Von der Staatsgründung bis zum ersten Kabinett Beneš, 1918–1921* (Munich, 1983), 72–74, 106–8, 110–13, 115–20.

<sup>124</sup>Local German-Austrian officials who tried to maintain a semblance of credibility found themselves presiding over administrative sand castles. And, as Hieronymus Oldofredi experienced in Nikolsburg in southern Moravia, such local German "defense" forces as did exist could prove problematic, given their lack of discipline: "Von Arbeit, von Dienst wollten die Leute, die ihr [the local Volkswehr] angehörten, nichts wissen; selbst anschaffen, kommandieren, diktieren, diktieren auch der zivilen Verwaltung, das allein war nach ihrem Geschmack. Es bedurfte aller Gewandtheit, aller Festigkeit des Leiters des Nikolsburger Amtes und seines militärischen Beraters, sich der täglichen Übergriffe dieser Leute zu erwehren." *Zwischen Krieg und Frieden. Erinnerungen von Hieronymus Oldofredi* (Zurich, n.d.), 53. For a graphic description of the disorganization of the local German forces in the Sudetenland, see Ferdinand Zeller, "Die Provinz Sudetenland. Der Umsturz in Nordmähren und Westschlesien 1918" (Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1971), 105–22.

<sup>125</sup>See Deutsch, *Aus Österreichs Revolution*, 68–69; Jedlicka, *Ein Heer*, 33–34; Strauss, *Die Entstehung*, 302–3.

<sup>126</sup>Molisch, *Freiheitsbewegung*, 36; Freissler, *Vom Zerfall*, 118–32, 141–42. What local administration that could be jerryrigged was further compromised by political feuds among local leaders, including the local Social Democrats. See Hanns Haas, "Die deutschböhmisches Frage 1918–1919 und das österreichisch-tschechoslowakische Verhältnis. Teil I," *Bohemia* 13 (1972): 354–60. As the Czechs moved forward, local Germans became even more demoralized and intragroup rivalries emerged. Some leaders remained in situ, quietly trying to agitate for their cause and to stay out of the scrutiny of the Czechs, while others fled to Vienna. Josef Mayer, a German National Agrarian and member of the Staatsrat, argued in the *Prager Tagblatt* that the industrialists tended to be prointegration, the lower middle classes and the workers anti-Czech, and the peasants "completely indifferent." "Eine Unterredung mit Staatssekretär Mayer," *Prager Tagblatt*, Mar. 7, 1919, p. 2. Victor Adler told the Saxon legate in Vienna, Erich Benndorf, on November 8 that he was certain that the majority of the local German population did not want to join the Czech state, but to the extent that some *Mittelstand* types did want to join, Adler thought it reflected the terrible food crisis. See "Der Zerfall," 200.

<sup>127</sup>The two issues often collided. For example, when Hans Loewenfeld-Russ reported to the Staatsrat on November 8 on the chronic lack of sugar in Austria, he noted that the Czechs' willingness to provide sugar deliveries to Austria hinged on whether Austrians would acknowledge the

On November 26, the German-Bohemian regional governor, Rudolf Lodgman von Auen, appeared before the Staatsrat, reporting that Czechs were overwhelming his forces:

Affairs in German Bohemia have devolved to the point where orderly administration is almost impossible, and in a short time it will definitely no longer exist. The laws passed by the National Assembly, the instructions issued by the Staatsrat, the orders issued by the regional government [*Landesregierung*] or its subordinate offices are practically speaking without any effect.

Lodgman wanted armed assistance:

[W]e must as quickly as possible create an appropriate organization [for defense], whether it involves gendarmerie, or army troops, or militia, and the provincial government must receive both total authority and the necessary financial support to organize this defense. It is completely irresponsible to expect that we administer our affairs at a time when the *Land* is in enemy hands.

In response, Otto Bauer was reasoned, but coldly realpolitical. Bauer argued that Austria could be expected to channel arms to the German Bohemians, and was trying to do so. But defense had to be locally organized and locally recruited. Austria itself had no troops to send, nor was it advisable to do so. Bauer was especially critical of the idea of Entente forces being invited to occupy Bohemia or Austria, which would be the equivalent of “committing suicide because of fear of death.” Bauer was willing to offer political assistance, but he made clear that it was neither in Austria’s interests nor within the realm of feasibility to declare war on the Czechs.<sup>128</sup>

Finally, matters came to a head on December 11 when Lodgman demanded that the Staatsrat authorize telegrams to the Supreme War Council in Paris and to President Woodrow Wilson protesting the Czech occupation and requesting the intervention of U.S., British, French, or Italian troops to prevent Czech troops from overrunning his province. In the face of Otto Bauer’s strong opposition, the council deadlocked eight to eight, and at its next session, Lodgman’s request was rejected.<sup>129</sup>

The year 1918 ended with Bauer’s office producing on behalf of the government a detailed summary of Austria’s international position, which included a trenchant defense of the northern lands.<sup>130</sup> Yet, when Karel Kramář

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right of authorities in Prague to coordinate all distribution activities, including factories that were located in German-Bohemian territory. SR, Nov. 8, 1918.

<sup>128</sup> SR, Nov. 26, 1918. Bauer comes off rather well in these exchanges—hard-nosed, pragmatic, ruthless—but also acutely conscious of the broader political landscape—a slightly different Bauer from the received literature about him in the later 1920s.

<sup>129</sup> SR, Dec. 11, and Dec. 13, 1918. As early as November 15, Wedel reported to Berlin that “Es scheint ferner auch zweifelhaft, ob der deutschösterreichische Staat den deutschen Teil Böhmens für sich wird retten können.” A49755, Nov. 15, 1918, Oest. 103/Bd. 10, PAAA. Molisch confirms that many German industrialists supported coming to terms with the Czech state. *Freiheitsbewegung*, 35–36, 60.

<sup>130</sup> “Denkschrift,” Dec. 25, 1918, in *Aussenpolitische Dokumente der Republik Österreich 1918–1938* (ADÖ), ed. Klaus Koch, Walter Rauscher, and Arnold Suppan, vol. 1 (Vienna, 1993), 316–28; and Wedel’s report in A335, Dec. 25, 1918, Oest. 103/Bd. 10, PAAA.

met with the unofficial Austrian representative in Prague, Ferdinand Marek, in early January 1919, he boastfully predicted that the Entente would do nothing to defend the German Bohemians, leaving them to their fate as part of the new Czech state, and that the Anschluss between Germany and Austria was also dead-on-arrival. Kramář was right on both counts long before France secured the formal prohibition of the Anschluss from the other Allies on April 24, 1919.<sup>131</sup> Formally, and officially, the policy of the Austrian government did not alter, and down to the last stages of the peace negotiations Austrian leaders faithfully tried to reverse Kramář's diktat. But behind the scenes, sentiments radically shifted. In late January 1919, Bauer instructed the Austrian representative in The Hague, Wilhelm Medinger, that saving German Bohemia remained a cardinal desideratum of Austrian government policy.<sup>132</sup> Four months later, his views had changed substantially, with Bauer informing Renner in late May that, in his judgment, the Bohemian Germans were likely to end up stuck in the Czech state.<sup>133</sup>

The final collapse of the triadic revolutionary regime in Vienna came in the aftermath of the elections for the Constituent Assembly in mid February 1919. Section 40 of the new Austrian election code adopted by the National Assembly on December 18, 1918 provided for emergency appointments for seats in the occupied territories.<sup>134</sup> Yet, when the Staatsrat took up the issue of the *Notwahlen* on February 20, 1919, the Social Democratic representatives led by Renner now announced that their party would oppose such instruments, arguing that such appointments would discredit the new Constituent Assembly and that not making them would be an even

<sup>131</sup>ADÖ, 1:371–74; and Alfred D. Low, *The Anschluss Movement 1918–1919 and the Paris Peace Conference* (Philadelphia, 1974), 324–26. See also Hanns Haas, "Österreich und die Alliierten, 1918–1919," in *Saint-Germain 1919. Protokoll des Symposiums am 29. und 30. Mai 1979 in Wien*, ed. Ackerl and Neck (Munich, 1989), 29. For the confidential views of the Czech cabinet in early January 1919, see Hans Lemberg, "Die Tschechoslowakei im Jahr 1. Der Staatsaufbau, die Liquidierung der Revolution und die Alternativen 1919," in *Das Jahr 1919*, 228–30.

<sup>132</sup>"Daher müssten wir, den Grundsätze Wilsons entsprechend, auf dem vollen Selbstbestimmungsrecht für Deutschböhmen beharren." Bauer to Medinger, Jan. 25, 1919, NPA Präs., Carton 233. To Berta Zuckerkandl in late December he was similarly determined: "Ohne Deutschböhmen muss Deutschösterreich ungefähr ein Drittel seines Brotgetreidebedarfes, mehr als die Hälfte seines Bedarfs an Futtergetreide und beinahe den ganzen Bedarf an Kohle, Fett und Zucker aus dem Ausland decken. Womit soll es das bezahlen, wenn man ihm mit Deutschböhmen alle seine Exportindustrien nimmt?" Bauer to Zuckerkandl, Dec. 27, 1918, *ibid.*

<sup>133</sup>"Wir werden in St. Germain natürlich für Selbstbestimmungsrecht Deutschböhmens kämpfen, haben aber wenig Hoffnung auf Gelingen." Bauer to Renner, May 24, 1919, *ibid.* This comment was made in the context of a conversation that Bauer had with Vlastimil Tusar, but no doubt represented Bauer's own views as well. Ironically, as early as March 1919, Rudolf Lodgman had informed the members of the Grossdeutsche Volkspartei that, in his personal view, it was now impossible to conceive of the northern lands as ending up with Austria ("weil dagegen geographische und administrative Gründe sprechen"). Among the options remaining for the Bohemian Germans, the most attractive possibility remained their joining the German Reich as a separate federal state. See "5. Verhandlungsschrift über die Sitzung der Grossdeutschen Vereinigung vom 5. März 1919," in *Grossdeutsche Volkspartei*, Carton 1, AdR.

<sup>134</sup>Eighty-five unfiled seats in Bohemia and Moravia were involved. See A6452, Feb. 26, 1919, Oest. 103/Bd. 11.

stronger protest to the Entente. Subsequent debates on February 26 led to no compromise.<sup>135</sup>

Hostile commentators assumed that the Social Democrats' veto was motivated by their failure to receive a large enough share of the proposed seats, but in fact the Christian Socials were no more enthusiastic. At the time, German Nationals such as Josef Mayer, Rudolf Heine, and Philipp Langenhan interpreted the Social Democrats' decision as signifying a deliberate rupture of Austria from German Bohemia.<sup>136</sup> Still, the decision to veto the emergency appointments remains a great puzzle, since it was a clear abridgment of the code of rights articulated by Renner on November 12. Moreover, several of the *bürgerlich* members of the Staatsrat noted that the situation in Bohemia and Moravia was already deplorable on December 18, when the provision for the *Notwahlen* was approved by the National Assembly. They thus found it difficult to accept the Socialists' argument that, seven weeks later, their party had now suddenly decided that such appointments were constitutionally suspect.

