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Europe and the Habsburg Question, 1916-1955

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy (2026)

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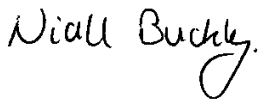

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Niall Michael Buckley

Thesis Summary

Challenging an established consensus in academic historiography which pronounces the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as the definitive conclusion of the Habsburg saga, —and with it the *Reichsidee* dream of a supernatural and supranational political order— this doctoral thesis investigates the underappreciated continued role played by the Habsburg dynasty within European modernity between 1916 and 1955. By careful examination of Emperor-King Karl, his wife Zita and son Archduke Otto, it will be argued that throughout their short reign and lengthy exile, these advocates for a Catholic traditional political order in Central Europe became a persistent rallying-point for Interwar, Second World War and early Cold War reactionaries of various political persuasions. Presenting an in-dept transnational study of the "Habsburg Question" as a matter which intersects with meaningful concepts such as political legitimacy, Central European identity, and Catholic political theory; this study explores counter-narratives to the advance of a 20th-Century European modernity shaped by opposing ascendent Wilsonian principles of enlightenment naturalism, Liberal Democracy, Nationalism and Republicanism. Making use of a wide variety of archival sources —including recently made available Vatican documents— the efforts of Habsburg exiles and domestic advocates to re-insert themselves into European public life are assessed within the context of polemics concerning Third-Way Political Catholicism and its associated allegations of coinciding Clerical-Fascism and anti-Semitism. Making the argument for the importance of mutually unshakable perceptions of nebulous conspiracies of freemasonic intrigue, Judo-Bolshevik subversion, and opposing monarchist machinations which permeated 20th-Century Central Europe; this thesis concludes that the power vacuums and general crises of legitimacy faced by the new so-called "mushroom republics" of Central Europe necessitate a re-evaluation of the Habsburg legacy in favour of the dynasty's indefatigability in the face of calumny, ridicule, and persecution. Adamant to not fade away into obscurity —as had so many other comparable dynasties— in an unceasing balance of tradition and reform, Karl, Zita, and Otto remained ever vigilant as to favourable circumstances to forward the Habsburg *Reichsidee*. They were prepared to re-brand the dynasty in accidental qualities to align with geopolitical realities of their time, but, nevertheless, remained intransigent in their refusal to compromise fundamental claims to hereditary right, Catholic social teaching and supranational outlook.

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Abbreviations

AAEESS	Vatican Secretariat of State, Archives for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs.
AFAD	American Federation of Austrian Democrats.
ACdS	Archivo Centrale dello Stato (Rome).
AOS	Acta Ordinaria Scriptorum Causae Caroli a Domo Austria(e).
CHA	Swiss Federal Archives.
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US) Digital Archive.
CSP	Christian Social Party.
FO	Foreign Office (UK).
HHStA	Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (Vienna).
HNA	Hungarian National Archives.
HOAL	Otto von Habsburg Foundation.
HRE	Holy Roman Empire.
K.u.K.	Imperial and Royal (Austro-Hungarian).
KtVp	Imperial Loyal People's Party (*Kaisertreue Volkspartei*).
KPÖ	Communist Party of Austria.
LON	League of Nations.
NARA	US National Archives and Records Administration.
NS	National Socialist.
NSDAP	National Socialist Germany Workers Party.
ÖA	*Österreichische Aktion* (Austrian Action).
ÖNB	Austrian National Library.
OSS	Office of Strategic Services (US).
ÖVP	Austrian People's Party.
PRO	Public Records Office (UK).
RSB	*Republikanischer Schutzbund* (Republican Defence League).
SD	US State Department.
SOS	Vatican Secretary of State.
SPÖ	Social Democratic Party of Austria.

TS	(Transsumpta Processus Ordinarii Causae Servi Dei Caroli a Domo Austria)
VAA	Vatican Apostolic Archive.
VF	Fatherland Front (*Vaterländische Front*).

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Introduction

Martyn Rady in his 2020 work *The Habsburgs: The Rise and Fall of a World Power* writes: "In the history of most European states, the year 1918 marks the end of a chapter […] For the Habsburg Empire, it is the end of the book."[1] Nonetheless, the October and November revolutions of 1918 gave Europe not only several new sovereign states but also an opposing political movement which would endure for decades, Habsburg Legitimism. This thesis adopts a broad definition of Legitimism as comprised of Habsburg-aligned anti-republican activists who would justify their title from their unalterable affirmation that the new post-Habsburg order was born of treasonous usurpation; and therefore, constituted an illegitimate moral authority. Far from being an easily assessed monolith; the multitude of heterogeneous Legitimist sub-groups varied by class, to a lesser extent religion, and political alignment. Notwithstanding, they were united in continuing to look to the Habsburg dynasty as a common solution to their divergent socio-political diagnoses.

This thesis will answer four pertinent questions indispendible to understanding the Habsburg story as it continued throughout the entire first-half of the 20-Century. Firstly, what influence did the pro-Habsburg (Legitimist) movement have within Political Catholicism in both Austria and Hungary? Secondly, what was the position of the Austrian and Hungarian Catholic laity, bishops and the Vatican regarding the question of restoration of the Monarchy? Thirdly, what political pressure did the United States of America, National Socialist Germany, Fascist Italy and the Soviet Union exert on Austrian domestic politics regarding the constitutional form of the state? Finally, what aid did fellow European constitutional monarchs and other European aristocrats provide to the cause of Habsburg restoration; and to what degree was this aid contingent on the strategic interests of their respective political governments?

Unlike other defeated dynasties exiled from their former thrones, Habsburg Legitimism remained a potent transnational political and cultural force across generations.

[1] Martyn Rady, *The Habsburgs: The Rise and Fall of a World Power* (London: Allen Lane, 2020), p. 323.

Popes, Prime ministers, Presidents and Dictators sought to the utilise the dynasty as either a saviour or scapegoat for Central Europe. This thesis forwards three core arguments. Firstly, rather than the object of sporadic nostalgic polemics, Legitimism remained an impactful political force well after the republican revolutions of 1918 and drove the national discourse of multiple successor states of the Habsburg empire decades after the First World War. Secondly, the Habsburg question was internationalised by divergent Great Powers in Europe and beyond in such a way that the exiled dynasty had to persistently adapt to fluctuating geopolitical circumstances to remain relevant, all the while not compromising on the immutable tenets of their inherited model of Catholic Monarchy. Thirdly, the supernational and supernatural *Reichsidee* doctrine of Habsburg Legitimism provided the ongoing catalyst for Austrian/German differentiation within a Cold War between Vienna and Berlin and therefore an indispensable force in creating the modern Austrian national identity.

A number of differing types of sources are used to forward these above arguments. In addition to the personal letters of Habsburg family members, this thesis undertaking is underpinned by a vast collection of primary source diplomatic and institutional intelligence correspondence from a range of relevant geopolitical actors such as the Holy See, Austria, Italy, United States, and United Kingdom. This thesis is aware of the limitations inherent to being confined to English, German and Italian sources in a study of Central European history. These institutional sources nonetheless provide unparalleled insights to the motivations, apprehensions, and prejudices of key decision makers with influence in the region.

Legitimists often coalesced around print publications such as periodicals, newspapers, and multivolume hagiographies. While some publications such as the Vienna *Reichspost* or Budapest *Pester Lloyd* had a broad appeal on the Catholic Right, others such as *Vaterland*, *Schwarz-Gelb*, *Die alte Front, Das Neue Reich,* and *Die Monarchie* were much more the purview of either a niche sub-set of erudite traditionalist scholars or single-issue activists. A third sub-set of Legitimist publications include the Second World War diaspora English and German-language *The Voice of Austria* and *Donau-Echo.* While the differing qualitative impact of these myriad of publications is difficult to assess, they not only provide a spectator narrative of unfolding events but are instrumental protagonists in

shaping the course of Legitimism by consistently setting the tone for how the movement was communicated to devotees, opponents, and bystanders alike.

In early 20th-Century Austria, according to thinking of the day —despite notable porosity underappreciated in current historiography—[2] there existed three fixed *Läger* (political camps): Catholic Conservativism, Austromarxism and Pan-Germanism. Johanna Rainio-Niemi rightly observes how the three traditional camps were not mere political parties but "subcultural blocs" constituting "groups into which one was born and socialised."[3] Give these deep-rooted political identities, achieving Habsburg restoration often seemed much more a zero-sum game than the unifying proposition it was presented as. Political Catholicism –in Austria and beyond– for example, often saw Jews as agents of an organised naturalism which existed in opposition to their Habsburg *Reichsidee*. A majority of Legitimists were therefore wary of counting upon the support of Jewish advocates for Habsburg civilisation and positioned their struggle as one in opposition to Jewish influence in the affairs of state on the grounds of –divergent and intersecting– racial, cultural, and religious Anti-Semitism. Legitimism, strictly understood, was reluctant to countenance allegedly fair-weather collaborators –many of them of Jewish heritage– who largely gravitated to Karl or Otto's vision of Austrian-ness out of a desire for a tolerant multicultural state without national animosity, rather than a rigid rejection of the idea of popular sovereignty from below. Unlike many legitimists holding explicit racial animosity towards Jews, however, Otto publicly praised how many "Jews were close to Austrian tradition."[4]

Much thought and many publications have sought to address both the root causes of the First World War as well as the factors which precipitated the demise of the Habsburg Monarchy. These coroner inquests have developed an expansive historiography with a consensus of historians carrying out a post-mortem autopsy which, up until recently, has forwarded the teleological conclusion of the Habsburg Empire's *causa mortis*

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[2] Julia Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933-38* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 233.
[3] Johanna Rainio-Niemi, *The Ideological Cold War: The Politics of Neutrality in Austria and Finland* (London: Routledge, 2013,) p. 24.
[4] Unknown, "Otto von Habsburg über Czernowitz," *Die Stimme Mitteilungsblatt für die Bukowiner* (Tel-Aviv). February 1, 1951, p. 4.

being misadventure in the face of unstoppable modernity. This thesis expands upon a growing nascent historiographical corpus which challenges the inevitability of the Habsburg Empire's dissolution and denial of the role played by proponents of Habsburg-led supernatural inspired supranationalism in Central Europe. While much of the existing scholarship has focused on national histories, this academic intervention adopts a contrastingly transnational approach.

This transnational methodology is nessessciated by the nature of Habsburg Supranationalism. Likewise, the thesis concerns itself with heavy topics which often adopt a multitude of theological, philosphical, political and emotional meanings. Chief amonsgt them are how the concerns of contemporary legitimists where profoundly shaped by heart-felt fears of freemasonic infiltration, impending Bolshevik invasion, and Jewish subversion. These anxieties provide a frame of reference to understanding the enviroment historical actors inhabited; motivating action and shaping political identity. They are reoccurring topics of fixation for politicians on the Catholic Right, local ecclesiastical hierarchy, and the Vatican. Furthermore, Karl and Otto —as well as respective popes Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII— were quick to ascribe religious meaning to the exercise of their office and held to the social doctrine of the enthronement of the Kingship of Christ over public life.[5] Many Jews gravitated to Habsburg civilisation as a pre-Nationalist bastion of harmonious multicultural toleration in contrast to the more prejudicial Romanov rule of Russia to the East and later National Socialism to Austria's North. Nonetheless, the substantive nature of the Habsburg *Reichsidee* did not see toleration as a telos but rather a means to achieving a Catholic-inspired social order in the shadow of old Christendom. The critical role occupied by non-Catholics in the Habsburg Question will therefore also be examined in detail.

Furthermore, to gain a holistic appreciation of the complexities surrounding the Habsburg question, one must look at intricate nuances of Central European bilateral and parallel inter-personal aristocratic international diplomacy. The most recent original doctoral works on the topic of Interwar Austrian Monarchism are the 1956, 1972 and 1979

[5] That is, the use of law to achieve the structuring of public life in accordance with a Thomistic understanding of natural law and the faith and morals of the Catholic Church.

scholarly works from Friedrich Wagner, Blair Ralph Holmes, and Ingrid Mosser respectively.[6] These academic interventions, which view the question of constitutional form as primarily an internal matter for Austrian domestic politics, are in turn based not on an examination of archival material but rather contemporary Legitimist publications, post-1945 memoirs, and testimonies presented at de-Nazification trials.[7] Adam Kozuchowski notes that in a post-Second World War re-assessment of Austria-Hungary and her legacy, the "monarchy was rediscovered as a shining centre of intellectual and artistic life, which now seemed intriguingly modern and original."[8] Nonetheless, for writers of History in the late 20th Century, Kozuchowski further argues, "from the perspective of national historiographies, the Habsburgs were a final chapter that closed an era of feudalism, religious wars and dynastic struggles."[9] Furthermore, Ernest Gellner in 1998 would term the Habsburgs an "old and rigid dynasty, long linked with hierarchy, authoritarianism, and obscurantist dogmatism" which was an anthesis of the "Open Society" of the new millennium.[10]

Importantly, within the last decade, Habsburg historiography has undergone rapid and through-provoking progress from its dormant consensus of Habsburg rule as an anachronistic redoubt of ridged and authoritarian neo-absolutism which was teleologically destined for disintegration in the face of an un-stoppable modernity. Steven Beller rather proposes that the Habsburg Empire "was not so much a 'prison of the peoples' as a nursery," prohibiting divisive political nationalism while all the same time fostering

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[6] Friedrich Wagner, "Der österreichische Legitimismus 1918–1938 seine Politik und Publizistik" (PhD thesis, University of Vienna, 1956); Blair Ralph Holmes, "Austrian Monarchism, 1918–1938" (PhD thesis, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1972); Ingrid Mosser, "Der Legitimismus und die Frage der Habsburger-Restauration in der innenpolitischen Zielsetzung des autoritären Regimes in Österreich (1933–1938)" (PhD thesis, University of Vienna, 1979).

[7] Christian Dörner and Barbara Dörner-Fazeny, *Theodor von Hornbostel: 1889 – 1973* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2006), p. 124.

[8] Adam Kozuchowski, "Der Diskrete Charme Der Dekadenz Und Das Posthume Fortleben Österreich-Ungarns." In *Das Integrative Empire: Wissensproduktion Und Kulturelle Praktiken in Habsburg-Zentraleuropa*, ed Johannes Feichtinger and Heidemarie Uhl, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2023), p. 321.

[9] Ibid., p. 332.

[10] Ernest Gellner. *Language and Solitude: Wittgenstein, Malinowski and the Habsburg Dilemma*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 32 cited in Adam Kozuchowski, "Der Diskrete Charme Der Dekadenz Und Das Posthume Fortleben Österreich-Ungarns." In *Das Integrative Empire: Wissensproduktion Und Kulturelle Praktiken in Habsburg-Zentraleuropa*, ed Johannes Feichtinger and Heidemarie Uhl, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2023), p. 332.

regional cultural development.[11] John Boyer's recent work on the crisis of legitimacy and lack of shared common identity in the new Austrian republic stands out as a particularly pertinent contribution deserving of close analysis.[12] Other ever more recent welcome additions to the academic literature include Werner Suppanz's work on "Ghosts of Old Austria" in the young First Republic[13] and Dieter A. Binder's contribution arguing for a *Pietas Austriaca* narrative in the cold war era as a Habsburg legacy.[14]

Most laudable is the work of Christopher Brennan's 2025 *Remembering and Forgetting the Habsburg Monarchy in the First Austrian Republic*.[15] His work on the role of Seipel as facilitating a hitherto seemingly aimless Christian Social Party (CSP) through a period of post-Imperial transition and his appreciation of the Church's role in supplying much needed legitimacy to the young Interwar republic is distinctly commendatory.[16] This doctoral thesis seeks to dig ever-deeper into this inter-play between Legitimism and Political Catholicism, between Church and State, and between democracy and authority. This thesis gladly takes up the baton from these endeavours and makes the argument that the Habsburg saga ends not with the fall of the Monarchy in 1918 nor the death of its last emperor and king, Karl, in 1922. The Habsburg mission as a coherent and viable compass in navigating the trials and tribulations of modernity did not lose its magnetism with the First World War but persisted with fluctuating vigour and tenacity to the signing of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955.