Another explanation involves the possibility of a realpolitical calculation by the Social Democrats about whether they wished to reauthorize a second large *bürgerlich* block in the new parliament that would actually write the constitution.<sup>137</sup> Whatever the motives, writing off the Bohemian lands had

<sup>135</sup> SR, Feb. 20, and Feb. 26, 1919. Another explanation given by the party was that the German-Bohemian delegation had recommended that the emergency appointments not be made for two reasons: out of respect for the electoral process; and because the appointments would be unfair to the Social Democrats, since the formulas for distributing the appointments would be based on the ratios that existed in the 1911 national elections. See Josef Seliger's statement, presented to the parliamentary club, as Beilage 3 of the "Protokoll der Verbandsitzung vom 19. II. 1919," VGA. Seliger's statement was plausible, but the larger question as to why the central party leadership deferred to it is still unanswered. For the political background, see Klaus Zessner, *Josef Seliger und die nationale Frage in Böhmen. Eine Untersuchung über die nationale Politik der deutschböhmisches Sozialdemokratie 1898-1920* (Stuttgart, 1976), 126-31.

<sup>136</sup>Mölich, *Freiheitsbewegung*, 158. Later scholars have taken more balanced views. Lothar Höbelt has suggested that Social Democrats were motivated by a genuine fear of the lack of credibility that such new appointees would suffer, and they also doubted if such a step would actually enhance legitimacy of Austria's claim to Sudetenland. Hanns Haas too believes the Social Democrats acted (at least in part) from conviction. Höbelt, "Deutschösterreich," 165; Haas, "Die deutschböhmisches Frage," 370-72.

<sup>137</sup>This was Botho Wedel's view, who reported to Berlin that Social Democrats did not want to make emergency appointments from Bohemia because they wanted to minimize the influence of the German Radicals in Austrian parliamentary life. Wedel argued that they especially wanted to eliminate Karl H. Wolf. See A6363, Feb. 24, 1919 and A6452, Feb. 26, 1919, Oest. 103/Bd. 10, PAAA. Such an explanation might also make sense in light of the failure of the German Nationals, especially those from German Bohemia, to support the Social Democrats in a key vote in the National Assembly a month earlier on marriage law reform. A proposal to authorize some circumstances under which Catholics could divorce and remarry collapsed when a large number of Nationalists failed to turn up for the vote, leaving the Social Democrats embittered and the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* speculating that any *bürgerlich* appointees from Bohemia and Moravia would likely be hacks with no connections to the people. See AZ, Jan. 25, pp. 1-2; Feb. 19, 1919, p. 4; Rp, Jan. 25, 1919 (M), pp. 1-2; and PNV, Beilage Nr. 145. If this legislation had passed, would the Social Democrats have been so casual in jettisoning the German Nationals a month later? Certainly, the Social Democrats had long memories about this incident, for as late as December 1920, they were still complaining about it. See the comments of Ernst Hampel in the "Verhandlungsschrift. 11. Sitzung des Verbandes der Abgeordneten der Grossdeutschen

huge implications for the fate of the revolution. To deny the right of representation to the Germans of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia was to prejudice the actions of the Allies at the peace conference and, de facto if not de jure, to concede that they would be subject to the kind of domination that their Czech compatriots experienced before 1917. For the new Austria, however, the result was a clear division of the new polity into a dyarchy of two big rival camps, which were based in the Alpine *Länder* and in Vienna.<sup>138</sup> This bipolarity was not foreordained in late October 1918, but after the first meeting of the new Constituent Assembly on March 4, 1919, the long-term triadic structure of Austro-German politics that had emerged in the early 1890s was over.

### *The Alpine Crownlands and the Revolution*

If the northern provinces felt themselves hostages, against their will and in violation of their democratic rights, the Alpine Lands to the west felt themselves victims of a different sort. Gerald Stourzh has cogently argued that in the last decades of the monarchy the struggle over ethnic-national rights in the context of the rival *Volksstämme* overshadowed the Crownlands and even the crown as objects of constitutional activity.<sup>139</sup> Still, the Crownlands remained administrative units with strong traditions of autonomy, and most important for the new state, they were key sources of food for Vienna. As the heartland of Christian Social politics, they increasingly viewed themselves as held hostage by an alien, unsympathetic government in Vienna that had the potential to violate their prerogatives and rights of self-determination.<sup>140</sup>

Much debate has occurred in the scholarly literature about the role of the *Länder* in the revolution, and whether they actively cofounded the republic. Legal and political issues collide in these questions, and different historians can look at the same evidence and come up with different conclusions.

Concurrent with the revolutionary events in Vienna, voices asserted themselves on behalf of the provinces. On October 22, the representatives of the German-speaking Crownlands met in Vienna and issued a declaration that was read in the National Assembly on October 30 that said

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Volkspartei am 14. Dezember 1920," Grossdeutsche Volkspartei, Carton 1, AdR. For the background to this dispute, see Ulrike Harmat, *Ehe auf Widerruf? Der Konflikt um das Eherecht in Österreich 1918–1938* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), 73–90.

<sup>138</sup>Fittingly, as if to symbolize the new east-west, Alpine-Vienna dyarchy, the Social Democrats and Christian Socials agreed to nominate 8 replacement deputies from German South Tirol and 3 from Lower Styria, in addition to the 159 who were regularly elected on February 16, 1919, but they refused to go along with appeals from the Nationalists to include at least some token deputies from the areas of southern Bohemia and southern Moravia that directly adjoined Austria. See Leopold Waber's proposal in "9. Verhandlungsschrift der Sitzung der Grossdeutschen Vereinigung am 27. 3. 1919," and the outcome in "12. Verhandlungsschrift der Sitzung der Grossdeutschen Vereinigung am 4. April 1919," Grossdeutsche Volkspartei, Carton 1.

<sup>139</sup>Stourzh, "Die dualistische Reichsstruktur," 66.

<sup>140</sup>Walter Goldinger has rightly called attention to the invocation of the right of self-determination on the part of the *Länder* in several key constitutional drafts generated in 1919 and 1920. See his "Das Werden der österreichischen Bundesverfassung aus der Sicht des Historikers," in *60 Jahre Bundesverfassung*, ed. Heinz Schäffer (Salzburg, 1980), 31.

[G]uaranteeing the continued existence of the autonomous regional administrations, institutions that are anchored and deeply rooted in the population of the *Länder*, is all the more necessary, as we have to face the possibility of the disintegration of the central administrative apparatus. Provided the development of a democratic restructuring of these institutions, they believe themselves justified in cooperating not only in the liquidation of the previous regime but also in the new construction of the new state system.<sup>141</sup>

The days and weeks that followed saw a flurry of meetings in the Crownlands, in most cases under the leadership of traditional prewar political elites.<sup>142</sup> The revolutionaries in Vienna quickly realized that they needed to gain traction with local power elites of the Crownlands. On October 29, Karl Renner persuaded the Vollzugausschuss to issue a communication to the Crownlands, inviting them to assent to joining the new state.<sup>143</sup> The so-called *Beitrittserklärungen* that the majority of the *Länder* produced were formally received by the National Assembly on November 12.<sup>144</sup> They have been the subject of very considerable scholarly debate.<sup>145</sup>

Some scholars have insisted that the *Länder* in the first weeks of the revolution did not view themselves as rival “states” but merely as dignified units of self-administration that essentially undertook a common revolution with the forces in Vienna; other scholars have seen them as manifesting the traditional, pre-1914 pretensions of the Crownlands, now magnified by the collapse of

<sup>141</sup>*Rp*, Oct. 23, 1918 (M), p. 2; *AZ*, Oct. 23, 1918, p. 3; *PNV*, 17–18. The origins of this meeting are uncertain, but Christian Socials clearly played a major role in orchestrating it, since Prince Alois Liechtenstein was the host.

<sup>142</sup>On October 25, the Vollzugausschuss approved a decree submitted by Karl Seitz at the suggestion of Stefan Licht and Julius Ofner regulating the convocation of provisional regional assemblies in which all the major parties would be represented on a democratic basis. This decree was generated before the constitutional laws of October 30 were even adopted. The reason for this decree was the fear that the new government might face competing claims as to who would represent the *Länder* and how such representation should be organized. See *SR*, Oct. 25, 1918; Georg Schmitz, *Die Vorentwürfe Hans Kelsens für die österreichische Bundesverfassung* (Vienna, 1981), 18.

<sup>143</sup>Schmitz, *Vorentwürfe*, 19; idem, *Renner's Briefe*, 18; Gottfried Köfner, “Eine oder wieviele Revolutionen? Das Verhältnis zwischen Staat und Ländern in Deutschösterreich im Oktober und November 1918,” *Jahrbuch für Zeitgeschichte* 2 (1979): 137. Renner’s strategy for encouraging these declarations related back to his understanding of self-administration, as developed in his previous work. For Renner, the power of the state could and had to be devolved to subordinate, self-representative institutions, controlled by the people. But in so doing the stateliness of the law did not diminish, and the ultimate uniformity of the law had to be sustained. Renner thus sanctioned structural subordination, but only coupled with policy coordination and legal homogeneity. To invite the *Länder* to accept the state by recognizing the Nationalversammlung “als derzeitige oberste staatliche Gewalt” (as the declaration of Styria of November 6, 1918 put it) was a first tentative step to remedy the structural feudalism that Renner had so strongly condemned as late as 1917.

<sup>144</sup>*PNV*, 77–80. Lower Austria and Tirol never officially responded, whereas Upper Austria responded only after the fact. The texts of the *Länder* responses are reprinted in Hans Kelsen, ed., *Die Verfassungsgesetze der Republik Deutschösterreich*, 5 vols. (Vienna, 1919–22), 3:181–232.

<sup>145</sup>See Berchtold, *Verfassungsgeschichte*, 40–41; Schmitz, *Vorentwürfe*, 18–23; Brauner, *Deutsch-Österreich 1918*, 98–106; Köfner, “Eine oder wieviele Revolutionen?” 137–42; Owerdieck, *Parteien*, 91–96.

the monarchy, which led the *Länder* to view themselves as having an autonomous existence apart from the state.<sup>146</sup> Still other scholars have seen the *Beitrittserklärungen* as a means by which the *Länder* cocreated the state, and this interpretation ironically matches well the conviction of many regionalist leaders in later November and December 1918, who argued that power had devolved back to the historic Crownlands.<sup>147</sup>

Renner's principal adviser on the writing of the Constitution of 1920, Hans Kelsen, was later dismayed over the fact that these centralist and extreme federalist principles collided in late 1918, but this reality was predictable.<sup>148</sup> Grete Klingenstein has recently reminded us of the deep power of regional particularism in the eighteenth century, which Josephism masked but hardly uprooted, and we should not underestimate its continued and growing vitality throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>149</sup> Indeed, Gerald Stourzh has observed that the *Länder* "have preserved their identity ... in the most remarkable way: in the transition from corporate to absolutist, then to constitutional, and finally to democratic institutions."<sup>150</sup> The Crownlands developed as sites of identity, memory, and mass political activity that was, in turn, crucial to late imperial politics. Although it was fashionable in government circles to critique the growing force of communal and regional autonomy—witness Ernest von Koerber's *Studien über die Reform der inneren Verwaltung* in 1904—the logic of Habsburg administration was predicated on them.

During the war, moreover, the Crownlands found themselves buffeted by the left, the center, and the right. The juridical and political interventions and the heavy food and other logistical controls imposed by the army and the domestic war regime left behind four years of terrible memories among regional leaders. Fashionable, antiautonomist rhetoric was also taken up by a variety of antiregional political forces, from renegade German Nationals to Social Democratic theorists.<sup>151</sup> One of Renner's key ideas in 1917 was to create *Kreise, Landschaften* (modeled on the Prussian *Regierungsbezirke*), and

<sup>146</sup>For the latter, see Kelsen, "Die Verfassung," 258–61. For the former view, see Gottfried Köfner, *Hunger, Not und Korruption. Der Übergang Österreichs von der Monarchie zur Republik am Beispiel Salzburgs* (Salzburg, 1980), 158–65; and idem, "Eine oder wieviele Revolutionen?" 131–66. Köfner offers a shrewd critique of the ahistorical views of a number of past and present constitutional historians, but his revisionist arguments fail to keep Renner's strong hostility against the Crownlands in mind when interpreting Renner's rhetoric and actions in late October 1918. This creates, in turn, a different kind of ahistoricism.

<sup>147</sup>For a clear contemporary statement of the pro-*Länder* position, see Ahrer, *Erlebte Zeitgeschichte*, 34–36. For the theoretical debate, see Kelsen, "Die Verfassung," 257–59; Köfner "Eine oder wieviele Revolutionen?" 131–34; Peter Pernthaler, *Die Staatsgründungsakte der österreichischen Bundesländer. Eine staatsrechtliche Untersuchung über die Entstehung des Bundesstaates* (Vienna, 1979), 25–27; and Theo Öhlinger, "Die Entstehung des Bundesstaates und ihre juristische Bedeutung," in *60 Jahre Bundesverfassung*, 41–45.

<sup>148</sup>He called this collision "ein Geburtsfehler, dessen verhängnisvolle Wirkungen die Existenz dieses Gemeinwesens ständig bedrohen." Kelsen, "Die Verfassung," 260.

<sup>149</sup>Klingenstein, "The Meanings of 'Austria,'" 435–36, 439.

<sup>150</sup>Gerald Stourzh, "Der Umfang der österreichischen Geschichte," in *Probleme der Geschichte Österreichs und ihrer Darstellung*, ed. Herwig Wolfram and Walter Pohl (Vienna, 1991), 4.

<sup>151</sup>See, in general, John W. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897–1918* (Chicago, 1995), chapter 7.

*Gubernien* as administrative units to replace the functionality of the Crownlands.<sup>152</sup> Christian Social leaders were bound to view such proposals as potential threats to *Land*-level authority; that regional leaders suddenly forgot in the last week of October 1918 about the abuses they had endured from the war regime and about the attempts to curb their traditional prerogatives is hard to credit.<sup>153</sup>

Renner himself was not a federalist, and his attempt to co-opt the *Länder* can only be understood in terms of his wanting to strengthen the general administration, while also grounding it in strong democratic practices. Hence, it is not surprising that Renner's proposal to appoint special "government commissars" from Vienna to supervise the work of the provisional *Länder* assemblies and regional governments encountered stiff opposition from Christian Social leaders in the *Länder*.<sup>154</sup> Christian Social complaints about Karl Renner's and Karl Seitz's ability to take over the Staatsrat as a veritable Social Democratic show were proxies for other kinds of structural worries as well.<sup>155</sup>

Finally, the resistance of the Crownlands was also fueled by the desperate food shortages in Vienna, and the need of the new government to continue the provisioning and distribution controls of the discredited war regime in rural areas. In his memoirs Hans Loewenfeld-Russ describes the fierce opposition that the various *Länder* put up against his ministry's attempts to secure food for Vienna from its very first days.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>152</sup>See *Selbstbestimmungsrecht*, 188–213, 228–32, 245–48, 254–62.

<sup>153</sup>See Hermann Bielowlawek's comments in Z. 20687, Oct. 5, 1917, MI Präs., Carton 1646. Czech leaders reacted in the same way. Molisch, *Freiheitsbewegung*, 15–16. Tellingly, Heinrich Lammasch's draft for a major constitutional reform of the monarchy in September 1918 went so far as to create four large kingdoms that would completely suppress the original Crownlands. See Stephan Verosta, "Heinrich Lammasch' Verfassungsentwurf für das Kaisertum Österreich vom September 1918," in *Politik und Gesellschaft im Alten und Neuen Österreich*, 1:365–77, esp. 372.

<sup>154</sup>That tensions were in play from the earliest days of the revolution is likely from the controversy surrounding the Law on the Assumption of State Authority in the *Länder*, which the National Assembly adopted on November 14 (*Staatsgesetzblatt*, 1918, Nr. 24). This legislation ended the dual-track administrative structure that existed under the empire. In section 10 of Renner's original draft for this legislation, which has survived in his *Nachlass*, he inserted a provision whereby "governmental commissars" representing the central government would supervise and participate in the work of *Land*-level administrative authorities. See "Übernahme der Staatsgewalt in den Ländern," *NL Renner*, E/1731: 298, AdR. It is likely that the Christian Socials opposed this idea, since the final version passed on November 14 eliminated it entirely. The draft also contained other semidisciplinary provisions, including the requirement that all *Land*-level legislation was to be submitted to the Staatsrat for approval before being implemented. This too was also dropped in the final version. See Schmitz, *Vorentwürfe*, 23–24, as well as Seipel's comments to Lammasch in his letter of November 9 in Stephan Verosta, "Ignaz Seipels Weg von der Monarchie zur Republik (1917–1919)," in *Die österreichische Verfassung von 1918 bis 1938. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 19. Oktober 1977*, ed. Neck and Wandruszka (Munich, 1980), 23.

<sup>155</sup>See the discussions at the "Klub Sitzung am 8. Nov. 1918," Christlichsozialer Parlamentsklub, where Athanas von Guggenberg argued "Staatsrat[,] Eindruck, dass nur Sozi zu reden haben. Immer der Seitz, der hervortritt, hat ausschliesslich die Leitung. Wenn sonst noch jemand zu tun hat, ist es der Renner. Das nach aussen ein peinlicher Eindruck." Jodok Fink urged that "Unsere Herren sollen sich im Staatsrat rühren!"

<sup>156</sup>Loewenfeld-Russ finally went public with a denunciation of these practices in the Staatsrat in January 1919. *Im Kampf*, 168–78. Gottfried Köfner argues that disputes over food were one of

In the face of such political realities, Renner knew that serious compromises would have to be made to secure agreement on a permanent constitution.<sup>157</sup> At the same time, his patience for *Länder* pretensions came to a brutal halt when he felt their self-interests were compromising the state. Renner's private diatribe to Bauer in late May 1919, denouncing the *Ländervertreter* in the St. Germain delegation for their lack of any "state or national feeling" and for their "most childish illusions," was consonant with his wider view of the world.<sup>158</sup> Renner's comments suggested, moreover, that the fate of the Crownlands reflected larger tensions between the political parties. Botho Wedel cut to the heart of the problem when he noted in late November 1918 that what had begun as resistance against Vienna and centralism was quickly eliding into opposition against the Social Democrats.<sup>159</sup> But, in fact, more was at stake than even this great issue, for the revolution gave impetus to renewed notions of particularism, localism, and regional liberties, always latent forces in Austrian history, that were a profound challenge to Kelsen's and Renner's visions of democratic liberty, all the more so because such local liberties could now also invoke the rights of mass democracy to justify and to defend their interests.

Hans Kelsen captured this perspective well when he observed in 1919 that democratically constituted regional governments might well feel little inclination to accept the orders of the central state.<sup>160</sup> The *Länder* of 1918 were not the same as those constituted in 1861; to democratize them was not only to transform them into the proper revolutionary bodies, but it was to strengthen the older, separatist notions of regional autonomy and authority that could now be defended even more effectively by invocations of new codes of democratic rights. In fact, the matrix of democratic rights made the fronde of the *Länder* potentially far more powerful than that of their eighteenth-century predecessors who had opposed Joseph II.<sup>161</sup>

### *The Anschluss Question*

Finally, in the midst of these other conflicts over rights, a powerful movement quickly emerged, claiming the democratic right of Austria to join the new German Republic. Having left an empire that could not protect their national rights, German Austrians were urged to join another empire that could and would do so.

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the primary reasons the *Länder* turned against Vienna in late November. See *Hunger, Not und Korruption*, 165ff., and "Eine oder wieviele Revolutionen?" 153–56.

<sup>157</sup>On this point, see the fascinating conversation between Loewenfeld-Russ and Renner in April 1920, in *Im Kampf*, 302.

<sup>158</sup>Renner to Bauer, May 26, 1919, NPA Präs., Carton 233.

<sup>159</sup>A49869, Nov. 22, 1918, Oest. 103/Bd. 10, PAAA.

<sup>160</sup>See Hans Kelsen, "Die Stellung der Länder in der künftigen Verfassung Deutschösterreichs," in Felix Ermacora, *Die Entstehung der Bundesverfassung 1920. Dokumente der Staatskanzlei über allgemeine Fragen der Verfassungsreform* (Vienna, 1989), 13.

<sup>161</sup>The extent to which the Social Democrats were deeply frustrated by the centrifugal pressures generated by the *Länder* was evident in the several conferences that the party organized to bring regional Social Democrats together with their Viennese brethren. In July 1919, Matthias

Discussion of the Anschluss emerged within various constituencies, beginning with Social Democratic leaders, for whom the Anschluss was a panacea that would lead Austria into a large, democratic, and socialist utopia. If any single concept may be said to have dominated Austrian foreign policy in the first eight months of the republic, it was the Anschluss. Invoking Ernst Troeltsch's famous quip, Franz Klein has called the period between the armistice and the peace conference in Germany a "dreamland," in the sense that it was filled with a host of "political and social illusions."<sup>162</sup> The most urgent illusion cherished in Vienna was the puzzling search for an Anschluss, puzzling in the sense that the self-stated goal of the new government was to be a legitimate state, defending its own rights, yet the arguments used to justify the Anschluss undercut the very logic of this assignment.

It would be a mistake to minimize the conviction of leading Social Democrats that the small, poor state was an impossible entity, and that the Anschluss was the only plausible option. Still, for all their elevated rhetoric, the situation on the ground, among popular opinion, was remarkably diverse and inconsistent, pendulating from week to week and month to month.<sup>163</sup> Hans Loewenfeld-Russ observed that in the early days most people in Vienna were not really attentive to the Anschluss idea; it was pushed by the professional politicians because of the desperate food problems and feelings of abandonment, but in a way that many people found surprising.<sup>164</sup> Russ's evaluation was confirmed by the indecision within the top Socialist leadership. At a key session of the Socialist executive on October 11, 1918, Otto Bauer tried to commit the party to an official Anschluss strategy, but most of the other leaders resisted. Seitz thought it "premature" and Karl Renner responded that "wide circles in the party would scarcely understand such a binding decision." Bauer backed down, but reserved the right to make the case for his position through newspaper articles, which he proceeded to do with a series of essays in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* beginning on October 16. By October 24, he would write to the still imprisoned Friedrich Adler, noting

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Eldersch spoke for many of his Viennese colleagues when he complained that "der Kampf um die Existenz der Länder ein Kampf gegen die Arbeiterklasse im einzelnen Lande sei.... Die Genossen in den Provinzen, die auch nur durch Passivität diese Bestrebungen unterstützen, helfen mit zur Zertrümmerung der Partei." "Protokoll der ersten Konferenz sozialdemokratischer Landeshauptleute vom 19. Juli 1919 in Wien," S. D. Parl. Klub, Carton 80, VGA.

<sup>162</sup>Fritz Klein, "Between Compiègne and Versailles: The Germans on the Way from a Misunderstood Defeat to an Unwanted Peace," in *The Treaty of Versailles: A Reassessment after 75 Years*, ed. Manfred F. Boemeke, Gerald D. Feldman, and Elisabeth Glaser (Cambridge, 1998), 205.