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[11] Steven Beller, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1815-1918*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 274. Pieter Judson likewise argues that nationalism and Imperial identity need not be seen in direct irreconcilable opposition, see Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*. (London: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 281.

[12] John W. Boyer, *Austria 1867-1955*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), p. 311 & 372.

[13] Werner Suppanz, "»Gespenster Des Alten Österreich«: Der Kampf Um Die Deutungsmacht Über Die Habsburgische Vergangenheit in Der Ersten Republik." In Das Integrative Empire: Wissensproduktion Und Kulturelle Praktiken in Habsburg-Zentraleuropa, ed Johannes Feichtinger and Heidemarie Uhl (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2023).

[14] Dieter A. Binder, "Pietas Austriaca?: Vom Habsburgischen Erbe Zur Ersatzideologie." In Das Integrative Empire: Wissensproduktion Und Kulturelle Praktiken in Habsburg-Zentraleuropa, ed Johannes Feichtinger and Heidemarie Uhl, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2023).

[15] Christopher Brennan. "Remembering and Forgetting the Habsburg Monarchy in the First Austrian Republic" in Ulrike Harmat (eds.) *Das Erbe der Habsburgermonarchie in den Nachfolgestaaten Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918 Brüche und Kontinuitäten* (Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 2025), p. 97-132.

[16] Ibid., p. 99-100.

The Habsburg Question was many things to many people, both a principle to strive for and conversely a sporadically convenient means to forward other political objectives. It occupies a salient role in Central European Political Catholicism as a rallying point for the opponents of a Wilsonian modernity shaped by Republicanism, Nationalism, and Liberal Democracy. The fortunes and prospects for restoration of the Habsburg family ebbed and flowed throughout the almost forty-years under examination. Nonetheless, their values and objectives remained the same. Adopting the rhetoric of Nationalism, Supranationalism, Corporativism or Democracy whenever convenient, they never tied themselves to one political ideology or programme beyond that of their understanding of Kingship of Christ.

Chapter 1: Double Eagle as Phoenix or Prey? (1916-1919)

Chapter one will address how in her final two years of life, the Habsburg Empire — bridging the Christendom of old and the upheaval of subsequent Modernity— was perceived by contemporary state actors and how the dynasty sought to uphold its narrative of a monopolised *Antemurale Christianitatis* while all the time besieged by Wilsonian idealism from without and increasingly from within.[1] Special attention will be paid to the Habsburg-inspired concept of Austrian-ness;[2] how it was propagated and how it was perceived abroad and within Central Europe.

While the outbreak of the First World War was met with jubilant cheers of bellicose crowds across Europe, a foreboding cloud permeated the halls of power within the Imperial palace of Vienna and behind the tall walls of the Vatican. Privately the future heir to the Imperial and Royal (K.u.K.) throne of Austria, Archduke Karl von Habsburg, would confide to his wife, Zita, that he longed for the "carefree happiness" of a pre-war homelife which contrasted starkly with the "endless worries" of "fearing for the life of each of the heroes" under his command.[3] His spiritual father, Pope Benedict XV, would publicly condemn the war as "the Suicide of Civilised Europe"[4] finding its root in the public abandoning of reason and true religion, warning that without divine intervention, "the end of civilisation would seem to be at hand."[5] In an age of rapid technological and ideological upheaval, the shattering of the decades uninterrupted Belle Époque "long peace" of the late 19th Century constituted the opening of a pandora's box which unleashed a wave of political upheaval proving self-destructive to the previous Imperial status-quo and usher in a new lasting Wilsonian order.

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[1] *Antemurale christianitatis* refers to the notion of a civilisation claiming a mantle to serve as a bulwark of Christendom against outside encroachment.
[2] *Österreichertum*.
[3] AOS: Tom. II. Index 1480, July 1916 letter from Karl von Habsburg to Zita von Habsburg found in Elisabeth Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?: Band 2: Politische Dokumente zu Kaiser und König Karl I. (IV.) aus internationalen Archiven* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2004), p. 125.
[4] John Pollar. "Papal Diplomacy and The Great War," *New Blackfriars* 96, no. 1062 (2015): p. 151.
[5] Benedict XV, *Ad beatissimi Apostolorum* (Vatican: Tipografia Vaticana, 1914).

1.1: Coronation.

Adam Kozuchowski observes that while monarchy itself was the normative default of European political life before 1918, nonetheless, "Austria-Hungary was an exception—it had to emphasize feudal loyalty because of the lack of a comparably attractive national idea."[6] One German-American author, Wolf von Schierbrand,[7] described Austria in 1917 as "the stoutest ramparts of mediaeval feudalism." [8] With the "French Revolution [having] left the masses of Austria and Hungary untouched," he argued to his American readership that "progress was in all cases the result of dynastic concession."[9] The contemporary von Schierbrand juxtaposed what he saw as the Habsburg dynasty's Catholic reactionary "principle of divine rulership" with the Empire's Jewish population, writing that the latter sub-group "dominates in the press, finance, commerce and industry. In fact, progress in every shape throughout Austria is a synonym for Judaism."[10]

Recent notable interjections in Habsburg historiography —such as Natasha Wheatley's 2023 monograph *The Life and Death of States: Central Europe and the Transformation of Modern Sovereignty*— grapple with the Habsburg battle against European modernity. The Dynasty's leadership was centred on a supranational and supernatural state model in which "historical actors sought to ground and explain sovereignty after the eclipse of divine right" often in reaction to how "the rise of (legal) positivism recast the state —rather than nature, or reason, or God— as the source of law."[11] It is this positivistic philosophical presupposition which guides Schierbrand as he described Vienna as "the most retrograde and exclusive court in the world" with "mediaeval views and customs still prevailing." Even if he would, somewhat

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[6] Adam Kozuchowski, *The Afterlife of Austria-Hungary: The Image of the Habsburg Monarchy in Interwar Europe*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), p. 13-14.
[7] Born of aristocratic German-Saxon linage and émigré to America in his youth.
[8] Wolf von Schierbrand, *Austria-Hungary: The polyglot Empire*. (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1917), p. 136.
[9] Ibid., p. 136.
[10] Ibid., p. 146 & 143.
[11] Natasha Wheatley. *The Life and Death of States: Central Europe and the Transformation of Modern Sovereignty*. (New York: Princeton University Press, 2023). p. 23 & 15.

magnanimously, qualify his assessment conceding that there were "some improvements by the present imperial couple: Carl and Zita," nonetheless, he argued, "it is the spirit of the darkest Middle Ages that is still reigning omnipotent at the Vienna court."[12]

This was the international perception of many towards Austria upon Karl's succession to the throne after the death of his great-uncle, Franz Josef I, on 21st November 1916. Pieter Judson notes how it was "important for the legitimacy of the dynasty and the continuity of the state" that Karl "successfully inhabit the role of imperial father figure" i.e., patriarch, to his peoples.[13] However, it was not merely an objective to establish his paternal image in the hearts of his people, nor solely a desire for constitutional legitimacy in the Transleithanian[14] half of his Empire that Karl pushed for a rapid coronation.[15] The young emperor was convinced of the quasi-sacramental grace which such a ceremony and oath could afford him. When Karl represented the Dual-Monarchy at George V's coronation in Westminster in 1911, for example, he reported to his fiancée —future empress Zita— that he was underwhelmed by the affair.[16] In contrast, he invested great energy into the planning of his own enthronement, embracing the more supernatural —explicitly Catholic— and mysterious aspects of the Hungarian royal liturgical rite, seeing in it an opportunity to reinvigorate his Empire through ritual steeped in symbolism.

This would however come at a price. Count Arthur Polzer-Hoditz in his 1929 book would make public how he had "tried to persuade his master [Karl] not to take the Hungarian constitutional oath because all constitutional endeavours [at reform] would break against the irresistible wall of Hungarian feudalism."[17] The apostolic crown of St. Stephen "was imbued with a 'doctrine' that conferred on its wearer certain rights and

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[12] Schierbrand, *Austria-Hungary* p. 156.
[13] Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (London: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 418.
[14] Eastern —Hungarian— half of the Dual-Monarchy, officially titled The Lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen.
[15] Unknown. "Austrian Ruler's Title; Emperor Charles I. of Austria and King Charles IV of Hungary. Official titles announced by Premier Tisza; Coronation to be held Dec. 30," *New York Times*. December 19, 1916, p. 3.
[16] AOS: Tomus (Tom) II, Index 758. June 22, 1911, letter from Karl von Habsburg (London) to Zita von Bourbon-Parma (Rome) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 44-45.
[17] Arthur Polzer-Hoditz, *Kaiser Karl. Aus der Geheimmappe seines Kabinetts-Chefs* (Vienna: Amalthea-Verlag, 1929) cited in Oscar Jászi, "Some Recent Publications Concerning the Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy," *The Journal of Modern History* 2, no. 1 (1930): p. 105.

certain responsibilities."[18] Swearing "by the living God, by the blessed Virgin Mary, and by all the saints of God," Karl undertook to "preserve the rights, constitution, legal independence and territorial integrity of Hungary."[19] The then still officially neutral American ambassador described the event as being "carried out with great pomp and ceremony and in strict keeping with the formula observed since the crowning of the first Christian King of Hungary, Stephen, in the year 1000."[20] Pointing his sword to the four corners of the world the newly crowned king vowed to protect the realm for all enemies. In addition to this customary gesture, so ardent was his conscience in viewing the war as a fratricidal conflict which imperilled the existence of the crown, he immediately declared himself disposed to seeking an "honourable peace" and included such a commitment as an additional oath attached to his December 1916 coronation oath and subsequently published manifesto to the peoples of the Empire promising to "do everything, as soon as available, to constrain the terrors and sacrifices of the war, and to regain the seriously missed blessings of peace."[21] The international press welcomed the new spirit of Karl's reign — demonstrated by cabinet appointments and peace oath— as a development which they eagerly saw as a break from his Prussian ally.[22]

Karl, while lacking the gravitas which his predecessor had accumulated over decades, did bring youthful enthusiasm and first-hand front-line testimony of the hideous nature of industrial warfare. Domestic propaganda highlighted his baptism of fire as having not merely merited the inheriting his crown but also the new title as "War Lord,"[23] now able to sue for peace from a position of strength. This service to the realm at the front lines and a decisively elaborate public coronation in the midst of war was calculated to

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[18] Ferenc Hörcher and Thomas Lorman, *A History of the Hungarian Constitution: Law, Government and Political Culture in Central Europe* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2019), p. 144-45.
[19] Primasi Leveltár, Nachlass Csernoch, Acta coronationis Caroli IV found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 53.
[20] NARA: 863.001K14/4, January 6, 1917, report no. 2372 from Frederic Courtland Penfield (American ambassador, Vienna) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[21] NARA: 863.001785/29, December 20, 1916, report no. 2321 from Frederic Courtland Penfield (American ambassador, Vienna) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
Unknown. "The Allies and Austria." *Times*, December 23, 1916, p. 7; Unknown. "AUSTRIANS LONG FOR PEACE.; Emperor Likely to Put Pressure on the Kaiser, It Is Said. report that he will put pressure on the Kaiser for peace after his coronation." *New York Times*, December 29, 1916, p. 2.
[22] Unknown. "Anti-Prussian Rally in Austria." *Times*, December 27, 1916, p. 5.
[23] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 792, Fasc. 1 Famglia Imperiale, Ff. 32-33, November 23, 1916, report from Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

inspire filial piety throughout the Habsburg Empire. However, not all historians are convinced by the role of ceremonialism in fostering popular devotion. Kozuchowski argues that "as long as Austria-Hungary actually existed, Austrian patriotism had been generally considered as nothing more than a superficial by-product of imperial pomp and a ridiculous dream of bureaucrats."[24] Others such as Laurence Cole and Daniel Unowsky take a more moderate position, pointing to the existence of a "long-standing belief in the 'salvation' offered by the divinely ordained monarch" which had "retained a residual effectiveness right down until the collapse of the Habsburg state, albeit in a much changed, weaker form than in earlier times."[25]

Magyar elites were certainly more concerned with the formal recognition of their privileged constitutional position within the Dual-Monarchy than drawing from the occasion of coronation a conviction of Karl as possessing qualities of supernatural salvation. Nevertheless, for Karl and his most loyal supporters already won over to the Universal Empire (*Reichsidee*) ideal, the coronation firmly situated him as the legitimate king of Hungary, with irrevocable obligations and inalienable rights to —with God's grace— protect the faith and realm from enemies within and without. In 1934 the former cabinet chief of the late Emperor Karl, Polzer-Hoditz, would write of the tension between Vienna and Berlin:

> "It was not only a struggle between the Catholic Habsburgs and the Protestant Hohenzollerns, not only a struggle for the supremacy of two dynasties, but essentially and essentially a struggle between two irreconcilable contradictions: the Habsburgs' supranational federalist *Reichsidee* and the Hohenzollerns' national-centralist *Staatsidee*."[26]

Legitimists, like the Count, were doggedly defensive against conflation between a Supranationalism —which "values and protects every individual characteristic of a nation"— and a secular "internationalism;" the latter being seen as either the "uniform

[24] Kozuchowski, *Afterlife of Austria-Hungary*, p. 3.
[25] Laurence Cole and Daniel L. Unowsky (eds.). *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007) p. 13.
[26] Arthur Graf Polzer-Hoditz, "Der Weg Zu Mitteleuropa," *Der Christliche Ständestaat: Österreichische Wochenhefte*. April 22, 1934, p. 4.

grey whitewash of the communist proletariat" or the equally sinister "pseudo-culture" of "international big business."[27]

Karl's self-image as a ruler was tightly bound in the perpetuation of the idea of Austrian-ness as an historically-rooted —but not static— umbrella identity which existed parallel to, and over, national identities rather than competing with them directly. Cole and Unowsky additionally observe that "the Habsburg myth was adaptable and responsive to change, despite its basically conservative principles."[28] Alas, the much-revered Hungarian constitution, while tracing its tradition to the Middle-Ages, was not actually formally codified and thus its "flexibility" would be weaponised by the Magyar elite to restrain overreach from Vienna.[29] Even in the face of vexatious Magyar intransigence, abroad to an international audience Karl set out to rebrand himself as a conservative reformer and the image of Habsburg dynasty as peace-loving victims of unprovoked aggression keen to do away with what the war had become. While holding the line that Austria originally did possess a just *casus belli* against Serbia for the fighting of a regional —localised— defensive war for her survival, it was universally acknowledged that Karl bore no personal culpability for the initiation of that war and was not even seriously consulted on the matter.[30]

U.S. ambassador to Vienna, Frederic Courtland Penfield, reported back to Washington D.C. on 3rd December 1916, that in his concluding words upon first meeting Karl, "the ruler of less than a week remarked, 'Governing anywhere now is no easy matter.'"[31] There was abundant speculation on the part of Penfield that Karl's half-German heritage and his military background would result in a more Prussian style of rule. Initially, the fact that Karl chose to retain a great deal of the Imperial Court's old-guard as his advisors drew much surprise, many abroad expecting Karl to immediately fill positions of political and military responsibility with those who possess an appetite for wide-sweeping reforms. This assessment would change by 26th December 1916 with Penfield

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[27] Ibid., p. 4.
[28] Cole and Unowsky, *Limits of Loyalty*, p. 13
[29] Hörcher and Lorman, *History of the Hungarian Constitution*, p. 142.
[30] Unknown, "Heart-To-Heart Talks" *Punch,* February 6, 1918, p. 92.
[31] NARA: 863.001785/27, December 3, 1916, report no. 2259 from Frederic Courtland Penfield (American ambassador, Vienna) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

noting that Karl was replacing personnel with a "frequency that was bewildering."[32] Sections of the UK press even took the opportunity of the coronation to sarcastically snipe as to whether the pointing of "the sword of St. Stephen towards the four corners of the earth, to indicate his intention to protect his empire against all its foes" was directed at the Entente or rather perhaps Austria's nominal ally to the North, Germany.[33]

[32] NARA: 863.00/52, December 26, 1916, report no. 2331 from Frederic Courtland Penfield (American ambassador, Vienna) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[33] Unknown, "Charivaria," *Punch* January 10, 1917, p. 17.