<sup>163</sup>For a good review of the context, see Hanns Haas, "Henry Allizé und die österreichische Unabhängigkeit," in *Deux fois l'Autriche, après 1918 et après 1945 (Actes du Colloque de Rouen 8–12 novembre 1977)*. *Austriaca. Cahiers Universitaires d'Information sur l'Autriche*, November 1979, 241–84; and Lajos Kerekes, "Zur Anschlusspolitik Otto Bauers 1918/1919. Die 'Alternative' zwischen Anschlusspolitik und Donaukonföderation," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 22 (1974): 18–45. See also the insightful observations in Ernst Bruckmüller, *Nation Österreich. Sozialhistorische Aspekte ihrer Entwicklung* (Vienna, 1984), 24, 151–52.

<sup>164</sup>"[S]o war dieses [Section 2 of the law of November 12] einem grossen Teile der Bevölkerung etwas überraschend gekommene Bekenntnis zum Deutschen Reich zunächst der furchtbaren sozialen Notlage des neuen Staates entsprungen," a situation that did not correspond to "einer einheitlichen nationalen Einstellung." Loewenfeld-Russ, *Im Kampf*, 155.

that he had gradually persuaded his colleagues and that the resolutions he was unable to get through on October 11 had now been accepted.<sup>165</sup>

Still, at the Socialist Congress on November 1, Bauer and Seitz admitted that many in the party were still skeptical of an Anschluss, especially in their hostility to Prussia.<sup>166</sup> The following months manifested a seesaw effect in public opinion. By early March 1919, the Saxon legate Erich Benndorf would shrewdly conclude that the debates about the Anschluss were dominated by two vocal minorities, one strongly for, the other strongly against, whereas the majority of Austrians were not certain what they really wanted, since they were at root "unreliable cantonists." Benndorf was certain that "it would only require some tangible evidence of [pro-Austrian] goodwill on the part of the Entente in order to persuade the great majority of German-Austrians to immediately drop the idea of the Anschluss."<sup>167</sup> Although the Anschluss was officially killed at the peace conferences, preliminary negotiations between the Germans and the Austrians in Weimar and Berlin in late February and early March 1919 left both sides frustrated, with the Austrians wanting concessions that the Germans resisted.<sup>168</sup> Altogether, a confusing situation, and one that hardly confirms a strong consensus in public opinion. In fact, the Viennese police confirmed this murkiness in May 1919, when they observed, "[N]either the supporters of the Anschluss movement nor their opponents have a particularly strong hope in the future. Also, one actually sees [among the general population] only very seldom a resolute position in favor of the one or the other standpoint."<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>165</sup>"Protokoll der Sitzung des deutschen Parteivorstandes am 11. Oktober 1918," VGA; Bauer to Friedrich Adler, Oct. 24, 1918.

<sup>166</sup>*Stenographisches Protokoll, Parteitag 1918*, 65–65a, 170–71, VGA.

<sup>167</sup>"Der Zerfall," 254–55, 257. German diplomatic reports in the winter and spring of 1919 reflected these inconsistencies. By late January 1919, Wedel was arguing that the Social Democrats in the Staatsrat had overplayed their hand in November, and had given the opponents of Anschluss ammunition to prove that Austrian economic interests would be damaged. A2621, Jan. 27, 1919, Oest. 95/Bd. 26, PAAA. Then, two weeks later, Wedel reported a change in public sympathy as a result of the outcome of German elections for the National Assembly in Weimar: anti-Anschluss forces were "[b]ekanntlich nur in bürgerlichen, speziell in klerikalen Kreisen zu Hause." A3993, Feb. 6, 1919, Oest. 95/Bd. 27. Haas detected similar up and down swings. See Hanns Haas, "Henry Allizé," 250, 255, 263–64. Otto Bauer himself admitted to Ludo Hartmann in early January that "[w]ir sehen jetzt schon, wie der allergrösste Teil der Bourgeoisie insbesondere die Industriellen aus purer Furcht vor dem Anschluss sich den Christlich-Sozialen zuwenden. Selbst die jüdischen Fabrikanten erklären, diesmal müsse man die Christlich-Sozialen unterstützen." Bauer to Hartmann, Jan. 3, 1919, NPA Präs., Carton 233.

<sup>168</sup>See ADÖ, 1:472–84, 487–99; Low, *The Anschluss Movement*, 187–206; Haas, "Henry Allizé," 247, 253–55, 263, 279; idem, "Otto Bauer und der Anschluss 1918/1919," in *Sozialdemokratie und Anschluss: Historische Wurzeln. Anschluss 1918 und 1938. Nachwirkungen*, ed. Helmut Konrad (Vienna, 1978), 36–38, 40–41.

<sup>169</sup>See the report of May 21, 1919, "Stimmungsberichte 1919," AdPDW. As for the later spring, Hanns Haas has argued that pro-Anschluss sentiment fell in April and May, but bounced back in June. Haas, "Henry Allizé," 264. Yet, even in mid July, Otto Bauer was disdainful of Ludo Hartmann's claims to German parliamentary leaders in Weimar that 90 percent of the Austrians supported the Anschluss, telling him that this was most certainly not the case. Bauer to Hartmann, July 15, 1919, NPA Präs., Carton 233.

Given the transparency with which Bauer pursued the Anschluss, whatever the state of public opinion, some scholars have understandably speculated as to Bauer's motives in pursuing what, in the end, was such a dead-end policy. Hanns Haas has suggested, for example, that Bauer was motivated by national goals which took precedence over the achievement of full socialism, and in their name he was apparently prepared to ram the Anschluss through over the opposition among his own rank and file, many of whom would have been much more sympathetic to collaboration with the Béla Kun regime in Hungary.<sup>170</sup>

As a means to solve the imperial nationality problem that had preoccupied him in his great theoretical work on *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, Bauer's passion for the Anschluss makes most sense, since the Anschluss would have resolved two historic political challenges simultaneously: appeals to the common ground of national identity would enhance socialist power, which, in turn, would deploy class loyalty to impel a merger of the little national community with its larger conational neighbor. Austria would leave one empire to join another, thus preserving its destiny as a member of a great imperial community.<sup>171</sup> That many Austrians felt no affinity for the Bismarckian Reich—which was Benndorf's point—was perhaps the most serious challenge faced by Bauer and his allies.

For Austrian Catholics the situation was even murkier. The Upper Austrian Catholic leader Johann Hauser told Austrian business leader Georg Günther that he was opposed to the declaration of the Anschluss inserted in the November 12 legislation on the republic, but that public opinion was so unsteady the Christian Socials did not feel they could vote against it.<sup>172</sup> Other Christian Social leaders were more supportive of the idea, but Ignaz Seipel, who was the coming man in the party, emerged as a leading critic of Bauer's foreign policy and was clearly opposed to Bauer's goals.<sup>173</sup> Seipel's speeches

<sup>170</sup>Haas, "Otto Bauer," 38–41. Haas also suggests that early Anschluss rhetoric in Vienna was pan-party, and that it was driven by economic need and by a need to secure liberal-democratic order. Haas, "Österreich und die Alliierten," 14–16.

<sup>171</sup>Bauer openly assimilated older ideas of a *grossdeutsch* nationalism, cleansed by a joint German and Austrian socialism, to create a new German nationhood in a top-down manner, via Austria's immediate assimilation into the Reich. Hence his open reference to the "Sieg von Königgrätz" in 1866 as a "geschichtliche[r] Zufall." See Bauer's "Acht Monate auswärtiger Politik," *Werkausgabe*, 2:189. Bauer was also convinced that this new Reich would be qualitatively different from the old Reich, that in the long run it would protect Austrian industry and the welfare of the working class, and that it was the quickest and surest route to a socialist society, but many of his critics were clearly uncertain.

<sup>172</sup>Georg Günther, *Lebenserinnerungen* (Vienna, 1936), 204.

<sup>173</sup>For Seipel and the Anschluss, see Rennhofer, *Seipel*, 165–68, 172–73, 182–85, 192–93; Klems von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel: Christian Statesman in a Time of Crisis* (Princeton, 1972), 114–17, 301–6; and Low, *Anschluss Movement*, 208–14. The German Nationals, who were to become the erstwhile coalition partners of the Christian Socials for much of the postwar period, knew exactly where the latter under Seipel's leadership stood on these matters. As Leopold Waber put it succinctly in late 1920, "Die Ch.S. betreiben eine anschlussfeindliche Politik. Sie wollen den Wiederaufbau unter Preisgabe Österreichs an die Entente ermöglichen. Unsere tragische Lage zwingt uns, mit den Ch. S. eine Mehrheit zu bilden." "8. Sitzung d. Verb. d. Abg. der Grossdeutschen Volkspartei am 4. Dezember [1920]," *Grossdeutsche Volkspartei*, Carton 1.

and essays were filled with invocations of the need to support the Austrian fatherland and the ideal of a “free federation of the Austrian *Länder*,” and of the dangers of Bauer’s challenge to the Entente and of joining a Socialist-dominated Reich. The implication was clear—Austria could do nicely without an Anschluss, but its fundamental identity was dependent on the regions.

At the same time, it would be a mistake to read Seipel’s great foreign-policy success at Geneva of 1922 back into his stubborn, trench-level opposition in 1918–20. In fact, much of Seipel’s rhetoric in 1919—vague appeals to the Austrians to “come together in an inner and a free way” in hopes of better treatment at the hands of the Allies—was no more convincing or plausible than Bauer’s vision. To the extent that Seipel’s vision was as improbable as Bauer’s, the failed and flawed politics of the Anschluss in 1918–19 may be of greatest significance in alerting us to the fact that neither of the two great parties had realistic foreign policy alternatives in 1919, and, equally important, that both had an equally fragile capacity for apriority in speaking about the future of Austrian society in a way that would convince the majority of the citizens that they should be part of that future.<sup>174</sup>

The Anschluss conundrum was an early warning sign that the new, party-run democracy faced rocky times in creating consensus on policy issues that had proxy value for highly charged cultural norms. Essentially, invocations of the right of democratic self-determination begged the question of what was to be determined. Equally important, the fact that the Allies so easily contradicted Wilson’s program of the rights of democratic self-determination in order to quarantine the new republic from Germany (to the relief of some Austrians, to the despair of others) hardly reinforced a sense that the postwar world would or even should be governed by rights-driven assumptions and standards.<sup>175</sup>

The righteousness of the Anschluss, the self-determination of the northern lands, and the new democratic autonomism of the *Länder*—all were examples of a floating rhetoric of rights, unleashed by the revolution, which surged across the ex-Habsburg political landscape of late 1918.<sup>176</sup> Everywhere men sought to become what their rights dictated they were entitled to become, and yet so many frustrations and so many doubts stood in the way.

<sup>174</sup>For the idea of a priori rhetoric in 1919, see Georg E. Schmid, “Selbstbestimmung 1919. Anmerkungen zur historischen Dimension und Relevanz eines politischen Schlagwortes,” in *Versailles-St.Germain-Trianon. Umbruch in Europa vor fünfzig Jahren*, ed. Karl Bosl (Munich, 1971), 134.

<sup>175</sup>Perhaps not surprisingly, recent scholarship has tended to view the issue of self-determination at the peace conference(s) from the perspective of the remainder of the twentieth century, acknowledging the inconsistency with which the Allies applied Wilson’s ideas, but also implying that “national self-determination” itself is not possible in all cases and that more recent attempts to resolve the issue of ethnic freedoms in multiethnic contexts have also had very mixed success. See the comments by Ronald Steel, “Prologue: 1918–1945–1989,” and William R. Keylor, in “Versailles and International Diplomacy,” in *The Treaty of Versailles*, 34, 496, 504–5; and by Zara Steiner, “The Treaty of Versailles Revisited,” in *The Paris Peace Conference, 1919: Peace without Victory?* ed. Michael Dockrill and John Fisher (Basingstoke, 2001), 24–29.

<sup>176</sup>For the problematic use of the word *Selbstbestimmungsrecht* in 1918–19, see Schmid, “Selbstbestimmung 1919,” *passim*.

## The Writing of the Constitution and the End of the Revolution

### *The Revival of Party Activity and the Constitution of 1920*

If the revolutionaries endured frustrating and humiliating challenges to the articulation of their democratic claims, they might at least have taken consolation in their total control over the construction of the permanent democratic constitution they would give to themselves. Yet, here too do we find a gap between expectations about rights and the concrete application of rights.

The formal end of the Austrian revolution came on October 1, 1920, when the Constituent Assembly voted the new constitution. The history of this constitution is extremely complex. Its stratigraphic quality—eighteen competing and overlapping drafts, including the six drafts authored by Hans Kelsen, had been in play by the time the process ended, so that understanding the final text is like analyzing an archaeological site—has been illuminated in the works of Felix Ermacora, Georg Schmitz, Robert Walter, and other legal scholars. Today, I wish to focus on only one facet of this document to illuminate the ambivalent way in which the revolution was concluded, which involves the idea of rights.<sup>177</sup>

Michael Mayr, the Christian Social politician from Innsbruck appointed in October 1919 to superintend the drafting process, faced considerable difficulties, given the basic differences between the Social Democrats and the Christian Socials. The Social Democrats wanted a strong, centralist state, whereas the Christian Socials—although more divided because of tensions between the Vienna-led leadership around Ignaz Seipel and Viktor Kienböck, and the peasant and small townsman-leadership of the provincial parties—were consistently in favor of greater decentralization and autonomy for the *Länder*.<sup>178</sup> Party interests substantially, but not totally overlapped

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<sup>177</sup>In mid December 1918, the National Assembly determined that the new Constituent Assembly would be elected for a two-year term. According to existing parliamentary procedure, the new constitution would require a two-thirds vote in the assembly. In November 1918, Karl Renner appointed a young legal expert from the University of Vienna, Hans Kelsen, to assist his staff on legislative and constitutional issues. Initial work in drafting the constitution itself was hindered by the government's preoccupation with the peace settlement, but Kelsen produced six drafts of a possible constitution in the summer and autumn of 1919. In October 1919, the Christian Social politician and historian from Tirol, Michael Mayr, was appointed as a special state secretary to coordinate the process of constitutional drafting, which in large part meant coordinating Christian Social opinions and then reconciling them with those of the Social Democrats. Mayr selected one of Kelsen's drafts and, with Kelsen's and others' assistance, generated a new draft, subsequently called the *Privatentwurf Mayr*. This draft, in turn, after additional revisions, became known as the *Linzer Entwurf* of April 1920. See *Rp*, Feb. 10, pp. 1–4, and Apr. 14, 1920, pp. 1–2. For Mayr's work, see Schmitz, *Renner's Briefe*, 102–16; and Hermann J. W. Kuprian, "Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik. Die politische Entwicklung Michael Mayrs von 1907 bis 1922" (Ph.D. diss., University of Innsbruck, 1985), 361–94.

<sup>178</sup>Moreover, the Christian Social Party that approved the Constitution of 1920 was a slightly different party than that of late 1918, if only because in the two years between 1918 and 1920, Seipel and his Viennese clerical colleagues had begun to ascend to key leadership roles in the party. Before Lueger's death in 1910 the party had been an uneasy but effective amalgam of regional and centralist forces. This was lost in 1911, but it was restored, in a circuitous way, as a result of the role of Seipel, Mataja, Schmitz, and Kienböck in the early and mid 1920s.

with regional interests on key structural issues, such as the extent of federalization, the nature of the presidency, the power of the parliament, and the relationship of law-making and administrative decision-making.

The final constitution resolved many thorny issues via compromises, especially those involving regional and central authority and who had the authority to create law, in what ways law would be constructed, and what limits law might find imposed on itself.<sup>179</sup> Not only was the new state subjected to the law, functioning as an instrument of freedom, but the agencies charged with enforcing the law (the *Verwaltung*) were subject to the same judicial restraints as parliament itself faced. The self-regulating legitimacy of this formal hierarchy created, at least in theory, what Paul Silverman has aptly called a “system of self-perpetuating democratic institutions.”<sup>180</sup>

Gernot Hasiba has rightly suggested that the final version gave Social Democrats more of what they wanted, since it did provide for significant features of unity, centralization, parliamentary hegemony, and proportional representation.<sup>181</sup> But the most notable flaw in the new constitution was its avoidance of any sustained discussion of individual or fundamental rights, which must count as a serious defeat for the Social Democrats and, more importantly, for the new nation-state as a whole. Why was this the case?

Why did the discussions between Christian Socials and Social Democrats about fundamental rights evaporate in the summer of 1920? The coalition agreement signed by both parties in mid October 1919 agreed to the need to regulate these issues within the constitution itself,<sup>182</sup> but little progress was

<sup>179</sup>See Paul Silverman, “Law and Economics in Interwar Vienna: Kelsen, Mises, and the Regeneration of Austrian Liberalism.” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1984), 653.

<sup>180</sup>Silverman, “Law and Economics,” 660. Silverman insists that the introductory article of the constitution “is the final statement of the ideals of earlier generations of Austrian liberals, this time stripped of all decoration and simply affirming that the boundaries of politics and society were made up of their highest practical ideal, the law” (670). A key element of the constitution was its reliance on the logic of the law, rather than on invocations of force, to attain its aims. As Silverman has pointed out, the preamble refers to law as deriving from the people, not power from the people, as in the Weimar Constitution. See Silverman, 668–70, 676–77. And, unlike the Weimar document, it did not contain any a priori claims about competencies, since it avoided the Social Democratic-favored prescription that “Bundesrecht bricht Landesrecht” (Christian Social delegates were opposed to the phrase, and it was dropped in the final version). Instead, the constitution relied on the *Verfassungsgerichtshof* to settle possible conflicts. See Georg Froehlich, “Die Verfassungsentwicklung in der Republik Österreich,” in *10 Jahre Wiederaufbau. Die staatliche, kulturelle und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der Republik Österreich 1918–1928*, ed. Wilhelm Exner (Vienna, 1928), 47, 52; Schmitz, *Vorentwürfe*, 66, 99; idem, *Renners Briefe*, 101, 107.

<sup>181</sup>*Koalitionsregierungen in Österreich*, 92; Gernot D. Hasiba, *Die Zweite Bundes-Verfassungsnovelle von 1929. Ihr Werdegang und wesentliche verfassungspolitische Ereignisse seit 1918* (Vienna, 1976), 19. At the same time, although the constitution sanctioned a parliamentary democracy with a weak presidential executive in place of the dynast, it also contained strong federalist provisions by balancing the prerogatives of the *Länder* against the central government, thus perhaps disappointing those who preferred a more centralized state, including Hans Kelsen himself. As Robert Kann has noted, Kelsen was gratuitously negative about the Austrian *Länder* while idealizing the Prussian provinces. See Robert A. Kann, “Die österreichische Bundesverfassung und der Anschluss im Lichte der Anschauungen von Hans Kelsen,” in *November 1918*, esp. pp. 36, 39.

<sup>182</sup>Schmitz, *Renners Briefe*, 79. For surveys of the deliberations of fundamental rights in 1918–20, see Felix Ermacora and Christiane Wirth, *Die österreichische Bundesverfassung und Hans*

evident by the time of the conference of *Länder* leaders to discuss the constitution that was held in Linz in late April 1920. At this meeting, the Social Democratic leader Robert Danneberg tried to decouple the regional-centralist axis from the rights issue, insisting that rights were a subject of great political significance that should not be confused with various *Länderinteressen*, since they involved "great political questions, which must be taken into account in the same way for the whole state, for the whole federation."<sup>183</sup>

What were the major differences? A comparison of the motion on rights that Robert Danneberg put forward on behalf of the Social Democrats at the Linz *Länderkonferenz* on April 23, 1920 with the relevant paragraphs of the constitutional draft that Michael Mayr had submitted to the same conference is revealing.<sup>184</sup> Danneberg separated church and state by ending all of the privileges enjoyed by the Catholic Church, including the financial support it had received since the eighteenth century. He also eliminated compulsory religious instruction in the schools, exempted individuals from religiously based oaths, and essentially reduced the Church's status to that of a private association. Moreover, he abolished the nobility; guaranteed personal freedom to all citizens; sanctioned full freedom of the press, of assembly, of association, and of the right to political asylum; created a compulsory civil marriage law; and instituted a state-level requirement of education to the eighteenth year of a student's life. Finally, he put forth a full measure of occupational rights, including the right to form unions, to enjoy comprehensive social insurance (with the administration of that insurance given to

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*Kelsen. Analysen und Materialien. Zum 100. Geburtstag von Hans Kelsen* (Vienna, 1982), 21–38; and Wilhelm Brauneder, "Die Gesetzgebungsgeschichte der österreichischen Grundrechte," in *Grund- und Menschenrechte in Österreich*, ed. Rudolf Machacek, Willibald P. Pahr, and Gerhard Stadler, 3 vols. (Kehl am Rhein, 1991–97), 1:304–26. Brauneder seems to minimize the intent of the parties to regulate these issues (309, 321–22) which, in my view, does not do justice to the sense of political urgency that the Social Democrats brought to this problem. This is clear from Otto Bauer's comments to the party executive in May 1920, where he insisted that even though it would be difficult to secure final approval for the Grundrechte by October, "[e]in parlamentarischer Kampf um die Grundrechte vor den Neuwahlen liegt jedoch im Parteiinteresse. Die Einbeziehung der Grundrechte in den Regierungsentwurf ist daher anzustreben." Confidential statement, attached to "Protokoll der Sitzung des Parteivorstandes am 20. Mai 1920," VGA. Similarly, Karl Seitz stressed in February 1920 the need for a general public debate on this question. See the "Protokoll der dritten Konferenz von Vertretern sozialdemokratischer Landesregierungen, der Gemeinde Wien und des Parteivorstandes vom 12. Feber 1920 im Parlament, Präsidialbüro," in S. D. Parl. Klub, Carton 80, VGA.

<sup>183</sup>Felix Ermacora, *Materialien zur österreichischen Bundesverfassung (I). Die Länderkonferenzen 1919/20 und die Verfassungsfrage* (Vienna, 1989), 280. In response, speaking for the Christian Socials, Leopold Kunschak agreed that the Grundrechte were in fact large political subjects, but he immediately concluded that the leadership of the political parties only could deal with them directly. *Ibid.*, 290.