1.2 Polemic Austrian-ness and Propaganda.

Empress Zita would retrospectively recount to the Vatican that Karl had remarked to her that "in central Europe there was not enough room for two German kingdoms."[1] The longstanding consensus of prominent historians such as AJP Taylor summarise that when "Germany was now committed to a bid for the mastery of Europe; […] the Habsburgs were no more than auxiliaries."[2] This teleological denial of Habsburg agency is common to established historiography. It is of paramount importance to understand that the Habsburg mindset —carefully cultivated over a centuries-long evolution of separate Austrian-ness— distinguished itself from its contemporary allies as much as its enemies. Essayist Hugo von Hofmannsthal, as a self-conscious ambassador for this Austrian-ness, rejected Prussian efforts to de-Latinise the German language and in his prominent 1915 lecture *We Austrians and Germany* opened his remarks as a guest speaker to a Berlin audience by declaring "it may be said that among the countries of the world, Austria is for Germans one of the least known or most poorly understood."[3] Furthermore, Ignaz Seipel in his 1916 work *Nation und Staat* —before his appointment as Imperial Minister— would write: "The Irish have long since had the same language as the English and are still a separate nation."[4]

Historians such as John Boyer note that the tangible mistrust within the Central powers camp had proven it necessary for the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) and Austrian Christian Social Party (CSP) "to address critical issues of 'Austrianness' and to reconsider previous their covert toleration of a moderate German nationalism under the

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[1] Congregatio De Causis Sanctorum. *Beatificationis Et Canonizationis Servi Dei Caroli E Domo Austriae Imperatoris Ac Regis (1887-1922): Positio Super Virtutibus Et Fama Sanctitatis Vol.* I.. (Vatican City: Tipografia Guerra s. r. l., 1994), p. 120.

[2] AJP Taylor. *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918* (London: Penguin Book, 1948/1990), p. 251.

[3] Hugo von Hofmannsthal and David S. Luft, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and the Austrian Idea: Selected Essays and Addresses, 1906 – 1927,* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue Univ. Press, 2011), p. 53 & 67.

[4] Ignaz Seipel, *Nation und Staat* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1916), p. 5; It was little known in Central Europe that while Ireland does have her own language, the Celtic language, *Gaeilge*, it was a minority language discriminated against by law in this period under United Kingdom rule. Nonetheless, the language was undergoing a revival parallel to the rise of Irish Nationalism.

umbrella of a dynastic supranationalism."[5] For decades leading up to Karl's reign, many Austrians increasingly looked more to their common German-ness to the North than their common supranational Catholicity and civic dynastic patriotism within the Dual-Monarchy.[6] Political parties would now have to grapple with the question as to whether their primary allegiance was to the Imperial dynasty or the German nation. Any answer would carry with it significant ramifications for the future of the Habsburg Empire, either disintegration and annexation into a Greater-Germany or perhaps chartering a path independent of Berlin and out of the war.

Mere weeks after Karl's coronation, the UK satirical magazine *Punch* imagined a fictional conversation between Tisza and Karl in which the Hungarian aristocratic Prime-Minister affirms the newly crowned King of Hungary's desire for peace despite Prussian objections:

> "Sire, you are a young man, but you are a scion of a great and ancient House, which was powerful and illustrious when the Hohenzollerns were but mean and petty barbarian princeling. Withdraw yourself, while the opportunity is still with you, from the fatal domination of this vain and inflated upstart who endeavours to serve only his own selfish design […] The world would glorify your name."[7]

Prussia as a kingdom and the Hohenzollerns as a dynastic house were seen in the British imagination as aspirational parvenues, relatively new to the European stage and demonstrating no shortage of appetite for further conquest. The same was not so for their view of the Habsburg dynasty and Austria. However, a calculated campaign of propaganda over the course of the war would soon change such perceptions.

Nonetheless, Papal Nuncio in Munich, Eugenio Pacelli,[8] recounted to Vatican Secretary of State (SOS) what he saw as the war-induced softening of traditional Prussian anti-clericalism and a newfound appreciation for the need for peace. While some opinion in the German *Kaiserreich* in 1917 still held that a total military victory was possible;

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[5] John W. Boyer, *Culture and political crisis in Vienna: Christian socialism in power, 1897-1918* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 378.
[6] Cole and Unowsky, *Limits of Loyalty*, p. 11-12.
[7] Unknown, "Heart-To-Heart Talks," *Punch,* January 10, 1917, p. 18.
[8] Pacelli would go on to become a pivotal figure in the Habsburg Question, not just as Papal Nuncio to Bavaria and Germany (from 1917 to 1930), but even more so later as Cardinal Secretary of State (between 1930 and 1939) and then Pope Pius XII (from 1939 and 1958).

nonetheless, the Hohenzollern Crown Prince Wilhelm was under no illusion as to the reality of the Central Powers' predicament. Pacelli, envisioned a new style of Hohenzollern rulership. This future generational shift —similar to Vienna— was theorised to potentially limit the influence of German general staff on non-military matters, i.e., undoing the ever-encroaching de facto Junker dictatorship of Ludendorff and Hindenburg.[9] The Vatican received reports of how this would-be Wilhelm III had the desire for a more democratic and federalised post-war Prussia along the same lines as Emperor Karl to the south, and would in-turn also respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Habsburg Empire.[10]

However, such a prospective programme of government breaking from the centralist and Pan-German undercurrents permeating the Juncker-dominated German General Staff was not possible without the same generational change which had occurred in Austria-Hungary. While the average Catholic and Protestant in Austria and Germany throughout the course of the war were deepening fraternal bonds and strengthening a sense of ecumenic and national identity,[11] with Wilhelm II in power in Berlin, the same cannot be said for the respective hierarchies of Central Power leadership. As the war progressed, distance grew between Vienna and Berlin. The ascension of Karl to the throne, especially his receptive disposition towards Pope Benedict XV's peace plan —which predated Franz Josef's death—[12] was a catalyst for the rapid deterioration of bi-lateral relations between the wartime allies.

While within their private correspondence Karl would refer to the German Emperor as his "dear friend,"[13] the true nature of their mutual perceptions of one another was far from amicable. In the Summer of 1917, British Foreign Office diplomat assigned

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[9] VAA: 3. Pos V Sovrani; 1 Famglia Imperiale della Germania, Fasc, 3, Ff. 2-3, August 23, 1917, report no. 1124 from Eugenio Pacelli (Papal Nuncio, Munich) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[10] VAA: 3. Pos V Sovrani; 1 Famglia Imperiale della Germania, Fasc, 3, Ff. 4-6, copy of undated (presumed August 1917) report entitled "Der deutsche Kronprinz."
[11] Patrick J. Houlihan, *Catholicism and the Great War: Religion and Everyday Life in Germany and Austria-Hungary, 1914–1922.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 262.
[12] Christopher Brennan, "*Reforming Austria-Hungary: Beyond his control or beyond his capacity? The domestic policies of Emperor Karl I November 1916 – May 1917*" (PhD thesis, London School of Economics (Department of International History), United Kingdom, 2012,) p. 48.
[13] HHStA, PA I, 504, fol. 977, April 12, 1917, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Vienna) to Wilhelm II von Hohenzollern (Berlin) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p.172-75.

to the Holy See, John D. Gregory, reported back to London how —according to the intermediaries of prince Sixtus and prince Xavier von Bourbon-Parma— Karl and Zita were "entirely pro-French and pro-English."[14] The report would go on to describe the Austrian Imperial family as "strongly anti-German" and holding particular disdain for Wilhelm II and Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria "both on political and private grounds," the latter being described as "a coarse dissolute Prussianised atheist who bullies the [Austrian] Emperor and Empress for their religious and moral principles."[15] Such tension did not escape the attention of the hostile Entente press which revelled in the increasingly public discord within the opposing Central Powers alliance.[16]

While the British press imagined conversations between the young emperor and his foreign minister Count Czernin which exalted Karl's desire for peace as being "a real Emperor and father of his people," they likewise painted the image of a captive ruler, sovereign in name only, trapped by Prussian militarism.[17] Even if these accounts were written and consumed as self-conscious fabrication for the effect of propaganda, they are indeed true reflections of the reality of Karl's predicament and demonstrate a profound sympathy for the young emperor-king in segments of the Anglo-sphere. In this way not all the UK press were complacent to adopt the so-called "*Austria est delenda*" position on the Habsburg Question rallying behind the "orange oriflamme" carried by Dr. Robert Seton-Watson and the Czechoslovakia/Yugoslavia sympathetic Fleet Street.[18]

From the onset, British historian –and enthusiast for Pan-Slavism– R.W. Seton-Watson, declared to his readers:

> "The key to the whole situation lies in Austria-Hungary, and that upon the fate of its provinces and races in this war depends to a very great extent the question

[14] PRO, FO: 371/3134, fol. 334-336. June 02/03, 1917, UK Foreign Office memorandum from John D. Gregory (London) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 198-200.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Unknown, "Heart-To-Heart Talks," *Punch.* February 6, 1918, p. 92.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Unknown, "Our Booking Office" *Punch*. February 28, 1917, p. 147-148; Fleet street being the epicentre of newspaper publishing in London, England.

whether the new Europe which is to issue from this fiery ordeal is to be better than the old Europe which is crumbling in ruins before our eyes."[19]

For Seton-Watson the Habsburg Empire had long been "the bulwark of Christendom" and was "unique among States."[20] Such a long-standing civilisational mandate would by no means preserve the dynasty from the harshest of denunciations from the nationally minded Slavophile Anglo-press. To men like Seton-Watson, the political order of "old Europe" had produced the current war and justice demanded that such an order be slain by it. Replacing the Christendom of old, journalists, historians, political scientists, and activists —the lines delineating such fields often being blurred— proactively advocated for a new secular order of fraternity, equality, and liberty between nations. To this end, the old order needed to be further delegitimised as archaic and bellicose. Seton-Watson went so far as to translate the mysterious "A.E.I.O.U." motto of Frederick III —a common motif of 20th Century Habsburg propaganda— as "*Austriae est Imperare Orbi Universo*" (Austria's it is to Rule the Universe)[21] rather than the alternate —more defensive— dynasty-approved translation: *Austria erit in orbe ultima* (Austria will survive till the end of the world).[22]

By the summer of 1918, with the end of the war possibly in sight, international media in the wake of the public fallout of the Sixtus affair highlighted how Austria over the course of the war had become a mere vassal to Prussian militarism with cartoons depicting Karl stumbling with an comical large oversized imposed Pickelhaube blinding his sight and restricting his manoeuvre.[23] Berlin was aware of the problem from the beginning of the war[24] but towards the end of the conflict, detailed intel reports of irreconcilable tension between wartime Austrian and German allies made their way to Washington.[25] With the April 1918 resignation of Imperial Foreign Minister, Count Ottokar Czernin, in the wake of the Sixtus-affair, the Papal Nuncio in Vienna lamented: "The damage caused to the monarchical principle and to the Emperor himself is

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[19] R. W. Seton-Watson, J. Dover Wilson, Alfred E. Zimmern and Arthur Greenwood, *The War and Democracy* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1914), p. 122.
[20] Ibid., p. 123 & 126.
[21] Ibid., p. 125.
[22] Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, p. 20.
[23] Leonard Raven Hill, "The Bosching of Austria," *Punch,* July 10, 1918, p. 19.
[24] John W. Boyer, *Culture and political crisis in Vienna: Christian socialism in power, 1897-1918* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 378.
[25] NARA: 863.00/87, August 7, 1918, report entitled "Austrian feeling towards Germany" from American consulate, Malmö (Sweden) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

incalculable."[26] Furthermore, in his assessment on the religious environment of the Empire, the Nuncio warned of the "enemies of religion" in Austria working to depict the Imperial family as traitors to *Deutschtum*. Indicative of deeply-entrenched prejudice and bitterness, later in May 1919, Papal Nuncio Sibilia would describe the bourgeois liberal German Neue Freie Presse as a "Judeo-Masonic newspaper."[27] Conversely, the legate pondered the growing success of allegedly Hussite-inspired Czech nationalist propaganda in depicting Catholicism —as embodied in the Archbishop of Prague Pavel Huyn and his predecessor Cardinal-Archbishop Leo Skrbenský von Hříště—[28] as an instrument of Germanic oppression.[29] Within his own realm, Karl would go on to undo wartime press censorship.[30]

While distinctions between what was Habsburg and what was German were not at the forefront of the minds of those directing the British press, —and by extension, those directing British war aims— if the demise of German and Magyar hegemony over Slavic peoples and other minorities had to mean the demise of the Habsburg dynasty, such a price was considered acceptable. The question of what to do with Karl and his dynasty still being open, Balfour wrote of the propaganda campaign against Austria-Hungary, that the means remain the same despite "whether the complete break-up of the Austrian Empire or its de-Germanisation under Hapsburg rule be the final goal of our efforts."[31] From the UK perspective therefore, it can be deduced that there was no active will by 1918 to seek the removal of the name of "Habsburg" from the Central European map. The Habsburgs could

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[26] AAEESS: Austria-Hungary, fasc. 504, pos. 1240, fol. 25-31: June 27, 1918 report from Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican). Found in Gottsmann, Andreas, *Die Wiener Nuntiatur und Kaiser Karl* in Karl I. (Iv.), Der Erste Weltkrieg Und Das Ende Der Donaumonarchie, ed. Andreas Gottsmann (Vienna: Verlag Der Österreichischen Akademie Der Wissenschaften, 2007), p. 93-118, p. 116-15.

[27] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, 13), Ff. 385-387, May 15, 1919, report entitled: "spedito il 19/4/1919" on state of Hungary report from Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[28] Unknown, "Zur Enthüllung des "Wehrmann in Eisen," der Deutschen in Prag," *Österreichische Illustrierte Zeitung*, July 11, 1915, p. 9.

[29] AAEESS: Austria-Hungary, fasc. 504, pos. 1240, fol. 25-31: June 27, 1918 report from Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican). Found in Gottsmann, Andreas, *Die Wiener Nuntiatur und Kaiser Karl* in Karl I. (Iv.), Der Erste Weltkrieg Und Das Ende Der Donaumonarchie, ed. Andreas Gottsmann (Vienna: Verlag Der Österreichischen Akademie Der Wissenschaften, 2007), p. 93-118, p. 116-15.

[30] Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 420-421.

[31] Ibid., Ff. 194.

theoretically be tolerated in the eyes of London, should they disassociate from Berlin and denounce German and Magyar domination within their Empire. These propositions were amenable to Karl,[32] however, the Great Powers of the Entente had to likewise appease not only their junior partners Serbia and Italy but also the increasingly well-organised Czech émigré diaspora.[33] Masaryk —campaigning in America— argued for the need to destroy the Habsburg dynasty so as to prevent the emergence of an anti-democratic Pan-German *Mitteleuropa*.[34] Only such a measure was considered adequate to give Slavs their rightful place among the international community.[35]

Once America did enter the war as a non-aligned co-belligerent, she set about ascertaining the position of Hungarian immigrants towards the Habsburg dynasty and therefore the White House's position on the future of the Magyar people in Central Europe. The Republic of Hungary League of Hungarians in America –seeking legal recognition for their work– were required by the State Department to provide the identity of their leadership as well as their "attitude with reference to the question of political freedom for the Slavs and Latin subjects in the Dual Monarchy."[36] Prompted to reveal their position on the National Question, the Hungarian League —aligning itself with the "sacred banner of the Stars and Stripes" of the US in the fight for "world democracy" against the "tyrannous Hapsburg Dynasty"— was eager to integrate itself into the émigré campaign of other would-be successor states. Nonetheless, the diaspora Magyars held on to a supranational solutions to the proposed post-war restructuring of Europe, calling for the US to "take under consideration, in solving the Balkan question, the magnificent idea of Kossuth: the proposed establishment of the 'South Danube Confederation'— Hungary, Dalmatia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Rumania, included."[37] Such proposals no doubt were received

[32] If understood to mean a Habsburg controlled domestic tripartite or quadripartite federalising constitutional reform and Western re-oriented foreign policy.
[33] HHStA: PA XXXIII 52, Ff. 266-267, February 29, 1916, report from K.u.K. consul Alexander von Nuber (Austrian Consulate, New York) to Baron Erich Zwiedinek von Südenhorst (Austrian Embassy, Washington D.C.).
[34] Unknown, "87,000,000 Federation: Former Bohemian Leader Thinks Hapsburg Dynasty Must Be Upset to Prevent it," *Evening Mail*, March 7, 1916, found in HHStA: PA XXXIII 52, Ff. 133.
[35] Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, "*The Slavs among the Nations*." (London: Czech National Alliance in Great Britain, 1916) p. 1.
[36] NARA: 864.00/23a, July 23, 1918, letter from Alvey A. Adee (State Department) to The Republic of Hungary League of Hungarians in America (New York).
[37] NARA: 864.00/23a, October 8, 1918, letter The Republic of Hungary League of Hungarians in America (New York) to Secretary of State.

by planners in Washington and the Little Entente states as constituting the retro-engineering of one empire in Vienna for another in Budapest, perpetuating a Greater Hungary project beyond the current war.

Domestic interest and geographic proximity to the Austrian front line made Italy an epicentre of Anti-Habsburg propaganda, often taking the form of aerial dropped psychological warfare literature.[38] In this highly charged atmosphere, in which the battlefield had not merely expanded from sea and land to the air but was also fought in the world's newspapers, the Vatican received unconfirmed April 1918 reports that Italian military pilots in Rome were openly joking of planning a false flag operation to bomb the Vatican and attribute blame on Austria.[39] That same month Rome hosted a "Congress of the Hapsburg Subject Races."[40] The so-called journalists William Steed, R.W. Seton-Watson, and Sir Arthur Evans facilitated collaboration between London and Rome via targeted propaganda directed toward the Slavic peoples of the Habsburg Empire with the intention of inciting revolt.[41] The summit concluded with the publication of "principles of common action." Firstly, that each race "proclaims its right to constitute its own nationality and State unity, or to complete it, and to attain full political and economic independence." Secondly, it was resolved that each race "recognises in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy the instrument of German domination and the fundamental obstacle to the realisation of its aspirations and rights."[42] The declaration finally advocated for "the necessity of a common struggle against the common oppressors, in order that each people may attain complete liberation."[43] This call for a "complete liberation" precluded any reform —no matter how substantial— that Karl may wish to embark upon. Such an uncompromising attitude precluded any possible negotiated settlement.

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[38] Mark Cornwall, *The undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 174 & 235.
[39] Vatican Apostolic Archive: Fondo Culto S. Sede 78,2 Carte Carlo Monti, Fasc. 1, Ff. 18-19, April 1918 report on Italian pilot jokes of planning false flag operation to bomb the Vatican and attribute blame on Austria.
[40] PRO FO: 898/1, Foreign Office Pre-War Propaganda Policy. 1938-39. MS Allied Propaganda in World War II and the British Political Warfare Executive, Ff. 191, "Private and Confidential Report on the Work of the Department of Propaganda in Enemy Countries."
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

A UK colonel, Granville Baker, was later sent to liaison with Italians in Padua, Italy. There he was to coordinate propaganda against what he termed "Teuton-Magyar tyranny," and observe preliminary negotiations with the Pan-Slavic movement, who for their part "were burning to assist in the task of overthrowing the Hapsburg monarchy." An additional task of his was to mitigate the conflicting Adriatic claims of Italy and Serbia from interfering with the anti-Austrian propaganda effort.[44] Demonstrative of an integration of a mobilised civilian press and military establishment at the international coordination meetings in Italy, Baker was joined by William Steed as Northcliffe's personal "representative."[45] Nevertheless, one can point out conflicting interests between not just the junior regional partners of the Entente but even between the Great Powers themselves vis-à-vis the future of the Habsburg dynasty in Central Europe.

Despite being not even two-years-old at the outbreak of war, decades later, Karl's son and heir-apparent, Otto von Habsburg, in 1990 gave the Habsburg perspective on the distinction between the Imperial Austria and Tsarist Russia. Denouncing the Soviet system as a "colonial empire […] under Russian tutelage,"[46] Otto saw continuity of the Romanov legacy in the USSR in the centralised rule of an alienated elite who shared neither language nor custom. In Contrast, Otto saw himself, his father, and great-grand-uncle as rooted in a millennium old *Reichsidee* tradition of sacred Imperial authority shaped by the principles of subsidiarity and toleration:

> "From the Holy Roman Empire there is, via the Habsburgs, a straight line leading to Austria-Hungary which was, in effect, a belated and residual but none the less very real legatee of the Holy Roman Empire."[47]

[44] PRO FO: 898/1, Foreign Office Pre-War Propaganda Policy. 1938-39. MS, Allied Propaganda in World War II and the British Political Warfare Executive, Ff. 196.
[45] Ibid., Ff. 195.
[46] Ibid., p. 94.
[47] Ibid., p. 98.

1.3 Vatican Favouritism

Contemporary Vatican diplomatic officials would share this view later espoused by Otto. For the Vatican of the early 20th-Century, a distinct Russia –perceived as bellicose, Asiatic, and therefore un-European—was as great a threat to their notion of Christendom as fears of internal freemasonic subversion. Reports from the Papal Nuncio in Vienna to the Vatican in late September 1914 speak of an intentionally concealed "human avalanche of Russia beyond the eastern borders of Prussia and Austria."[1] The Vatican saw freemasons in Italy as directly "organising large demonstrations across the country in favour of intervention and against Austria" which were to be explicitly "anti-monarchical in character."[2] Once efforts to keep Italy neutral had failed, in the midst of war —an outwardly neutral Vatican— was conflicted on how to honour the deceased devoutly Catholic Emperor, Franz Josef, who had long defended Papal sovereignty on the Italian peninsular and the rights of the Church within his own territory. The Vatican —aware of the potential for provocation— decided to offer a discreet 18th December 1916, requiem Mass. Liaising with Italian authorities on how best to guarantee order —fearing a violent mob reaction— it was decided to limit attendance to Cardinals, former Papal Nuncios to Vienna and essential participants (e.g., altar servers and choir).[3]

Despite the need to maintain the outward appearance of strict neutrality, Karl could rely on near total Vatican support on account of the hereditary animosity between the Italian state and the Holy See and the role Austria traditionally played supporting the latter. In February 1918, Cardinal Scapinelli[4] gave a speech at a social event in Rome

[1] VAA: Segreteria di Stato Guerra Anno 1914-18, 244, Fasc. 90, Ff. 17-21, September 29, 1914, letter no. 2203 from Raffaele Scapinelli di Leguigno (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican)

[2] VAA: SSt 244, E 1, Fasz. 114, fol. 36-37, Prot. 4339, February 1, 1915, anonymous Vatican report concerning "The influence of the Grand Orient [freemasonic lodge] of Rome on Italian war propaganda against the Austro-Hungarian monarchy" found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p.101-102.

[3] VAA: Fondo Culto S. Sede 85 Carte Carlo Monti, Funerali per Francesco Giusseppe, Ff. 2-3; VAA: Fondo Culto S. Sede 85 Carte Carlo Monti, Funerali per Francesco Giusseppe, Ff. 23-24, December 15, 1916 letter from Baron Carlo Monti (General Director of Fondo per il Culto, Rome) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[4] Former nuncio to Vienna and typical of the older generation of high-ranking Curia officials born before the fall of the Papal States.

attended by "many people of both sexes from the city's aristocratic society" which "provoked the indignation of some persons" when he stated in regard to Belgium that "everything which is said about the persecutions exercised by the oppressor [Germany] is nothing but a fabrication and the same for what is said about invaded Friuli [occupied by Austrian forces]."[5]

Sensitive also to a "violent campaign of calumnies" regarding the Holy See's ability to act as a neutral peace-broker, Benedict XV admonished outspoken Belgian Archbishop of Malines, Cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier, for remarks he made endorsing the moral merit of the Entente narrative of the war despite having previously been given repeated "appropriate counsels of prudence and moderation."[6] The Pope however also wrote to the implacable German Kaiser on 4th May 1918 urging him, despite the raging "terrible scourge" of war, to consider his responsibility to avoid collateral damage to the "treasures" of Christendom and to open himself to God's "infinite mercy" in ending "the infinite mourning that the war has cast upon our Christian family."[7] Whereas the Prussian sovereign wanted to pursue war to the very end, clinging to the belief in an absolute military victory even as late as 1918,[8] Karl from the onset of his reign in Austria-Hungary was much more willing to cooperate in seeking a negotiated "honourable" peace and was swift to privately admit the justice of Belgian and French grievances.[9]

Vienna and the Vatican saw the Habsburg Empire as the antithesis of the Kingdom of Italy. The war on the South-West alpine front was thus a struggle to the death with freemasonic modernity diametrically opposed to their Christendom of old. Showing higher allegiance to ecclesial interest than that of consanguinity, Apostolic Nuncio to Vienna,

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[5] VAA: Fondo Culto S. Sede 78,2 Carte Carlo Monti, Fasc. 1, Ff. 16, February 18, 1918 report from Baron Carlo Monti (General Director of Fondo per il Culto, Rome) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[6] VAA: 1. Pos V Sovrani; 1 Famglia Imperiale della Germania, Fasc. 3, Ff. 84-85, June 24, 1818 letter no. 66746 from Gasparri (Vatican) to Pacelli (Munich).
[7] VAA: 1. Pos V Sovrani; 1 Famglia Imperiale della Germania, Fasc. 3, Ff. 71, may 4, 1918 letter from Benedict XV (Vatican) to Wilhelm II (Berlin).
[8] HHStA, PA I, 504, fol. 989. May 11, 1917, letter from Wilhelm II von Hohenzollern (Berlin) to Karl von Habsburg (Vienna) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 174-75.
[9] VAA: Segreteria di Stato Guerra Anno 1914-18, 244, Fasc. 90 Ff. 48-51, undated (pre-May 23, 1915) letter from Sixtus to Zita.
from Sixtus correspondence

Archbishop Scapinelli,[10] wrote that it was "impossible to describe the hatred that has been aroused in all classes of the people and in the army against the Italians, who are considered to be faithless and traitors."[11] While the average Italian soldier was no doubt a fellow Catholic, for Austria, the war against Italy was perceived and portrayed to be a defensive war to protect the Catholic faith and Austrian *Heimat* (regional homeland) from pejoratively conceived perfidious freemasonic secularist nationalism.

Catholic authorities had a heightened sensitivity to the spirit of Liberalism and attributed it to machinations of freemasons, i.e., those responsible for the decline of the Papal States and Unification of Italy. None were above suspicion. In September 1916, Papal Nuncio in Munich, Pacelli, in providing "an analysis of the internal state of the Danube Monarchy in the third year of the First World War" noted with concern what he saw as the creeping apparent "Jewish-Freemason influence" infiltrating Austro-Hungarian universities and even into parts of the Habsburg Imperial Court advising Karl.[12] In the eyes of the Vatican establishment and her diplomatic network, such matters were not superficial coincidences, but rather of central importance. In her own understanding, the current fratricide was internally reported to be the fruit of "[...] European freemasonry, which continually fomented the war, seeking to ruin the Habsburg Empire and the Church in their temporal power and morality."[13] Italy in turn continued to see Habsburg Austria as "the Pope's protector," resenting her refusal to officially acknowledge Rome as the capital of the Kingdom of Italy even in the era of the nominal Triple Alliance.[14] Furthermore, Vatican influence on Italy —despite being a majority Catholic country—was thus severely limited and distrust between Quirinal and Apostolic Palaces reigned near unrestricted. Adding to the irreconcilable tension was the increasingly anti-traditional spirit of Italian irredentism —under proto-fascist nationalist intellectuals such as Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and Gabriele D'Annunzio who had long imagined and advocated for a War on

[10] Himself Italian by birth but in no way sympathetic to Italian nationalism.
[11] VAA: Segreteria di Stato Guerra Anno 1914-18, 244, Fasc. 90 Ff. 149, June 5, 1915 report no. 3097 from Raffaele Scapinelli di Leguigno (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[12] Elisabeth Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?: Band 1: Die österreichische Frage : Kaiser und König Karl I. (IV.) und die Neuordnung Mitteleuropas (1916 - 1922*) (Vienna: Böhlau, 2004), p. 17.
[13] Ibid., p. 18.
[14] Vanda Wilcox, *Italy in the Era of the Great War*. (Leiden: Brill, 2018), p. 190.

Vienna and the Vatican—[15] and which now adopted a Futurism directly opposed to the Habsburg *Reichsidee*.

In the eyes of the protagonists of Political Catholicism in Vienna and the Vatican, it followed that if freemasonry had started the war, it was further interested in prolonging the struggle. In this way it was considered possible to achieve total social and political upheaval by deposing and exiling the remnants of Christendom from public society and replacing vertical divine-right authority with a secular horizontal egalitarian fraternity. Prior to the 1929 Lateran treaty formalising Vatican sovereignty, there was genuine fear during the war that the Pope's support for Habsburg Austria could induce an Italian Carbonari fashion attack on his person similar to that of Napoleon Bonaparte's 1809 imprisonment of Pope Pius VII. In such an eventuality, it was proposed by German and Austrian politicians that the Pope should reign in exile from Spain, Switzerland or Lichtenstein.[16] Karl leaned into this polemic, not shying away from publicly invoking divine assistance for the Habsburg cause in what he saw as a civilisation struggle which was as much a matter of spiritual warfare was it was about tangible bullets, artillery shells and barbed wire. On the feast day of his namesake, St. Charles Borromeo,[17] the customary St. Stephan's cathedral Mass and Te Deum, was —upon the request of the Emperor himself— extraordinarily offered "thanking the Lord for the victories recently won by the Austrian armies in the Italian theatre of war and to implore divine help for the armies of the Monarchy."[18] Such a bold and public integration of Catholic liturgy with the political objectives of the Habsburg dynasty presented a challenge for the international Church hierarchy. After personal reflection and consultation with the local Archbishop, the Papal Nuncio decided to rather attend a parallel nearby Minoritenkirche[19] Te Deum, "a ceremony that would be free of any political character" offered for the usual —less

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[15] Selena Daly. *Italian Futurism and the First World War*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016, p. 3 & 11.