<sup>184</sup>For this comparison, I used the version of the so-called *Linzer Entwurf* that was presented to the Linz *Länderkonferenz*, as reprinted by Felix Ermacora in *Die Entstehung der Bundesverfassung 1920. Die Sammlung der Entwürfe zur Staats- bzw. Bundesverfassung* (Vienna, 1990), 378–401 (listed under the title "Vorentwurf einer Bundesstaatsverfassung. Zweite Fassung"), with the text of the *Grund- und Freiheitsrechte* proposed by Robert Danneberg at the Linz *Länderkonferenz* on April 23, 1920, as reprinted in *Materialien*, 283–89. The comparison is justified by the fact that Danneberg cited this particular draft as the point of his comparative analysis.

those who participated in the system), and a right to gainful employment, guaranteed by the state. As if to dot the last *I* and cross the last *T*, Danneberg also declared that private property existed via the warrant of the legal order, and made such property subject to modification by that order.<sup>185</sup>

Although Mayr offered many of the same individual-based guarantees as Danneberg (equality before the law, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, etc.), in his scheme, the rights of free expression could be limited by regular federal legislation, and not by the application of the criminal law, such as the Social Democrats favored. Mayr also inserted a general emergency clause (Article 137) that enabled the state to set aside by ordinance the rights of individuals or groups who constituted an urgent danger to the state and citizenry. On the other hand, Mayr strengthened the individual's right to own property, since private property was "guaranteed" by the state, and any infringement required fair compensation by the state. Moreover, Mayr essentially retained the semiprivileged status that the Catholic Church enjoyed in the empire as a corporation under public law, and confirmed that religious instruction was a regular component of the curriculum in all schools and under the protection of the state. His draft contained nothing about marriage reform and nothing about occupational rights. Rather, Mayr accorded significant protection to the Catholic Church, while offering virtually no social guarantees to occupational groups in society.

In the main, the two drafts exposed two ways of imagining society. Both relied on a core of individual (liberal) personal rights (Danneberg's was slightly more expansive than Mayr's, and Mayr provided more ways by which the state might control abuses of such rights). Significantly, both Mayr and Danneberg inserted the individual into a broader corporatist legal and social order that mandated the accommodation of individual behavior in light of larger cultural and social aspirations: for Mayr, the ideal of a well-ordered, religiously grounded society, in which morality and virtue would be sustained by the work of religion and guaranteed by the state; for Danneberg, the ideal of a socially just society in which the state itself would guarantee significant material opportunities to all citizens. In their party programmatic appeals, the Social Democrats and the Christian Socials acknowledged the need for the regulation of social, cultural, and economic rights. But they differed profoundly in questions of the boundaries attached to those rights—the boundary between state and church, the boundary between collectivity and person, between employer and employee, man and woman, husband and wife, parents and children.<sup>186</sup> If the struggles over the north, the west, and the Reich contested the political boundaries for the nation, the dispute over fundamental rights challenged the social boundaries within the nation.

<sup>185</sup>At the same time, Danneberg insisted that the Social Democrats found themselves forced to play the role of protector of nineteenth-century liberal-democratic political rights, since the current *Bürgertum* was now indifferent to them. *Materialien*, 281.

<sup>186</sup>See Ermacora, "Menschenrechte im Staatsgrundgesetz 1867 und Parteivorschläge 1918," in *November 1918*, 51–53; and Ermacora's detailed review in *Die österreichische Bundesverfassung und Hans Kelsen*, 21–38; as well as idem, *Die Entstehung der Bundesverfassung 1920. Die Sammlung der Entwürfe zur Staats- bzw. Bundesverfassung*, 29.

Were the differences between the Social Democrats and Christian Socials merely reflections of a gulf between the two parties on the religious question, or were other issues also at play?

Certainly, conflicting notions about the proper role of organized religion in a democratic state contributed profoundly to the deadlock. And these conflicts were not simply, *pace* Danneberg, between Red center and Black periphery. Rather, the conflict was much more one of Red Vienna against Black Vienna, with the image of blackness referring to a spectrum of societal and cultural views, some of them narrowly "religious," others having little to do with religion at all. Certainly, the 1920s were a time across Europe of the intensification of prewar trends toward more uniform and more integral Catholicism, and that integralism had a much more powerful scope than antimodernism. It aimed to encompass no less than religion as a civilization, as a whole way of life. This energized Catholicism found a substantial presence in Red Vienna as well, and Seipel's world view in the 1920s—the decade when he was perhaps the single most influential political leader in interwar Austrian history—is impossible to understand without the sense that Central European Catholics had grown aggressively confident of their options and opportunities since the 1890s. The tensions that tore the republic apart in the later 1920s fed off of the energy generated by this process of cultural and intellectual renewal.

Like other prominent political clergy in the early First Republic, Ignaz Seipel was a refugee from the collapse of the former "alliance of dynasty and altar" that controlled public morals and mores in the late empire.<sup>187</sup> In destroying the dynasty, the revolution had left the altar with the default responsibility for cultural conservation and advocacy of extended cultural traditions. This was a powerful boon, and one that the Church took full advantage of. The force of Austrian Catholicism in the interwar period owed much to this substitutive function, for which it had been well prepared even before 1914. Since the state itself could no longer guarantee, much less provide, a comprehensive, willing, and knowable moral order, the Church took on this role, becoming literally a "state-church." The problem faced by the constitution writers of 1920 was not, in essence, the need to define an abstract relationship between church and state, so much as it was the need to accommodate (or, in the case of the Social Democrats, to react to) the aggressive sense of collective moral purpose that the Catholic Church had grown accustomed to exercising within Austrian civic life, namely the temptation by the Church to act like the state.<sup>188</sup> Perhaps the supreme irony of the compromise that Seipel and his colleagues engineered in August and September 1920—to

<sup>187</sup>For the phrase, see Rennhofer, *Seipel*, 156.

<sup>188</sup>Robert Musil caught this temptation well when he wrote in 1912 about the Austrian Church that "modernism is enormously significant as the final outcome of the fateful struggle of Catholicism against the state, a struggle that began with the church allowing itself to be misled into wanting to rule the state in the state's way, and ended with the church being dominated by the state in the church's way, that of invisible spiritual penetration. Out of the church-state there emerged the state-church." Robert Musil, *Precision and Soul: Essays and Addresses*, ed. and trans. by Burton Pike and David S. Luft (Chicago, 1990), 21.

reauthorize the liberal Grundrechte of 1867—was that it presumed a real, if opaque, revival of the liberal Josephist state that had collapsed in October 1918. In order to bury the issue of fundamental rights, a key legislative heritage of that state was reanimated. Yet, the Church's partnership with this state was no longer based on a living alliance; rather, the Church became the custodian of the cultural heritage of the defunct dynastic state.<sup>189</sup>

Yet something else was at work as well. The debates over the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in July and August of 1789 showed fundamental disparities about the kind of revolutionary society that was prized, no less than the kind of state that was admired, and the same happened in 1918–20 in Austria. Norbert Leser has argued that after 1919 the Social Democrats confronted a rising tide of bourgeois hatred and envy, and fond remembrances of the imperial world, and that in their enthusiastic rewriting of imperial history, the Social Democrats played right into the hands of their opponents, since they could now be blamed both for wanting to destroy the monarchy and for having led its destruction.<sup>190</sup>

A clear sign of this trend are the election results manifest in Vienna in the February 1919 and the October 1920 national elections. Under the guise of the official coalition, political life reemerged in early 1919 and with full force.<sup>191</sup> After a month of intense campaigning, the first national elections were held in February 1919, four weeks after those conducted in Germany. The February 1919 elections went in favor of the Social Democrats, who not only won sixty-nine seats, but who could claim a strong moral victory. Yet the months that followed were among the most tumultuous in the history of the republic, and while marked by several stunning Socialist successes in the legislative realm—much of Ferdinand Hanusch's program of social welfare legislation is a child of this era, as is the work of the Socialization Commission and the creation of the *Betriebsräte* law in May, 1919—the popular violence manifested in April and again in June led to repercussions among non-Socialist voters.<sup>192</sup> True, Communist agitators failed both on April 17 and

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<sup>189</sup>Later, other observers argued that Seipel's insistence on foregoing parliamentary consideration of the domain of fundamental rights came out of fear of what an ad hoc, blue-red coalition might have imposed on the Christian Socials. Certainly, such fears may have been present, but it must also be remembered that constitutional laws had to gain a two-thirds majority, and his party had the votes necessary to prevent a revived *Kulturkampf*. See Seipel's comments in *Rp*, Sept. 29 (M), p. 3; Oct. 1, 1920 (M), p. 1; and Richard Schmitz, "Österreichs Bundesverfassung. Eine Antwort an das 'Neue Reich,'" in *Volkswohl* 11 (1920): 362.

<sup>190</sup>Leser, "Der Bruch der Koalition 1920—Voraussetzungen und Konsequenzen," 35–36; idem, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus. Der Austromarxismus als Theorie und Praxis* (Vienna, 1968), 310–11, 318–20.

<sup>191</sup>For example, one sees this process in the Social Democratic municipal club's debates about the strategy they should pursue against the Christian Socials. As early as December 10, 1918, Georg Emmerling urged the club to develop a coherent strategy to provoke serious political debates in the city council against Christian Socials, and urged careful preparation be given to selection of issues, so that the process was credible and not based on reactive provocations. "Dritte Sitzung des Gemeinderatsklubs am 10. Dezember 1918," S.D. Parteistellen, Carton 77, VGA.

<sup>192</sup>Hans Hautmann has rightly insisted that, at their high point, Hanusch's laws were characterized by "ein für kapitalistische Staaten damals geradezu unglaublicher *Radikalismus*." See

on June 15 to gain effective traction, but their radicalism was no less ominous, not the least because so many unemployed and otherwise victimized citizens continued to suffer in the postwar social crisis.

Whereas the Social Democrats had crushed the Christian Socials in the elections for the Constituent Assembly held in mid February 1919, picking up 523,329 votes to the Christian Socials' 210,737 (and winning 55.4 percent of all votes cast in the city), a clear trend in favor of *bürgerlich* forces became apparent in the fall of 1920, when the Social Democrats sank to 436,147 votes and the Christian Socials won 279,285 votes.<sup>193</sup> Granted, the Social Democrats still had a lock on the municipal administration, but their share of the total number of votes cast fell well below the 50 percent mark, a fact that Catholic publicists touted as a sign that Red Vienna might not be as red as party propaganda predicted.

With a fine sensitivity to the possibilities of life beyond the coalition, Ignaz Seipel and the Viennese wing of the Christian Socials had begun a determined campaign over the course of 1919 to undermine the coalition.<sup>194</sup> In the short term, Seipel ran up against opposition from key Christian Social provincial leaders, especially Jodok Fink and Johann Hauser, but over time his machinations had a powerful effect.<sup>195</sup>

As Catholics looked at the social order imagined by the Social Democrats, they saw not only moral collapse and social unrest sanctioned (so they believed) by the Socialist leadership, but graphic evidence that the potential consumers of the new rights demanded by the Social Democrats did not deserve such largesse. Already on the eve of the February 1919 elections, the police observed among the propertied elements of Vienna strong condemnations of left-wing activities, together with accusations about the laziness of

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Staininger, ed., *Ferdinand Hanusch*, 83. On the fate of the socialization project, see Rudolf Gerlich, *Die gescheiterte Alternative. Sozialisierung in Österreich nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna, 1980); and Erwin Weissel, *Die Ohnmacht des Sieges. Arbeiterschaft und Sozialisierung nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg in Österreich* (Vienna, 1976). However, the success of Bauer's socialization strategy was premised, as Eduard März and Fritz Weber have argued, on getting the Anschluss and on the new, larger Germany having a real social revolution. Both failed to occur by late 1919, and the local Social Democrats found themselves left with a "two-stage" revolutionary strategy that was backfiring. See "Sozialdemokratie und Sozialisierung nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg," 117.

<sup>193</sup>*Statistisches Handbuch für die Republik Österreich* 1 (1920): 2–4; and *ibid.*, 2 (1921): 2–5. In October 1920, eleven other political groups (including various German National factions, Communists, and Viennese Czechs) collected an additional 212,796 votes, for a total of 928,228 valid votes cast.