[16] Elisabeth Kovács. Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?: Band 1: Die österreichische Frage : Kaiser und König Karl I. (IV.) und die Neuordnung Mitteleuropas (1916 - 1922). Vienna [u.a.]: Böhlau, 2004, p. 18.

[17] November 4th, 1917.

[18] VAA: Segreteria di Stato Guerra Anno 1914-18, 244, Fasc. 91, Ff. 139-140, November 5, 1917 report no. 2726 from report from Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[19] The 14th-Century gothic-style Catholic church located adjacent to the Habsburg Hofburg Winter palace which served the pastoral needs of the Italian community of Vienna since the 18th-Century.

divisive— intention of "thanksgiving to the Lord for the preservation of His Majesty [Karl]."[20]

In the eyes of the Vatican officials, the Habsburg dynasty's mobilisation of their Catholic faith in service of the war effort stood in great contrast to most European states,[21] most notably the Kingdom of Italy, where the anti-clerical legacy of the Anglo-Italian Jewish Freemason recent mayor of Rome, Ernesto Nathan, lived on.[22] While Vanda Wilcox notes that in Italy "[e]xplicitly Catholic objections to the war among soldiers were rare,"[23] this thesis proposes that the same religious indifferentism cannot be said for Austria, particularly in the Tyrol borderlands. Even abroad —in a Catholic Ireland reluctantly integrated into the United Kingdom— the *Irish Independent* in September 1914 called Austria the "Last Stronghold of Catholic Life" and espoused the view that "the downfall of Austria must inevitably spell the ruin of the Catholic cause in Europe."[24] While highlighting "Belgium's Misery" at the hands of Prussian invasion and alleging freemasonic infiltration[25] –despite the restrictions of wartime censorship– Karl was depicted in Catholic Ireland as wanting peace and struggling to enact benevolent constitutional reforms. Irish newspapers went so far as to uncritically quote their Austrian counterparts regarding allegations of a conspiracy from "freemasonry circles" featuring exiled Czechoslovakians seeking to perpetuate "libellous rumours" against "a deeply pious Empress"[26] and "create civil war between Austria and Hungary."[27]

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[20] VAA: Segreteria di Stato Guerra Anno 1914-18, 244, Fasc. 91, Ff. 139-140, November 5, 1917 report no. 2726 from report from Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[21] VAA: Segreteria di Stato Guerra Anno 1914-18 Rubica 244 Fasc. 90, Ff. 114-15, February 10, 1915, report no. 2620 entitled "La Guerra e il risverglio dello Spirito religioso" from Raffaele Scapinelli di Leguigno (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[22] R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini and the Eclipse of Italian Fascism: From Dictatorship to Populism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), p. 45.
[23] Vanda Wilcox, *Morale and the Italian Army During the First World War* (Cambridge Military Histories. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 188.
[24] Unknown, "Austria and the war: Last Stronghold of Catholic Life," *Irish Independent*, September 16, 1914, p. 2.
[25] Unknown, "Belgium's Misery," *Irish Independent*, October 14, 1915, p. 2.
[26] Unknown. "Austrian Scandals," *The Cork Examiner* (Ireland), July 10, 1918, p. 5.
[27] Unknown, "Emperor Wants Peace: Carl as a Peace Kaiser," *Irish Independent*, June 30, 1917, p. 6.

While across the Alps, Italy was nominally a fellow majority Catholic monarchy, civic culture there was fundamentally nationalist and anti-clerical.[28] Rather than contest Austrian narratives, Italy rejected the entire of paradigm of the Christendom logic espoused by Austria. Italian nationalists embraced a revolutionary justification for their war effort which proclaimed that the struggle would bring about the fulfilment of a long obstructed *Risorgimento*. To this end, during the war, under the reign of the House of Savoy in Italy, "young and robust priests" were expected by Italian authorities to fight in the army like other mobilised civilians. Furthermore, state officials noted with suspicion that "one could not know how many bishops and priests are Austrianists and desire the restoration of the temporal power of the Popes."[29] For Italian authorities, clericalism and Habsburg Austrian-ness were de facto synonymous. Meanwhile, advocates of Austrian-ness sought to monopolise the Christendom of old as the true European spirit. In a March 1917 lecture in Switzerland Hugo von Hofmannsthal would argue that "whoever says 'Austria' says indeed: a thousand-year struggle for Europe, a thousand-year mission for Europe, a thousand-year belief in Europe."[30]

Nonetheless, Federico Chabod argues that even on the eve of the First World War, for many in the Italian diplomatic establishment —the so-called "moderates of the Risorgimento"— the Triple Alliance was justified based on "their conviction that the Habsburg empire was indispensable for European equilibrium, and their fear of a Slavic advance towards the west."[31] Notwithstanding, in the view of Vatican officials, Papal attempts to secure Italian neutrality were impeded by "the fury and cunning of overwhelming International Freemasonry."[32] Likewise, as recognised in work of

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[28] Federico Chabod. *Italian Foreign Policy: The Statecraft of the Founders, 1870-1896* (Agnelli. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 194 & 217; Giovanni Maddalena and Giovanni Tuzet, *The Italian Pragmatists: Between Allies and Enemies. Studies in Pragmatism and Values* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2021), p. 31.

[29] VAA: Fondo Culto S. Sede 22.1° Carte Carlo Monti, Ff. 7, January 18, 1916, report by General Director of Fundo per il Culto.

[30] Hugo von Hofmannsthal and David S. Luft, "*Hugo von Hofmannsthal and the Austrian Idea: Selected Essays and Addresses, 1906 - 1927"* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue Univ. Press, 2011), p. 97.

[31] Federico Chabod. *Italian Foreign Policy: The Statecraft of the Founders, 1870-1896* (Agnelli. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 392.

[32] VAA: Segreteria di Stato Guerra Anno 1914-18, 244, Fasc. 90, Ff. 38-42. March 16, 1915, P. Celestino da Seggendorf O.M.C Latin report on Italian potential entry into the war and freemasonic infiltration of Austria.

Christopher Brennan, Karl's "religiosity was not empty formalism, but intimate conviction."[33] In conducting his wartime diplomacy, the young Emperor would be aided by a preferential paternal concern for Austria on the part of the Vatican.

Preventing additional belligerents entering the war and crafting a path forward towards a white peace were the prime dictates of Vatican policy. Beyond the countless human suffering at the frontlines, war had the potential to unleash a tidal wave of revolutionary forces across the European continent. Cardinal Secretary Pietro Gasparri's January 1915 instructions to Apostolic Nuncio in Vienna, Raffaele Scapinelli di Leguigno, were to urge an appeasement of Italy "due to the evident and very high interest that the Church itself has in the preservation of the one great Catholic power [Habsburg Empire]."[34] Foreshadowing a later Austrian attitude of uncompromising dedication to the principle of integral unity and immutable monarchical sovereignty, Franz Josef —like his successor Karl— was unwilling to entertain Italian proposals for territorial concession from Vienna in exchange for continued Italian neutrality.[35] Prussia, for her part, did not see Austria as an equal partner in the Central Powers alliance, going so far as to unilaterally make Italy offers of Habsburg lands with Italian ethnic majorities to win Rome's support.[36]

Such favouritism of the Vatican was not limited to a divide between Central Powers and Entente, but also within the Central Powers alliance. Letters purporting to be the Interwar personal of correspondence of Wilhelm II —written to family members during his Dutch exile— found their way into the possession of the Vatican. These

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[33] Christopher Brennan, "*Reforming Austria-Hungary: Beyond his control or beyond his capacity? The domestic policies of Emperor Karl I November 1916 – May 1917*" (PhD thesis, London School of Economics (Department of International History), United Kingdom, 2012,) p. 25.
[34] VAA: Segreteria di Stato Guerra Anno 1914-18, 244, Fasc. 28, Ff. 4r-5v, found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 96.
[35] VAA: Fondo Culto S. Sede 154, Carte Carlo Monti, Ff. 4, May 10, 1915, report entitled "Proposte degli Imperi Centrali per il mantentimento della neutralità Italiana" with terms of possible Austrian concessions to Italy signed by Baron Karl von Macchio (Austro-Hungary) and Bernhard von Bülow (Germany).
[36] VAA: Fondo Culto S. Sede 154, Carte Carlo Monti, Ff. 4, May 10, 1915, report entitled "Proposte degli Imperi Centrali per il mantentimento della neutralità Italiana" with terms of possible Austrian concessions to Italy signed by Baron Karl von Macchio (Austro-Hungary) and Bernhard von Bülow (Germany).

documents display the bitterness of the Prussian exiled former emperor at the perceived disproportionate pro-Austrian favouritism which the Vatican displayed in dealing with Vienna and Berlin. Wilhelm boasted of confronting an unnamed "Catholic nobleman" who at "coming from Rome, had asserted that the Vatican was taking a great interest in [his] fate." The abdicated Emperor recounts having rebuked the envoy stating:

> "I will only believe that when the Vatican spends as much on the restoration of the German imperial throne as it did on the traitor Karl."[37]

A self-assured Wilhelm describes his accusation being confirmed in the resulting interlocutor "blushing very red, becoming terribly embarrassed" and defensively replying "meekly: 'How could Your Majesty have found out about that?'"[38]

[37] VAA: Archivo della Nunziatura Apostolica di Berlino-Bonn, Arch. Nunz. Berlino 25, 3. Pos V Sovrani; 1 Famglia Imperiale della Germania, Fasc, 3, Ff. 99-102, report on April 2, 1923 letter April 2, 1923 entitled: "Copia della lettera dell'Imperatore Guglielmo II al principe Guglielmo di Hohenzollern-Sigmarien," from Wilhelm II to Prince Wilhelm of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen.
[38] Ibid.

1.4 Failed Peace and Reform Efforts

The Quirinal Palace in Rome wanted their participation within the Entente war effort contingent not only the acquisition of Austrian Alpine and Adriatic lands but also a provision which stipulated that the Entente would deliberately exclude the Holy See from the negotiations of the post-war peace conference so as to maximise the disadvantage of the Central Powers.[1] In the minds of the Entente, as early as 1915, Central Powers defeat would mean Habsburg territorial concessions to her neighbouring belligerent nation states. Whether that would leave any room for a Habsburg to retain his thrones in Vienna and Budapest was not however at that point called into question. Nonetheless, Austria was unfortunate to find herself in a comparable situation to the likewise multi-ethnic —but substantially different — Ottoman Empire, which, as demonstrated by the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, was not merely earmarked for partition, but rather the rise of new states from the disintegration of the Empire was envisaged from the onset of the war.[2]

The Habsburg dynasty, while a core component of the Central Powers, did not see the war as one for the supremacy of German culture in Europe. From very early on, warning of how an "Italian and Romanian intervention [was] imminent", Karl's brother-in-law, Sixtus, implored the crown-prince, through his sister Zita, to put pressure on Emperor Franz Josef to abandon his alliance with Hohenzollern Berlin, arguing that while "well aware that Russia is said to be implacable,"[3] only the restoration of an independent Belgium and annexation of Alsace and Lorraine would be French perquisites for peace. Such terms were agreeable to Austria, but not Prussian Germany. In fact, Karl, due to the Bourbon lineage of his wife Zita, was seen by Pan-Germans within his Empire as a Francophile. Meanwhile the young prince saw himself was a first and foremost a Catholic, then a European, a European identity expressed through his Austrian-ness. Zita's brother,

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[1] Christopher Howard, "Historical Revision. No. XCVI: The Treaty of London, 1915." *History* 25, no. 100 (1941): p. 351.
[2] Victor Kattan and Richard Falk, "The Hussein–McMahon Correspondence." in *From Coexistence to Conquest: International Law and the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1891-1949*, (London: Pluto Press, 2009), p. 100.
[3] VAA: Segreteria di Stato Guerra Anno 1914-18, 244, Fasc. 90 Ff. 48-51, undated (pre-May 23, 1915) letter from Sixtus to Zita.

Sixtus, in his correspondence with Karl sought to highlight how "Catholic interests are at stake" in the isolation of Austria from neutral states by her dependency on Prussian Germany, writing that "[d]uring [his] stay in France, [he] did everything to maintain the sympathy of the French for Austria, which persists in spite of present events," expounding his brother-in-law to break with Berlin least the war should go on and all that would be left of Austria would be a mere "vassal of the House of Prussia."[4] There was little in such an assessment that Karl could refute. As emperor-king from 1916 he inherited the Habsburg-Hohenzollern alliance which he privately resented as a shackle tying him to endless futile war.

Karl wanted to seek an immediate honourable peace while his counterpart in Berlin, Wilhelm II, wanted to persevere to a final decisive total victory, each extrapolating from the collapse of Romanov Russia divergent lessons. Advising peace, Karl would write with great insight:

> "We are fighting against a new enemy that is more dangerous than the Entente: the international revolution."[5]

In view of the stalemate on the Western Front and victory in the East, urging an embrace of attrition warfare, Wilhelm countered by reassuring Vienna: "time has become our newest ally."[6] However, Karl, having an apparent better understanding of the burden which the war placed on the Homefront, appreciated that time was one resource the Habsburg Empire did not have.[7] In the Spring of 1917 Austrian foreign minister, Count Czernin, argued for Karl's peace plan to the Prussian establishment represented by Ludendorff. Berlin was adamant that any concessions would be indicative of defeat, not stalemate. The German de facto military dictator, Ludendorff, recounted:

> "I told Count Czernin that he ought to lead the peoples of the Dual Monarchy more firmly and raise their morale. He replied that this was impossible."[8]

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[4] Ibid.
[5] HHStA, PA I, 504, fol. 977. April 12, 1917, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Vienna) to Wilhelm II von Hohenzollern (Berlin) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 172-74.
[6] HHStA, PA I, 504, fol. 989. May 11, 1917 letter from Wilhelm II von Hohenzollern (Berlin) to Karl von Habsburg (Vienna) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 174-75.
[7] Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917-1923* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), p. 43.
[8] Eric Ludendorff, *My War Memories 1914-1918* (Vol. 2) (Uckfield: The Naval & Military Press Ltd, 2005), p. 441.

Even if Berlin argued that the "Entente would see nothing in all these proposals but a trap or a confession of military defeat,"[9] taking his predicament into consideration, Karl furthermore allowed Benedict XV to work covertly in representing Habsburg interests dialoguing with a relevant "English plenipotentiary" delegation in the Vatican.[10]

Over the course of the war the question of Serbia —and even Belgium— were increasingly relegated to secondary concerns, and the rhetoric of national honour and treaty obligation made way for intensified declarations of ideology. With Russia's withdrawal and the entry of the United States of America into the war, the idea of the bloodshed being in the name of Imperialist or Nationalist ambition was largely no longer tenable. From the beginning of 1918 —intensified by Woodrow Wilson's January 8, 1918, Fourteen Points address to Congress— the narrative of "making the world safe for democracy"[11] began to gain apparent unstoppable momentum. Therefore, under Karl's reign, the enemies of Austria would no longer be a realpolitik heterogeneous conglomeration of Autocratic, Liberal democratic and Nationalist states but increasingly a homogenous alliance of conviction. That conviction would be the assertation that certain states —such as the Habsburg Monarchy— were incompatible with a normative vision of a modernity shaped by the values of democracy, secular rationale for the source of political authority, free commerce, social Liberalism and national self-determination. Departing from the policy of his grand-uncle, Karl reconvened the Cisleithanian parliament in July 1917 and addressed the assembled parliamentarians. The US embassy —still neutral for five remaining months—reported of the speech that the twenty-nine-year-old emperor "assured [his] unalterable intention to exercise sovereign powers in truly constitutional spirit."[12] During the address Karl made renewed reference to his coronation oath to the apostolic throne of St. Stephen and his additional oath to seek out an honourable peace.

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[9] Ibid., p. 442.
[10] VAA: Segreteria di Stato Guerra Anno 1914-18, 244, Fasc. 90 Ff. 48-51, undated (pre-May 23, 1915) letter from Sixtus to Zita.
[11] Charles A. Ellwood, "Making the World Safe for Democracy," *The Scientific Monthly* 7, no. 6 (1918): p. 511.
[12] NARA: 860.00/56, June 1, 1917, telegram report from Pleasant Alexander Stovall (US Embassy, Bern) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

Karl was not obstinate in his rejection of Entente and US proposals for peace. While holding to the principle of dynastic sovereignty, Karl had "agreed to strike out the Polish territory of Austria from the possession of the House of Hapsburg-Lorraine" and, much to the anger of his Prussian allies, supported the restoration of Ancient Poland.[13] His constitutional reforms centred on the federalisation of the Habsburg Monarchy to allow for Self-Determination in accordance with —his own more favourable personal interpretation of— Wilsonian principles. US State Department officials in nearby Switzerland noted that "in recognition of this right of self-determination" the individual national groups which comprised the monarchy would "constitute themselves as independent states within their own territory, but certain matters within the Austrian federal state shall remain common to all parts thereof and are to be under the Hapsburg sceptre."[14] This development was denounced by Eduard Benes as being mutually incompatible with US and Czech war aims as it allowed the domination of the Habsburgs as a "German dynasty" over the Czechoslovak people.[15]

Benedict XV urged that a "spirit of equity and justice must guide the examination of the other territorial and political questions" to facilitate "the future reorganization of the peoples." [16] He further singled out "the old Kingdom of Poland, for which in particular, its noble historical traditions and suffering, particularly undergone in the present war, must win, with justice, the sympathies of the nations."[17] Karl —who had long fostered Trialist thinking which transcended the 1867 enshrined German-Magyar dual-hegemony— was keen to show public docility to such a Papal prompt and began consulting with Germany to craft a Polish state in East-Central Europe which would be sovereign but not harmful to Berlin nor Vienna's Imperial interests. It was theorised that, with the support of "austophile, conservative and monarchist-minded Poles," a Habsburg —perhaps Karl or a relative— could be elected king of Poland. It was desperately hoped that such a development would satisfy international Wilsonian demands and could even reinforce the

[13] NARA: 860.00/88, October 17, 1918, telegram report from Pleasant Alexander Stovall (US Embassy, Bern) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[14] Ibid.
[15] NARA: 860.00/95, October 27, 1918, telegram report from Pleasant Alexander Stovall (US Embassy, Bern) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[16] Benedict XV, "Pope Benedict's Appeal for Peace: Official Text of His Proposal." *Current History* (1916-1940) 6, no. 3 (1917): p. 392–94.
[17] Ibid.

domestic cohesion of the Monarchy, damping Czechoslovak desires for total republican independence.[18]

While Woodrow Wilson would ultimately object to the secret treaty diplomacy between the Imperial powers –and Italy would only receive what irredentists would infamously refer to as a "mutilated victory"–[19] Wilson concurred on the necessity of diplomatically isolating the Vatican so as to effectively restrain any reactionary anti-nationalist and anti-secularist influence upon the Paris Peace Conference. The president's personal adviser and envoy, Col. Edward House, therefore "urged the American president to seize the 'opportunity to take the peace negotiations out of the hands of the pope and hold them in [his own].'"[20] Back in September 1916 alleged comments of Vatican Secretary of State, Gasparri, were published in the Entente press in which it was claimed that the Vatican were seeking to warn Paris to the "Russian danger that would threaten all of Europe after a victory for the Tsarist Empire," and that the "destruction of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was madness."[21] Three months later, the Pope's Christmas homily once more urged an immediate peace, "pointing out the terrible atrocities of the World War, comparing Europe with the heavenly Jerusalem."[22]

United States Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, persuaded Wilson that the Pope's subsequent August 1917 peace declaration "was not an honest action" and that the Vatican stood for a "status quo ante bellum"[23] motivated by what he saw as "an earnest wish to

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[18] HHStA: PA XXVII 63, Ff. 347-352, Bern report October 21, 1918, entitled: "Memorandum des Herrn Jan Perkowski über die austropolnische Lösung" from Baron Leo Bar de Vaux (Austrian Embassy, Bern) to Count Stephan Burián (Imperial Foreign Ministry of Austria-Hungary).
[19] Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, "Vectors of Violence: Paramilitarism in Europe after the Great War, 1917–1923," *The Journal of Modern History* 83, no. 3 (2011): p. 503.
[20] Charles Seymour, *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*" (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1926), p.156; House to Wilson, August 17, 1917 cited in Giuliana Chamedes, "The Vatican and the Reshaping of the European International Order after the First World War," *The Historical Journal* 56, no. 4 (2013): p. 960.
[21] HHStA: GKA, GesA, Rom Vatikan V Band 1, 2067, September 24, 1916, report on "Eindruck des Interviews Kardinal Gasparri's" from Baron Leo Bar de Vaux (Austrian Embassy, Bern) to Count Stephan Burián (Imperial Foreign Ministry of Austria-Hungary).
[22] HHStA: GKA, GesA, Rom Vatikan V Band 1, 2067, December 29, 1916 report entitled: "Friedensallokution des Papstes am 24. Dezember 1916" from Baron Leo Bar de Vaux (Austrian Embassy, Bern) to Count Stephan Burián (Imperial Foreign Ministry of Austria-Hungary).
[23] Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, *The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920* (2 vols., Washington, 1939-1940), II, p. 43-45 cited in Dragan Zivojinovic, "Robert Lansing's Comments on the Pontifical Peace Note of August 1, 1917," *The Journal of American History* 56, no. 3 (1969): p. 557.

preserve the Empire of Austria-Hungary from dismemberment,"[24] a view shared by Col. House.[25] Paris, Rome and Washington DC —having no diplomatic relations with the Vatican— relied on correspondence being forwarded from the King of England.[26] The Vatican was "decidedly disappointed" with Wilson's response to the August 1917 Papal peace note,[27] in which the Pope posed the question:

> "Is this civilized world to be turned into a field of death, and is Europe, so glorious and flourishing, to rush, as carried by a universal folly, to the abyss and take a hand in its own suicide?"[28]

Nonetheless, in the estimation of historian Robert Gerwarth, Wilson was of the view that "Germany was still controlled by an 'arbitrary power' —presumably the Kaiser and the OHL."[29] Furthermore, solidifying in the minds of many that Austria had been reduced to the status of a German-vassal, Wilson would not deal directly with Vienna, outright ignoring Karl's peace proposals.[30] Acquiescence to the fourteen points would not be sufficient to satisfy Washington, the subtext was that peace could only be conducted with a secular liberal republic. Col. Edward House was not alone in arguing that if America for her part were prepared to intervene in the European war, it should consider a partial victory unacceptable; nothing short of the reshaping of Europe would suffice. US Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, in his September 21st, 1918, peace plan pitched at Wilson notes with concern how ending the war without an alternative eastern settlement to the 3rd March 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (between the Central Powers and the USSR) would allow Russia's weakness to "give them [Berlin and Vienna] the opportunity to rebuild the imperial power and to carry out the Prussian ambition of world-mastery."[31]

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[24] Zivojinovic, "Robert Lansing's Comments," p. 559.
[25] Seymour, *Papers of Colonel House,*" p. 160-61; cited in Zivojinovic, "Robert Lansing's Comments," p. 560.
[26] "Pope Benedict's Appeal for Peace," 392–94; P. J. Connolly, "The Pope and Peace." *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 6, no. 24 (1917): p. 534-535.
[27] OeStA/HHStA: GKA, GesA, Rom Vatikan V Band 2, Bern Vatican embassy September 7, 1917, report entitled "Die Antwort des Praesidenten Wilson auf die Friedensnote des Papstes."
[28] "Pope Benedict's Appeal for Peace," p. 392–94.
[29] Gerwarth, *The Vanquished*, p. 61.
[30] Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution,* (trans. H. J. Stenning) (London: L. Parsons, 1925), p. 46.
[31] Robert Lansing, *The Peace Negotiations: A Personal Narrative* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), p. 193.

Furthermore, in this September 21st, 1918, proposal one finds; the creation of a "Jugo-Slav" state along similar formula of previous proposals for an independent Poland; the assertation that "Hungary should be separated from Austria"; a Romanian Transylvania; and the "Restoration to Italy of all the Italian provinces of Austria." Most pertinently, point eleven of the proposal called for:

> "Reduction of Austria to the ancient boundaries and title of the Archduchy of Austria. Incorporation of Archduchy in the Imperial German Confederation."[32]

This preliminary draft by Lansing therefore envisioned a Monarchical Austria within a German political union. Therefore, even as late as the end of September 1918, US thinking was not outright opposed to either an Austro-German *Anschluss* nor the continued reign of the Habsburg dynasty from Vienna, albeit ruling over a territorially reduced realm.

While these Lansing proposals had foreseen a declining but still alive Habsburg role in Central Europe, the intervening period between October and November 1918 shows an immense impetus to seek out more ambitious alterations to the map of Europe. Anti-Habsburg propaganda campaigns had fermented widespread rebellion beyond even the expectations of the Great Powers. In the context of compromised social cohesion within the Habsburg realm, the same January 1918 "Fourteen Points" were now re-interpreted to their maximumly punitive potential. Point ten had called for the vague objective of having "safeguarded and assured" for "the peoples of Austria-Hungary" a "place among the nations" such that they would "be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development."[33] The implicit framing of this prerequisite for peace posed the national question as an anti-Habsburg Question. The will of the international community was thus juxtaposed with the one perceivable barrier to the goal of national self-determination, the Habsburg dynasty. Therefore, US rhetoric toward Prague, Belgrade and Budapest could be knowingly interpreted as a death warrant for Habsburg rule, making Wilson as much a liberator as their own indigenous revolutionaries.

A commonly presented image to the US public was one in which it was said that "the Habsburgs have regarded the polyglot races under their sway as their personal

[32] Ibid., p. 194-195.
[33] Ibid., p. 315.

possessions, as human chattels to do with as they liked."[34] Lansing as United States Secretary of State took great satisfaction in the prospect of inducing the rebellion of the Empire's nationalities, having adopted the "prison of peoples" narrative regarding the Habsburg realm writing:

> "The Austro-Hungarian Empire had fallen to pieces beyond hope of becoming again one of the Great Powers."[35]

Lansing did not merely passively observe the end of the Habsburg Empire but sought to pro-actively bring it about, writing that he "demanded the empire 'be wiped off the map of Europe.'" [36] He and the press[37] convinced Wilson to declare by summer of 1918 that "all branches of the Slav race must be completely liberated from German and Austrian domination."[38]

The prospect of the so-called liberation of all Slavic peoples from the House of Austria was not a cause of universal jubilation for all Entente belligerents. Deep-rooted Italian historical animosity towards Vienna did not however blind her to the demands of the future. Balfour notes that Baron Sonnino[39] expressed an Italian policy to distinguish between Bohemian Slavs and the Southern Slavs of the Balkans. A summary of this division in the Allied camp —between Rome on one side "so violently opposed" to Paris and London on the other— was presented by Balfour to Northcliffe thus:

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[34] Schierbrand, *Austria-Hungary,* p. 149.
[35] Lansing, *The Peace Negotiations*, p. 224.
[36] Lansing, *Peace Negotiations*, p. 224.
[37] Unknown, "Watterson offers Slogan; 'To Hell with the Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns!' Is his Suggestion. Col. H. Watterson suggests slogan for the contest," *New York Times*, April 14, 1917. P. 8; Unknown, "Taft Says Kaiser Must Follow Czar; Hohenzollern and Hapsburg Have Got to Get Out, He Declares. Are in War to Tell Them "We are going over there because we are for the right and will fight for I,." must follow the Czar, says W. H. Taft," *New York Times*, May 7, 1917. p. 9; Unknown, "See No Durable Peace With Hohenzollerns; Belgian Socialists Say German and Austrian Delegates Must Renounce Emperors. Renunciation of Hapsburg dynasty by the people demanded by Belgian Socialists," *New York Times*, April 14, 1917, p. 2.
[38] Martyn Rady, *The Habsburgs: The Rise and Fall of a World Power* (London: Allen Lane, 2020) p. 321-322.
[39] Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

> "[T]he argument which he [Baron Sonnino] himself developed at great length and with considerable reiteration […] 90 percent or 95 percent [of southern Slavs], he stated, favoured autonomy within the Austrian Empire."[40]

In this account, Sonnino's resistance to Entente Yugoslav policy makes apparent that Italian regional goals in the Balkans to the East superseded any hatred of their Habsburg enemy to the North. Secure in the knowledge that, with Entente victory, Italy would have exclusive claim on South Tyrol as far as the Brenner pass, she was much less certain as to the fate of the Adriatic coast claimed by a newly proposed Yugoslavia.

With the end of the war in sight, Italy was shifting attention from Vienna to Belgrade. K.u.K. diplomatic leadership noted on October 4th, 1918:

> "Complete victory for the Entente with the creation of a turbulent, youthful Yugo-Slav state would be just about the most inconvenient thing that could happen to Italy, because the old monarchy was a much more comfortable neighbour."[41]

Likewise, France was determined in wanting "to fight until the final victory and the complete defeat of Germany," which, now fast approaching, "a counterweight is being sought against it [Berlin] in Europe, for which only Austria-Hungary could be considered."[42] The K.u.K. *Chargé d'affaires* in Switzerland, Baron Leo Bar de Vaux, an Imperial aristocrat, noted of Clémenceau in Paris that "he must strive to satisfy the wishes of both the Freemasons and the Catholic conservatives." Of the former de Vaux warned:

> "Freemasons see the Austro-Hungarian monarchy as the last stronghold of Catholicism and are therefore our sworn enemies, the [French] Catholic conservatives most of all have their like-minded comrades in Austria-Hungary and want to preserve us."[43]

Historians such as David Stevenson point to a faction of influential republican-minded "hotheads of the Quai d'Orsay" which had a natural "hostility to the multinational Hapsburg" Austria. Furthermore, he opines that this tight circle of Foreign Ministry

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[40] PRO FO: 898/1, Foreign Office Pre-War Propaganda Policy. 1938-39. MS, Allied Propaganda in World War II and the British Political Warfare Executive. Undated (1938-39) Report on the work of the Department of Propaganda in Enemy Countries. Ff. 201.

[41] HHStA: PA XXVII 63, October 4, 1918, report entitled: "Die momentane Stellung der einzelnen Ententestaaten der Monarchie gegenüber" from Baron Leo Bar de Vaux (Austrian Embassy, Bern) to Count Stephan Burián (Imperial Foreign Ministry of Austria-Hungary).