<sup>194</sup>The loss of control of the administration of the city of Vienna in May 1919 was a bitter blow to local Catholics, and the strident anticoalitionism manifested by the Viennese Christian Socials is attributable to this disaster. Renner's press secretary, Ludwig Brügel, reported in August 1919 that "[i]n der Christlichsozialen Partei ist man jetzt mutiger und angriffslustiger gegen die 'sozialistische] Reg[ierung]' geworden u[nd] Fink und Hauser werden kaum länger mehr imstande sein, die Morgenluft witternden Elemente zurückzuhalten." Quoted in Schmitz, *Renner's Briefe*, 73, as well as 65–66. See also Friedrich Funder, *Vom Gestern ins Heute. Aus dem Kaiserreich in die Republik* (Vienna, 1953), 641–42.

<sup>195</sup>Renner himself was not above trying to drive a wedge between Christian Social leaders in Vienna and their counterparts in the provinces, arguing in February 1919 that the coalition demonstrated that the Christian Socials, seen now as a modern peasant party, were capable of cooperation with a modern workers' party. As Schmitz points out, this drew strong rebuke from the Catholics in Vienna, who rejected this stylization. *Renner's Briefe*, 68.

the workers, about their unwillingness to work, and about the violent propensities of the working class.<sup>196</sup> Following the Communist riots of mid April 1919, they then encountered strong disapproval of the Socialist-led government, which appeared unwilling to use aggressive means to repress such dangerous disturbances (*gefährliche Unruhen*).<sup>197</sup> The purveyors of such *gefährliche Unruhen* were the imaginary body social whom many Christian Socials had in mind when they listened to the Social Democrats' demands about fundamental rights in the summer of 1920.<sup>198</sup>

Seipel was a prescient, if impatient, observer of these trends, and his speeches in 1919 and 1920 are barometers of their impact. Seipel believed that ideas could win elections; he was also convinced that Austria needed to be rebuilt culturally along all fronts, and that this message was not only the right message, but that it could be sold politically as well.<sup>199</sup> In an important essay published in September 1920, on the eve of the national parliamentary elections, Seipel inserted the church-state conundrum into a larger policy arena involving basic social institutions and cultural values relating to marriage, social propriety, schools, and family. Religion was essential to the moral well-being of the nation and its individuals, and the Church could not be separated from religion. Given its prior status—as a divinely authorized institution prior to the state—the Church must maintain its freedom from state control. Indeed, the sanctity of the Church's independence in setting marriage law was a prime test case of the stability of the state's legal order. Morality itself was not a direct concern of the state, but of the individual and the Church, and it was only in an intermediary role that the state could support the Church.<sup>200</sup>

In the prewar period, the primary constituents of the Christian Social voting block were the economic self-employed, local property owners, and white collar employees, especially those in public bureaucracies. But in the aftermath of the expansion of the suffrage in 1919, the Catholics also garnered a substantial share of women's votes as well, both those who were employed and those who did not work outside the home.<sup>201</sup> Part of the success enjoyed

<sup>196</sup>Reports of Feb. 5 and Feb. 12, 1919, "Stimmungsberichte 1919," AdPDW.

<sup>197</sup>Reports of Apr. 9, esp. Apr. 24, 1919, *ibid.* For the background, see Gerhard Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1938*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Munich, 1983), 22–86.

<sup>198</sup>In his commentary on the Renner-Mayr draft of the constitution in early July 1920, Renner himself acknowledged that the leaders of the parties themselves were influenced by "ganz chaotische Auffassungen" and "zahlreichen primitiven Missverständnisse und Vorurteile" against each other. If this was true of the leaders, how much more relevant must it have been for the general electorate. See Felix Ermacora, ed., *Quellen zum Österreichischen Verfassungsrecht (1920)* (Vienna, 1967), 191.

<sup>199</sup>Rennhofer, *Seipel*, 169, 188–90, 199, 220. See also "Statt Klassenkampf—Klassenausgleich," *Rp*, Dec. 7, 1919 (M), p. 6; "Die unpolitischen und politischen Vereine in der christlichen Volksbewegung," *Rp*, Jan. 5, 1920 (M), pp. 1–2; "Das Entscheidungsjahr," *Rp*, Jan. 7, 1920 (M), pp. 2–3.

<sup>200</sup>"Die Kulturpolitik der Christlichsozialen," *Rp*, Sept. 23, 1920 (M), pp. 1–2. Although he did not make this explicit, such a way of looking at the world was bound to be deeply unsympathetic to unmediated conceptions of individual rights.

<sup>201</sup>See Marin Seliger and Karl Ucakar, *Wien. Politische Geschichte 1740–1934. Entwicklung und Bestimmungskräfte grossstädtischer Politik*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1985), 2:1136–40, 1153–57; *AZ*, Oct. 22,

by the non-Socialist parties in the fall of 1920 reflected an inclination by many voters to return to more “comfortable” ways of comprehending their own cultural, social, and economic personalities.<sup>202</sup> But it also had to do with a successful invocation by the Christian Socials of traditional cultural values and ways of remembering, not of the dynasty or the other hated political features of the old regime, such as the army, but the cultural values that that world had espoused—order in the schools, deference and solidity in the home, stability in marriage, hierarchy and accountability in the workplace, a world where “democracy” had been happily circumscribed by curial franchise structures and other class-based, semiabsolutistic cultural guarantees.<sup>203</sup>

The *Reichspost* described the alternatives facing voters in October 1920 in the following way:

On October 17 each Austrian, man and woman, peasant, bourgeois, and worker, must be clear about what kind of future they want for themselves and their children. Do they want control by the native Christian people in the land that belongs to them, or a dictatorship of a small group of popular demagogues and parasites who are largely not even of our race? Do they want a slow, but deliberate ascent into a better future based on their own hard work and discipline, or do they want an inescapable collapse into spiritual, moral, and material impoverishment?<sup>204</sup>

Either Catholics stood up for their own cause, or they might fall victim to a “militant movement of the worst sort, one energized by fanatic convictions and ideas.” Women especially had a profound interest in supporting the Christian Socials, in view of the fact that “Social Democracy has tried to destroy the holiness of the Christian family and to alienate the Christian mother from the hearts of her children; it has brought disaster via the Sever marriages to countless women and their children.”<sup>205</sup> As Richard Schmitz,

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1920, p. 4. Women voters constituted 53 percent of actual voters. The Christian Socials polled 111,644 male voters, but 167,647 female voters, whereas the Social Democrats won 218,402 male voters and 216,665 female voters. For an insightful survey of the implications of gender in the national elections in Linz in 1923, see Merith Niehuss, “Die Nationalratswahlen in Linz 1923. Eine Analyse der Wahlbeteiligung,” *Zeitgeschichte* 9 (1982): 378–89.

<sup>202</sup>See Otto Bauer, “Die österreichische Revolution,” in *Werkausgabe*, 2:766, 772–73, 780; as well as Robert Hoffmann, “The British Military Representative in Vienna, 1919,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 52 (1974): 271, on Sir Thomas Cuninghame’s view of the “steady growth of self-confidence among the middle classes” in Austria as early as June and July 1919. The Viennese business leader Georg Günther reported in his memoirs (*Lebenserinnerungen*, 206) that he became close to Seipel in 1918–19, and that they had a common cause in defense of business interests against Social Democratic socialization projects.

<sup>203</sup>Klaus Amann has called attention to the pervasive and explicit antidemocratic attitudes of many of the most popular writers and other literary figures enjoyed by *bürgerlich* readers of interwar Austria. See his “Zum Republikverständnis österreichischer Autoren der Zwischenkriegszeit,” in *Staatsgründungen 1918*, ed. Wilhelm Brauneder and Norbert Leser (Frankfurt, 1999), 183–200, esp. 193–94.

<sup>204</sup>*Rp*, Oct. 16, 1920 (M), p. 1.

<sup>205</sup>*Rp*, Oct. 20, 1920 (M), p. 1. Albert Sever was a Social Democratic politician who was elected governor (*Landeshauptmann*) of the province of Lower Austria from 1919 to 1921. During his tenure he approved many dispensations that permitted separated Catholics to remarry. These marriages became known as “Sever marriages.” See Harmat, *Ehe auf Widerruf?* 164–68.

an influential young Viennese Catholic political leader and protégé of Seipel, put it:

[T]he dangers for our healthy, capable national character which is respected throughout the world come from another side: the good, Christian, trustworthy German character and morality of the Danubian and Alpine Germans is unfortunately in terrible trouble because of a widespread desecration of the morality of our economic life and by a degeneration of our social and public life during the last few years, made more alarming by the evil influence that Eastern Jewish circles brought in trade and commerce, in the arts and social life.<sup>206</sup>

Schmitz's blatant manipulation of popular anti-Semitism, which had mushroomed in the city in the last years of the war, was a sign that the 1880s were truly again upon Vienna. In such circumstances, why would one want to codify a body of "rights" for those who were not only one's bitter enemy, but whose "enemyness" was itself a misguided distortion of the right way to organize the world?

Many thousands of apprehensive voters, certainly not a majority, but a significant minority, returned to the *bürgerlich* fold in later 1920, leaving the Social Democrats with their base in the traditional industrial and commercial working classes.<sup>207</sup> Certainly, the protracted misery of the economic situation must have played a role in voter choices. But what equally disturbed the Social Democrats was the seeming success of the rhetoric of moral panic that was embedded in the Christian Socials' appeals. This was at the core of Friedrich Austerlitz's complaint that the campaign had been a "storm of hate and rage, this whipping up of all egoistic instincts, this distortion and slander," and that the "voters who defected to the Christian Socials succumbed without resistance to the lie that the Social Democrats are to blame for all their misfortunes."<sup>208</sup>

Clearly, as long as the issue of fundamental rights was alive, the revolution could not be ended, since to end the revolution, it was necessary to enact the constitution. Yet, to enact the constitution without such a statement of rights meant ignoring the whole issue of rival conceptions of individual and social rights, and by default, leaving in place the understanding of those rights that early Liberal statesmen in the monarchy had put in place in the

<sup>206</sup>Rp, Oct. 24, 1920 (M), p. 1.

<sup>207</sup>See C. A. Macartney, *The Social Revolution in Austria* (Cambridge, 1926), 141–42, 144; and Rp, Oct. 19, 1920 (M), p. 1. In his "Memorandum" on Austria of June 3, 1919, Sir Francis Oppenheimer observed that "[t]he fact that so far Vienna, devoid of coal, food, and clothing, has escaped a revolution, would be inexplicable but for the presence of a large bourgeoisie with old traditions, braced in its misery by an extraordinary love of its home and the hope of succour from generous foes." Notwithstanding his sentimentality, Oppenheimer hit upon an important social fact. Vienna did have a large *Kleinbürgertum*, as well as masses of workers, and the former clearly began to have second thoughts about the revolution in the summer and fall of 1920. See Oppenheimer's *Stranger Within: Autobiographical Pages* (London, 1960), 379.

<sup>208</sup>Friedrich Austerlitz, "Wahrheit und Illusion," *Der Kampf* 13 (1920): 396–97.