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

administrative technocrats had typically been granted "unchallenged control over French diplomacy in this period [of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century]."[44]

Parallel to these peace overtures aimed at Great Britain and France, Karl embarked upon a lengthy internal reform programme which was calculated to complement his external diplomatic efforts in addition to ensuring domestic stability. While Masaryk and others were lobbying against Habsburg interests abroad; Czechs within the Dual-Monarchy were —upon Karl's reconvening of the K.u.K. parliament in May 1917— publicly advocating for "a system of independent federal states" under a "mere nominal union under the Hapsburg Dynasty."[45] Furthermore, Anton Korošec –as leader of Conservative southern Slavs in the Imperial parliament– declared in 1917:

> "Our Croat-Slovene people is firmly and entirely resolved to be true and loyal to the death, to the Monarchy and the August ruling house of Habsburg."[46]

Such indications were a source of encouragement and almost three years into the conflict the front lines had not substantially altered on the West and South-West frontiers. Notwithstanding, the essential nature of the civilisational struggle had transformed immensely, and not to Vienna's advantage.

Confronted with domestic and external opposition, Anglo-German interwar historian, Elizabeth Wiskemann —herself writing later in the dying days of the First Czechoslovak Republic— would retrospectively call Karl's federal reform plan a dream "spoken by nothing but a voice from the grave."[47] In March 1919, the British Lieutenant-Colonel entrusted with safeguarding Emperor Karl, Edward Lisle Strutt, would note in his diary:

> "The Emperor spoke about his reign. 'I first tried to rule autocratically, and then democratically; both were errors, but of the two the latter was the greater'."[48]

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[44] David Stevenson, "Part 3 Introduction" p. 231-237 in Robert Tombs, *Nationhood and Nationalism in France: From Boulangism to the Great War 1889-1918* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 234-235.
[45] Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*, p. 408.
[46] Taylor, *Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 256.
[47] Elizabeth Wiskemann, *Czechs and German: A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Providences of Bohemia and Moravia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 78.
[48] Gordon Brook-Shepherd, *The Last Habsburg* (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1968), p. 235.

Christopher Brennan in his extensive academic research on Karl's reform plans points to the Habsburg emperor as having only "perfunctory introduction to statecraft, leaving him lacking in preparation and experience."[49] The newly crowned emperor-king did certainly display an abundance of political idealism, seeing dialogue —while not compromising the Imperial principle— as a path to survival for Habsburg Central Europe. Historians such as Pieter Judson and Steven Beller argue that the Habsburg state turned on its own people from the onset of the war and thus delegitimised itself in the eyes of the peripheral nationalities. Under Karl, this shift away from the military justice courts —what Beller terms as a "crass and ruthless rule alienating the various minority national groups"—[50] can therefore be seen as an effort to undo this harm inflicted to the very spirit of Habsburg paternal supranationalism.

Horrified by the assassination of prominent Cisleithanian Minister-President, Karl von Stürgkh, in 1916,[51] Karl saw the obvious potential for a spiral of repression and reprisal as an existential threat to the Monarchy. Less than one year into his reign, Karl had not only reopened the Cisleithanian parliament but had restored pre-1914 levels of press freedom.[52] Such a display was naturally interpreted by many seeking to uphold the constitutional status quo as weakness. K.u.K. Infantry general and German racial supremacist Alfred Krauss noted in his 1921 memoirs how while "the death of Emperor Franz Josef opened up the possibility of a new course" for Magyar nationalists to forward their plans to expand upon their privileged autonomy within the Empire. Furthermore, he saw Karl's convocation of the Austrian parliament as having "brought back the old ignominy of this state to an even greater extent."[53] In line with Ludendorff, Krauss went so far as to label this olive branch as a "political travesty" which only served "to revitalise and strengthen the enemies' hopes of ultimate victory."[54]

While some Habsburg titles —such as "King of Jerusalem"— were more honorific than stating a political reality, others did carry constitutional weight and shaped the

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[49] Brennan, "Reforming Austria-Hungary," p. 3.
[50] Steven Beller, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1815-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 275.
[51] Murdered at the hands of Austromarxist Friedrich Adler —son of the SPÖ founder Victor Adler.
[52] Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 420-421.
[53] Krauss, *Die Ursachen unserer Niederlage*, p. 278.
[54] Ibid., P. 279.

Habsburg political self-conceptualisation. Rather than ethnic lines, the Habsburg realm was divided into various kingdoms, archduchies, duchies, dukedoms, principalities, margraviates, and voivodeships, all of which were united by the paternal personage of the reigning Habsburg sovereign. Many political actors were receptive to varying degrees of constitutional reform within the parameters of patriarchal traditionalism set forth by Karl. In a rare case of collegial consensus between the cosmopolitan Viennese factions of the CSP and SPÖ, there was a growing momentum for a new parallel ethnic and territorial system of jurisdiction. This effort was idealistically presented as appeasing the desires of national groups for autonomy while not carving up the Habsburg monarchy into a series of endless racial enclaves and exclaves. Both CSP Imperial Minister Ignaz Seipel and Austromarxist Karl Renner enthusiastically adopted this extra-territoriality logic.[55] Karl placed his hope that such a reform could satiate the Wilsonian appetite for national devolvement.

Relevant to the *Reichsidee*, the Habsburgs of 1918 were no longer —since 1806— Emperors in the sense of the Holy Roman Empire but nonetheless ruled over a vast diverse array of peoples under these various regional titles. The sovereign swapped hats —or rather crowns— as he travelled across Habsburg realms from ruling as Margrave, Lord, Grand Voivode, Prince, Grand Prince, Duke, Archduke or King depending on location within the Dual Monarchy. While Renner's reform proposals had "made frequent reference to the idea of the German cultural mission,"[56] the role of the Dynasty was not of central concern in SPÖ political calculations. The 1867 *Ausgleich* status quo had been fundamentally a product of reluctant Habsburg compromise when confronted with the domestic threat of proto-Nationalism and bourgeoise democracy. Karl could not entertain the Socialist leader's proposals as Habsburg self-conceptualisation of authority and historical mission was tightly bound to the continuity of their titles, law being promulgated and enforced in that name.

AJP Taylor, paints the picture of a Monarchy doomed to fail, a "rotten" corpse waiting for international community to pronounce the hour of death.[57] The murder of

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[55] Ignaz Seipel, *Gedanken zur österreichischen Verfassungsreform* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1917), p. 57.
[56] Ibid., p. 49.
[57] Taylor, *Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 250.

Stürgkh in 1916 —a mere month before the death of Karl's predecessor, emperor Franz Josef— was an event which had a profound impact on the soon-to-be young emperor. It is reasonable to deduce that —although yet unknown to him— the first shot of the revolution that would ultimately cast him into exile had already been fired. This assassination was a moment no less decisive than that of Sarajevo in July two years prior. Notably, this revolutionary shot was not fired by a nationalist in Prague, Budapest, Kraków, Zagreb nor Trent, but in Vienna, by a Socialist German-speaker. SPÖ deputy-leader Otto Bauer, would later describe the act as "the turning point in the history of the Labour Movement" which was justified out of frustration at there being "no longer any possibility of a legal Opposition."[58]

War censors on the Swiss border in late November 1916 reported back to Vienna that after their analysis of some 590,000 letters in that month they had determined that German-Austrians held a universal conviction of the war being a struggle of "good over evil, of truth over lies" and were "absolutely confident and certain of victory."[59] Such popular sentiment was not held amongst all peoples of the Empire and as war exhaustion embittered political attitudes, K.u.K. representative in Bern, Ladislaus Skrzynno-Skrzynski, reported in May 1918:

> "Undoubtedly, the danger of revolution is an element that must be taken seriously today […] the popular psyche is no longer able to grasp the interest that pushes the monarchy to continue the war."[60]

The Imperial elite saw revolution largely as an urban industrial phenomenon, warning that "the city worker has become apathetic" but that in contrast a "deep, innate sense of justice saves the farmer from thoughts of subversion."[61] Nonetheless, of greatest concern, it was reported of even well-meaning patriotic soldiers that war-weariness was pervasive. In the context of worsening conditions in the trenches and on the Homefront, combined with the

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[58] Bauer, *Austrian Revolution*, p. 30.
[59] Kriegsüberwachungsamt (KÜA): K169, 90747 cited in Christopher Brennan, "*Reforming Austria-Hungary: Beyond his control or beyond his capacity? The domestic policies of Emperor Karl I November 1916 – May 1917*" (PhD thesis, London School of Economics (Department of International History), United Kingdom, 2012,) p. 89.
[60] HHStA: PA XXVII 63, May 28, 1918, report entitled: "Die Revolutionsgefahr" from Ladislaus Skrzynno-Skrzynski (Bern) to Count Stephan Burián (Imperial Foreign Ministry of Austria-Hungary).
[61] Ibid.

spreading ideological disease of Bolshevism, returning POWs from Russia were seen as "serious danger,"[62] many subject to "disciplinary re-education."[63]

The failure of the Sixtus affair[64] had left Karl feeling geopolitically "trapped."[65] Baron de Vaux in Switzerland warned his contemporaries in a 4th October 1918, secret report how —to his mind— Wilson wished to establish the US as the world's political and economic hegemon, and this "desire for the throne of '*arbiter mundi*'" implied grave ramifications for the Habsburg dynasty. Keeping his ear to the ground and consulting ambassadors of neutral and even hostile states, the K.u.K. representative in neutral Switzerland gave prophetic warning to Vienna:

> "These American aspirations, which are directly directed against our existence, are by no means shared by the European Entente states."[66]

As insightful as this assessment is, —not unexpectedly from an ambassadorial report to a Ministry of Foreign Affairs— it does not take into consideration domestic conditions which served as a catalyst for the Dual-Monarchy's destruction.

New research in recent years has highlighted how the Dual-Monarchy had become an occupying power to the peoples who once thought of themselves as the loyal subjects of the emperor, with the "harsh, extra-legal military dictatorship imposed on the citizens in the first two years of war" undermining Habsburg patriotism.[67] Thus the military as "the last significant bastion of a kind of political absolutism"[68] had —via military courts— imposed a system of suppression upon radicalised nationalists which in turn alienated moderate minorities and led to the proliferation of widespread nationalist sentiment. Such was the view of not just Karl, but even protagonist of revolutionary-in-waiting Otto Bauer who surmised: "The Hapsburg Monarchy was involved in a war against its own

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 426.
[64] The leaked attempt of Zita's siblings to broker peace between Paris and Vienna.
[65] Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis,* p. 437.
[66] HHStA: PA XXVII 63, October 4, 1918, report entitled: "Die momentane Stellung der einzelnen Ententestaaten der Monarchie gegenüber" from Baron Leo Bar de Vaux (Austrian Embassy, Bern) to Count Stephan Burián (Imperial Foreign Ministry of Austria-Hungary).
[67] Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 385.
[68] Ibid., p. 390-391.

citizens."[69] No new committee studies or lofty unrealised promises of reform could undo this damage.

[69] Bauer, *Austrian Revolution*, p. 27.

1.5 Revolution

Facing into another war winter, in late October 1918 a series of revolutions sprung up across the Habsburg Empire. In the wake of the 29th October 1918 Czechoslovak unilateral declaration of independence, nationalist mobs roamed Prague with iconoclastic intent, systematically purging all symbols of Habsburg authority which crossed their path.[1] Any person on the streets of Prague not prepared to dissociate from the dynasty was liable to physical intimidation and violence.[2] Claire Morelon points to the significance of how authorities were further powerless to prevent a crowd of youths from ceremonially removing the double-headed eagle from the façade of the local police headquarters and tossing it into the river Vltava to the sound of a military band performing a funeral hymn.[3] Demonstrative of re-conceptualised civic patronage, in little time Prague's main train-station would trade its namesake from Franz Josef to Woodrow Wilson.[4] Václav Šmidrkal argues the Bohemian experience of political violence —with returning soldiers engaging in a calculated campaign of nation-building through destructive purges directed under state supervision to achieve an "ethos of a new beginning"— was markedly different from that of the neighbouring anarchy of Berlin, Munich, and Budapest.[5] Nonetheless, one of the first acts of the revolutionary state on 3rd November 1918 was the tearing down of the "Mariensäule" in the Prague Altstädter Ring[6] erected in the seventeenth century as a symbol of counter-reformation Habsburg victory. In an apparent total breakdown of law and order, Imperial authorities were powerless to intervene as "hundreds of Catholic churches and chapels were looted and even more statues of the Virgin Mary and St John of

[1] Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 434.
[2] Claire Morelon, *Streetscapes of War and Revolution: Prague, 1914–1920, Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024), p. 261.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., p. 266.
[5] Václav Šmidrkal, "'What a Republic It Was!' Public Violence and State Building in the Bohemian Lands after 1918," *Contemporary European History* 28, no. 3 (2019): p. 305.
[6] Alexander Wöll, "Identitätsverwirrungen: Die Enttäuschung Der Katholiken in Der Post-Habsburgischen Tschechoslowakei Masaryks Nach 1918." in *Zusammenbruch, Trauma, Triumph: Das Epochenjahr 1918 Und Sein Nachleben in Zentral-, Ostmittel- Und Südosteuropa*, ed. Steffen Höhne, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2020), p. 207.

Nepomuk were destroyed."[7] In this way, with clear Hussite undertones, representations of Catholic piety were politicised and conflated with Habsburg rule and likewise fell victim to the collective will of the war-weary crowd.

As mentioned, revolutionary violence was not exclusive to Prague. In Budapest, former Transleithanian Prime Minister, Count István Tisza, suffered the same fate as his Cisleithanian counterpart, Karl von Stürgkh.

John W. Boyer asserts that by "1918 leaders in both movements [SPÖ and CSP] had come to think the unthinkable, imagining a state without a supranational Dynasty and a nation without a multinational state."[8] While international actors had crafted the perfect storm, the *coup de grâce* against Habsburg rule would ultimately come from within, and below. Even Imperial Vienna succumbed to the revolutionary fervour. Desiring not to let rapidly developing events get ahead of them, the SPÖ on 3rd October and CSP on 8th October issued declarations on the need to organise the German areas of the Empire into a cohesive political entity. Nonetheless, in contrast to their Austromarxist counterparts, the CSP's conservative declaration assured Karl of their undiminished "religious and dynastic conviction."[9] This CSP position —even if for many of their number only a nominal allegiance— came about as a reactionary response, seeing declarations of total independent sovereignty from Prague, Zagreb and Budapest. Witnessing the tectonic cracks of the splintering-apart empire –and encouraged by Karl's 16th October *Völkermanifest*– on 21st German-speaking delegates of the Cisleithanian parliament declared a Provisional National Assembly for German-Austria. This establishment of a provisional assembly meant two very different things to separate factions. For those still loyal to the Habsburg dynasty it was a circumscription of greater Imperial sovereignty. For nationalists it was the acknowledgement of a right for the existence of a German republic which would serve as a first step to achieving Anschluss with a larger republic centred on Berlin. Cisleithanian Imperial Minister-President, Heinrich Lammasch, took the former view, arguing for the parallel existence in law of both the Habsburg Empire and the

[7] Arnold Suppan, *1000 Jahre Nachbarschaft: "Österreicher", "Tschechen" Und "Sudetendeutsche,"* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2023), p. 453.
[8] Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis,* p. 378.
[9] Ibid., p. 438.

national assembly simultaneously. To the minds of pro-Habsburg supporters there need not be an adversarial relationship between Imperial rights and national rights.