1860s. In defending the final legislation before parliament on September 30, Michael Mayr thought the absence of a new set of codified rights, while regrettable, was not cause for alarm, since the conflicting parties did have the laws of the 1860s to fall back upon. From Mayr's perspective this congenial invocation of the empire's legal past was not altogether unhistorical, since, in point of fact, the imperial state could be remembered (and regularly has been remembered since) as a realm of reasonably fair and equitable laws. But Karl Leuthner, who spoke for the Social Democrats, thought otherwise. Denouncing what he felt to be Christian Social stalling and equivocation, Leuthner claimed that for the working class a constitution without a statement of fundamental rights was a body that was little more than a *Trümmerwerk*. This proved, according to Leuthner, that the Christian Socials had no interest in a modern press law, a modern association and assembly law, no interest in modern social legislation, and certainly no interest in modern laws for public schooling and marriage reform.

But, more important, Leuthner suggested that the Christian Socials' unwillingness to provide a "modern conception of fundamental rights" was dangerous in a practical way. Since Leuthner was no friend of the monarchy, his memory of the imperial past was different from Mayr's. He recalled that the imperial *Verwaltung* had, in fact, a long-standing record of selectively failing to honor the freedoms of 1867, and he suspected that this tradition of inconsistency was precisely what the Catholics admired about the 1860s:

[O]ne could almost imagine, if one were to engage in a bit of fantasy and especially considering what a more exact understanding of the Christian Socials really brings to light, a time and a situation in which somewhere deep in Tirol or Vorarlberg some rural types might again try to bless a political rally with a police agent or force an association to give the government prior notice of its intention to hold a rally. Indeed, it is not really totally unimaginable that someone like Rintelen or whoever it might be in a weak or bold moment might even remember how to use Section 23 [a section of the imperial law on the press]. Thus, it is not just a question of honor or of etiquette, but rather it is a wholly practical question that we gain a modern form for our fundamental rights, that constitutionally speaking, by sharper and clearer demarcations than were contained in the constitutional legislation of the past, we better guarantee and ensure our rights to assembly, to freedom of the press, and freedom of association.<sup>209</sup>

Of course, seen from the perspective of March 1933 and especially February 1934, Leuthner's questions cannot be deemed mere rhetorical posturing.

### Conclusion

The war was a fundamental cleavage in Austrian history, and the end of the war brought a revolution that was no less real for want of bloodshed and violence. The silent war that the Austrian government and Austrian army

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<sup>209</sup>*Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen der Konstituierenden Nationalversammlung der Republik Österreich*, 1920, p. 3421. Mayr's comments are on p. 3384. For a similar observation by Karl Seitz, see Walter Goldinger's comments in *Die österreichische Verfassung von 1918 bis 1938*, 239.

had waged against its own population, including large elements of its privileged, German-speaking population, led to the inexorable collapse of the regime. With the regime fell structures of authoritarian rule, enabling the mass political parties to take control, via the legitimacy of what began as a multiparty national revolution. The Entente then eliminated the social base of the revolutionary triad by slicing off the homeland of the old *Deutscher Nationalverband*, and with it the possibility of a strong, nonclerical bourgeois political force that was, in a way, the closest thing that prewar Austria had to a successor party in the old Liberal tradition. In so doing, the Allies and St. Germain together created, perforce unintentionally, a bipolar political system based on the two great milieu parties of the late nineteenth century.

Just as Austria endured two kinds of war in 1918—a noisy war abroad, and a silent war at home—it endured two kinds of peace in 1918–20. The first peace was that of St. Germain, and its disastrous qualities were widely acknowledged. But the foreign peace was at least clear, definable, and settled, in that in its harsh territoriality it closed the door on the Anschluss and it also closed the door on German Bohemia and South Tirol. It drew boundaries around the new “state” and left those residing within those boundaries to survive as best they might. If any single document is the charter for the current republic, it is the Treaty of St. Germain, and after eighty riotous years, it does not look quite as dismal as it understandably seemed to those who experienced it. Since Austria was a totally defeated power, this peace might have been the occasion for a fresh start, and Seipel’s work in Geneva in 1922 gave the Austrian state such a start, for better or worse. But the other, much more problematic, peace was that of the bitter inner peace, and that process is best represented in the constitution itself. Hans Kelsen believed that a properly constituted democracy would be able to express and channel the “inner power” of a people, allowing choices to be made about the final determinations of the popular will.<sup>210</sup> The logical hierarchy and technical precision of the Constitution of 1920 was impressive in this regard. What this constitution proved incapable of doing was signifying a consensus about the relationship between individual liberty and social authority and about the extent to which the rights of an individual might be exempted from (or even privileged against) the rights of corporate bodies or the state itself to establish prescriptive bonds in society.

To the extent that the revolution deliberately avoided terror and bloodshed, it was no less a radical social or political rupture in the minds of Social Democratic or Christian Social leaders. Indeed, I believe that the political culture of the First Republic makes no sense unless one assumes that a radical, wrenching, and irrevocable break took place in late October 1918 that opened fascinating new opportunities for the exercise of power. The problem of the revolution was not that it failed to generate a rich, dense web of “civil-society”-like institutions and groups; rather, as happened elsewhere in Europe in the early twentieth century, an already well-organized civil society was hyperpolarized by the revolution, put at odds with itself through a

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<sup>210</sup>Silverman, “Law and Economics,” 598–603.

host of normative and cultural viewpoints, many of them anchored and nourished in the milieu-like cultural movements that came to power via the democratic revolution, without the presence of a “neutral” state to mediate these conflicts.<sup>211</sup> Margarete Grandner has shrewdly observed that one of the ironies of the revolution was that significant elements both of the right and the left disclaimed paternity for it.<sup>212</sup> This can hardly be surprising, since in essence the revolution was a democratic, liberal revolution, but one undertaken without the full consent of any of the governed.

A local Viennese Social Democrat Ferdinand Skaret captured the sense of his party in a statement written on October 26, 1918 denouncing the views of Herrenhaus members on the nature of the revolutionary crisis. In the face of their calls for an orderly transmission of power, including the retention of the monarchy, Skaret was astounded that these politicians did not understand what a real revolution was:

[T]he revolutionary character of our time consists precisely in the fact that the reality of life moves well beyond the constitutional regulations previously written down on paper and that we now bring into reality the true relations of power. The new relations of power can win out not only via bloody uprisings and revolutionary terror, as happened in the French and English and presently in the Russian revolution—where the heads of kings and their crowns are rolling in the dust—but also in a situation like the present, where nations have declared themselves independent and where constitutional approval will at best be given after the fact. In this way, additional existing constitutional forces and bodies will give way, in order to make way for the new powers, and they will do so without bloodshed under the pressure of these powers, who will sweep them away with bold and insuperable force.<sup>213</sup>

These simple words contained some important assumptions. First, in an unintended parallel to the famous tract of Abbé Sieyès in 1789, the revolution here was about the nation reclaiming its own authority and sovereignty, and using that power to create a new set of formal institutions, which we can denominate as the state, and doing so in ways that ensured the future legitimacy of its operations. The revolution accomplished that feat, and in this sense it was a categorical victory for liberal modernity. The revolution also generated governing structures based on parliamentary hegemony and proportional suffrage for the new nation, and via the constitutional reforms of 1929 those have endured, down to the present day. The Social Democrats in the end got a federal state with central authority and with institutions such as the courts of public law that could, in theory, ensure the judicious use of

<sup>211</sup>See the comments of António Costa Pinto and Pedro Tavares de Almeida, “On Liberalism and the Emergence of Civil Society in Portugal,” 16–17; and Klaus Tenfelde, “Civil Society and the Middle Classes in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” 100–103, both in *Civil Society Before Democracy: Lessons from Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Nancy Bermeo and Philip Nord (Lanham, 2000).

<sup>212</sup>Grandner, *Gewerkschaftspolitik*, 441–42.

<sup>213</sup>“Abschied vom Herrenhause,” Oct. 26, 1918, S. D. Parteistellen, Carton 117, VGA. See the speeches given in the Herrenhaus on October 23 and 24 in *Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Herrenhauses*, 1918, 1190–268.

power, but the cultural ethos that undergirded the state offered little security to these latter-day Jacobins. If anything, 1920 was a rerun of 1795, not 1793.

Karl Renner later recalled that no one in the National Assembly in October 1918 could have imagined what did in fact happen by the summer of 1920. That is, everyone assumed that new national states would constitute themselves and then, under the leadership of the Entente, they would make open and freely taken decisions about their future economic relationships that would make their further existence possible. The Anschluss was second choice for most Austrians, but it was a more plausible choice than remaining totally isolated, which no one thought feasible or imaginable, but which was what actually happened.<sup>214</sup> Yet, in spite of all the grave disappointments of his regime, Renner was exceedingly proud of his accomplishments in founding the republic. After the collapse in April 1945, he would again invoke the solidaristic image of a democratic “republic of workers, peasants, and burghers” that was created between 1918 and 1920 as a solid norm on which to restore Austria.<sup>215</sup>

The image of a republic of workers and peasants to undergird the new democratic state was and is an intriguing one. It certainly influenced the distinguished scholar, Robert Kann, in whose memory and honor this lecture series is named. Upon Renner’s death in 1951, Kann published a tribute to him in the *Journal of Modern History* that argued that “[t]he construction of a new state out of the misery and confusion of 1918 goes to a very large extent to his credit.... His services as one of the champions of a coalition policy between peasantry, urban burgher class, and labor, which he consistently upheld for three decades, is his lasting political merit.”<sup>216</sup> As is well known, Kann wrote much about and admired Renner, not least because of this vision of an Austria that would be multifunctional but that would also privilege the common “ideology” of democracy in a way that would supersede all other, more divisive normative positions. In 1968, Kann even posed the question of the availability of such a social and occupational triad as the basis for a successful reform of the monarchy, asking whether it would not have been possible for “creative men with a deeply anchored social understanding” in the years before 1918, working in the context of the “agrarian-bourgeois reform movement in conjunction with that of the Social Democratic working class,” to transform the social and constitutional issues facing the monarchy in the last years.<sup>217</sup> Of course, Kann’s answer had to be deeply equivocal. For in the world of 1914, as in the world of 1920, the possibilities of a sudden blending of urban and rural social and cultural interests and a sudden accommodation of the disparities in wealth and opportunity to sustain a workable democracy was far too advanced a project for the twentieth-century Central European world to comprehend.

<sup>214</sup>Karl Renner, *Österreich von der Ersten zur Zweiten Republik* (Vienna, 1953), 17–18.

<sup>215</sup>Siegfried Nasko, ed., *Karl Renner in Dokumenten und Erinnerungen* (Vienna, 1982), 150–51.

<sup>216</sup>Kann, “Karl Renner (December 14, 1870–December 31, 1950),” *Journal of Modern History* 23 (1951): 246.

<sup>217</sup>Kann, “Das demokratische Prinzip im Widerstreit des Zusammenbruches Österreich-Ungarns und des Aufbruchs der Nachfolgestaaten,” in *Die Auflösung*, 335–36.

Even in 1918, this imaginary triad was an artifice of Renner's imagination, since the plausibility of the image did not comprehend the ways in which most real people in the real republic thought about themselves. Most revolutions claim to create new structures to coordinate a more efficient and just use of coercive power, but, if they are to succeed in the long run, they must also help to develop forms of social communication and understanding that can sustain, approve, and defend those structures. In 1918–19, a new liberal democratic state was born, but it would take many decades even to begin to fashion a political culture of tolerance and respect worthy of that state, and even then that process was slow, arduous, and deeply painful.

But that does not detract from the structural and institutional achievements of those years, which were profound, and which clearly, and I think proudly, deserve, as Victor Adler himself suggested on November 9, 1918, the status of being a genuine revolution.