On 26th October 1918, US observers from Milan reported back to their government the mood of the triumphant Italian press which openly pondered: "Austria's decay is imminent! […] What shall spring from these ruins? What order shall be established […]?"[10] The Vienna provisional assembly wrote to Wilson on the 29th October claiming to have formed a new German-Austrian state in his vision, comprising of all "9.7 million" Germans within the German-speaking electoral districts of the old Empire.[11] Then later on 20th November 1918 writing to the Vatican they sought international recognition.[12] Austromarxist opportunists saw the preceding revolutions across the Habsburg realm and sought to capitalise on anti-monarchical momentum. On 11th November 1918, Emperor Karl issued a proclamation removing himself from political life. The SPÖ spared no time in taking advantage of the power vacuum and fired their arrow. The following day they unilaterally declared a new republic.[13] Only SPÖ leadership of Adler, Bauer and Renner would claim to be the source of the new republics' progeny and subsequently be considered the undisputed founding fathers of this new republic. In contrast, the CSP reluctantly went along with the republican momentum, some seeing it as an inevitable reality and others as an interim solution to a future restoration.[14] From this latter faction of the Austrian Right a new movement would be born, that of Legitimism. As the name would suggest, these Legitimists would see the new republic as an illegal usurpation of legitimate Habsburg authority. Josef Eberle's recently founded publication *Die Monarchie* would publish a November 1918 poem *Austria is still not lost!* by Franz Sicherl which

[10] NARA: 863.00/111, October 26, 1918 report from American Consul in Milan (Italy) to Secretary of State, Robert Lansing (Washington D.C.) transmitting copy of newspaper article "Austria's Inheritance" *Corriere della Sera*.
[11] AdR: NPA, Karton 251 Liasse Österreich 12, Anerkennung, Ff. 4-7, copy of declaration: "Die Friedensnote der deutschösterreichischen Nationalversammlung an Wilson. Wien, 29.Oktober 1918" signed by Franz Dinghofer, Jodok Fink, and Karl Seitz.
[12] AdR: NPA, Karton 251 Liasse Österreich 12, Anerkennung, Ff. 10-13, November 20, 1918 letter from German-Austrian provisional assembly to Pope Benedict XV (Vatican).
[13] Notably no CSP political figures would be present at the 30th October declaration ceremony from the Herrengasse balcony of the Lower-Austrian parliament, chosen rather than the Cisleithanian Imperial parliament building on Ringstrasse. In the minds of the SPÖ republican revolutionaries, a definitive statement of discontinuity between Habsburg Imperial Austria and the new republic of German-Austria.
[14] Gerwarth, *The Vanquished*, p. 64.

encapsulated the mood of Legitimists on the eve of what was to them a false republican political order:[15]

> "My Austria! How we cannot let go of you! No matter what false servants feast on your lifeblood, we lament, but we cannot leave you […] Do not ask: Shall life arise from the ruins? Christ, too, had to go through the bitter pangs of suffering to reach his glories."[16]

Josef Eberle openly declared the new republic to be of Jewish nature, framing his struggle as one of being "for the Christian monarchy against the Jewish republic."[17] Seeking to monopolise Catholic Church teaching on the source of political authority being derived from God via natural and divine law Eberle concluded: "Under today's circumstances, one must speak out more in favour of the Christian monarchy than in favour of the modern republic."[18]

The bishops of German-Austria publicly did not oppose the overthrow of the monarchy and likewise the establishment of a new republic. While bishops did remove prayers for the emperor from the liturgy, reports from the local papal nuncio to the Vatican were far from neutral in tone. On November 18th, the Swiss government, as part of a coalition of neutral countries —operating "under the presidency of the Papal Nuncio"— transmitted to Robert Lansing a "strictly confidential communication" requesting the immediate military occupation of Vienna to prevent revolution being carried out "under the leadership of the extreme socialist party."[19] Commenting on the German-Austrian request for recognition by the Holy See, Archbishop Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo advised the Secretary of State in Rome on 22nd November 1918 with a pessimistic and anti-Semitic tone:

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[15] Franz Sicherl, "Noch ist Österreich nicht verloren!" *Die Monarchie*, November 14, 1918, p. 3.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Josef Eberle, "Wie sollen wir Stellung nehmen?" *Die Monarchie*, November 14, 1918, p. 7.
[18] Ibid.
[19] NARA: 863.00/112, November 18, 1918, letter from Hans A. Sulzer (Legation of Switzerland, Washington D.C.) to Secretary of State, Robert Lansing (Washington D.C.).

> "The socialist elements allied to Freemasonry and to Judaism, which desire to pass over in silence the very high profits made during the war, are masters of the field and now have the upper hand. Very sad days seem to be dawning for Austria."[20]

Describing the SPÖ as "the only party that is truly organised today" the archbishop warned of impending secularisation and potential Bolshevisation. Austria —traditionally the loyalist defender of the Church— was seemingly lost.

While an end of the war was a relief to all, the revolution in Vienna was received in the Alpine crownlands with neither universal approval nor total apathy. Taking no pride in an independent republican German-Austria, many sought refuge and continuity in the safe bastion of regional identity. Active resistance was offered by Catholic Conservatives in Tyrol who petitioned the Vatican for intervention. In their 16th December 1918 letter addressed to the Holy Father, the *Tiroler-Volkspartei* rejected revolutionary SPÖ logic and distanced itself from Viennese revolutionary fervour. Notably they too sought to claim refuge under the Wilsonian logic of Self-Determination to express their intersecting traditional religious and political concerns. These Alpine anti-Republicans highlighted their loyalty to local homeland (*Heimat*) and Catholic faith, presenting their struggle as united to the Holy Father as a prisoner behind the walls of the Vatican, held captive by Italian —freemasonic— Imperialism.[21]

One the first acts of the new revolutionary government was to declare *Deutschösterreich* a constituent part of Greater-Germany. This declaration in favour of Anschluss was an admission of the untenable nature of the republic to sustain its own independent existence. Karl's subsequent 11th November 1918 non-abdication[22] also left the Habsburg Question unresolved and would characterise Central European politics for decades to come. Future president of the republic, Wilhelm Miklas[23] was the one and only

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[20] AAEESS: Perido III [Pontificati Pio X (1903-1914) e Benedetto XV (1914-1922)], Austria- Ungheria, III Pos, 1336, fasc., 529, Ff- 61r-63r, November 22, 1918 letter from Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Vienna) to Vatican Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri (Vatican).

[21] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 794 - Fasc. 3- 95, December 16, 1918 letter from Tiroler-Volkspartei president to Papal Nuncio Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Vienna).

[22] Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854 - Fasc. 2, 3), Ff. 105, September 18, 1924 report from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[23] Who would a decade later collaborate with Seipel, Dollfuss and Schuschnigg as President of Austria.

member of the Provisional National Assembly to directly oppose the passage of 12th November Anti-Habsburg bill into law.[24] Presented with the passivity of their conservative allies, the Legitimist movement did not wish to concede a monopoly of the concept of Democracy to republican forces. Seeing Wilsonian America as a mirror image of the Habsburg Austrian ideal, Legitimist Richard von Kralik wrote on November 14th:

> "Monarchy is, taken purely objectively, the most perfect form of government […] audaciously above all, the last barrier against the otherwise dominating and devouring rule of money […] No state today is more imperialistic than the United States. The Imperator is a republican invention […] Monarchy is the most democratic form of government. Only the monarch can truly be a democrat."[25]

As long as such views were inculcated in the hearts of some Austrians, the stage was set for a protracted generations long struggle to settle the Habsburg Question. In the following months and years, the SPÖ would therefore mobilise the state apparatus to investigate and arrest Legitimists for "suspicion of counter-revolutionary activities."[26]

Habsburg-sympathetic voices within the CSP camp of German-Austrian politics now worked franticly to minimise the revolutionary essence of the political order coming into existence. Ignaz Seipel —while himself at the time enjoying public office not as an elected official, but rather as an Imperial Minster appointed by Karl— did not shy away from the polemics of the day, declaring:

> "O immortal Austria! We do not want to become intoxicated with lofty words, but in these days we can say without equivocation that we stand on the threshold of a new age. Woe to us if we enter the new era with a lie, if we give our new state democratic names and forms, but no democratic constitution!"[27]

The CSP only participated in the provisional national assembly of German-Austria on the basis of Karl's 16th October 1918 manifesto. Nonetheless, Boyer concludes that "[CSP] leadership doggedly defended the monarchical principle" only seeing a plebiscite as a

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[24] McGregor-Bulloch, "Promotion of an Austrian Identity," p. 54.
[25] Richard von Kralik, "Politische Tagesfragen, Monarchie und Dynastie," *Die Monarchie: Wochenschrift für Kultur, Politik und Volkswirtschaft*, November 14, 1918, p. 1.
[26] AdR: NPA, Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11, monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919-1933, Ff. 31-32, May 15, 1919, police report on "Verdacht auf gegenrevolutionäre Umtriebe."
[27] Ignaz Seipel, "Die demokratische Verfassung," *Reichspost*, November 21, 1918, p.1

lawful means of declaring a republic.[28] Nevertheless, this "monarchical principle" if subject to the assent of popular will appeared to many legitimists as diluted, fair-weather, Monarchism. In contrast, genuine Legitimists —comprised largely of former K.u.K. military officers, Imperial bureaucrats and aristocrats— saw the new Austrian republicans as mutinous sailors jumping from a ship taking on water, all the time blaming the captain for the storm that brought about their predicament, now seeking their survival in the lifeboat of what was increasingly referred to as a "Rump-Austria."[29]

This new remnant of the former monarchy —with still uncertain borders— saw her sole opportunity for salvation in being taking up by the passing —storm-battered but afloat— ship of Germany rather than remain clinging to a sinking Habsburg mast. Meanwhile for neighbouring successor states, there existed a real geopolitical expediency in adopting anti-Habsburgism on the international stage. Mark Cornwall argues how in a historiography of "official dialectic between the victors and the vanquished," Romania, Poland Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, were successful in having "posed as victor states in the New Europe" and were able to thus have "secured a privileged place at the Paris peace conference."[30]

Tara Zahra recounts how Thomas Masaryk –first president of new the Czechoslovakian state– would write of his time: "great multinational Empires are an institution of the past, of a time when material force was held high and the principle of nationality had not yet been recognized, because democracy had not been recognized."[31] Rather than this hard juxtaposition between the empires of yesterday and the republics of tomorrow, Pieter Judson argues that the "states that replaced Austria-Hungary could more

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[28] John W. Boyer, *Culture and political crisis in Vienna: Christian socialism in power, 1897-1918* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 439-440.
[29] Alfred-Pfoser and Andreas Weigl, *Die Erste Stunde Null. Gründungsjahre der österreichischen Republik* (Vienna: Residenz Verlag, 2017), p. 24.
[30] Mark Cornwall & John Paul Newman, *Sacrifice and Rebirth: The Legacy of the Last Habsburg War* (New York: Berghahn Books. 2016), p. 2
[31] Masaryk, Thomas Garrigue, "The Problem of Small Nations and States," in *We Were and We Shall Be: The Czechoslovak Spirit through the Centuries*, ed. Zdenka Müzner and Jan Müzner (Frederick Ungar, 1941), p. 153 cited in Tara Zahra, "Afterword: Chutes and Ladders: Racialization in Habsburg Central Europe After 1918," in *Ethnicizing Europe: Hate and Violence After Versailles*, ed. Éva Kovács, Raul Cârstocea, and Gábor Egry (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2025), p. 277.

usefully be considered "little empires"'[32] which nonetheless derived their justification in the de-legitimisation of the old Habsburg empire.

To conclude, the nature of this "New Age" which Seipel spoke of was not well defined and remained open for the taking. Whether it would be an age of the self-conscious proletariat, the bourgeois Liberal Wilsonian man, or the reactionary rebirth of the Kingship of Christ embodied in the Habsburg dynasty, one could only speculate. What was certain was that the Habsburg dynasty would not only be a point of reference for any shift of *Zeitgeist*, but that they would be protagonists advocating for their supernatural and supranational *Österreichertum* along the way.

[32] Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 388.

Chapter 2 Rise of the Wilsonian World Order (1919-1921).

Chapter two looks at the attempts of the nascent republics which formed the successor states of Austria-Hungary, such as Czechoslovakia and Austria, to consolidate their republican revolutions and entrench new civic cultures. These new successor states would lay claim to a place in a new Wilsonian European order at the expense of the old Habsburg regime via a programmatic material and spiritual iconoclasm which rejected supernational and supranational identity. Furthermore, this segment of the thesis will examine the swift and punitive response of the Great Powers and new regional so-labelled "mushroom republics" to the prospect of a limited restoration of Habsburg power in Budapest. The argument will be made that Karl –frustrated by a temporarily demoralised and passive CSP– considered himself no way bound by his previous declarations to have released his subjects from their oaths of obedience. Furthermore, by denouncing the coercive voice of the streets; seeking to place himself at the vanguard of both an anti-Prussian coalition and an international anti-Bolshevik crusade starting with a localised restoration in Budapest, Karl set a hard-line example for his supporters to follow.

2.1: Consolidating the Revolution

Of the days between the declaration of provisional assembly and the proclamation of a German-Austrian Republic, Otto Bauer would assert:

> "Socialist influence in the Government was strengthened by events […] which tended to transform the National Revolution into a Social Revolution."[1]

In contrast to the 30th October 1918 provisional constitution, article one of the new 12th November provisional constitution declared: "German-Austria is a democratic republic" with a required provisional assembly oath "in the name of the German-Austrian State."[2] In the wake of the November 1918 revolution, the SPÖ had largely a free hand in determining the fate of Emperor Karl. Legitimism as a movement was mostly curtailed to the fringe of political discourse where it remained markedly heterogenous. It could count amongst its ranks intersecting cohorts of anti-nationalist Jews, anti-Semites of many stripes, cosmopolitan aristocrats, rural peasants, Catholic integralists, former imperial bureaucrats, and veteran army officers.[3] Nonetheless, it is difficult to establish which groups gravitated to Legitimism on account of principled devotion of the Habsburg Emperor, and those who simply opposed the new Renner-Seitz regime.

In January 1919 Renner tried to break the stalemate by travelling to Eckartsau to speak with Karl and Zita who —following court protocol— would not meet with Renner as no formal audience was requested. To do so would implicitly accept the status as private

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[1] Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution* (trans. H. J. Stenning) (London: L. Parsons, 1925), p. 55.
[2] John W. Boyer, *Culture and political crisis in Vienna: Christian socialism in power, 1897-1918* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 440.
[3] AdR: NPA Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 1-2, April 8, 1919 Vienna Police Headquarters report to "deutschösterreichisches Staatsamt des Aeußeres" entitled "Paul Adolf Narr monarchistische Umtriebe."; AdR: NPA Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 149-150, June 28, 1921 Vienna Police Headquarters report to "Bundesministerium für Aeußeres" entitled "Monarchistische Kundgebung von Jugendlich auf dem Leopoldsberge."

persons.[4] Karl's promises to facilitate the autonomy of the Empire's nationalities was interpreted by Bauer and Renner as an unlimited principle which could be separated from the granting authority. Thus, in their mind, Karl "could only remain in Austria if he fulfilled his promise to renounce the throne for himself and his House."[5] As the wording of his declarations had made clear, Karl was adamant as to having made no such republican promise.

No longer willing to tolerate the passivity of the Austrian Right on the Habsburg question, Karl had sharp criticism for the CSP, confiding in Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Piffl, that "all the excuses for weakness that the [CSP] party puts forward are groundless."[6] Decrying their apparent duplicity, he regarded them as "no longer a respectable party" and went so far as to state "I almost prefer the Socialists, who are at least innately Republicans."[7] The Eckartsau stand-off was universally recognised as no permanent solution. Implicitly hinting at the age-old alliance of Habsburg throne and altar, Karl was clear to the archbishop that, despite what fate might befall the Imperial family:

> "A fight is coming, Your Eminence. It is not right to provoke it, but one must be prepared for it and ready for it. With God's help, it can be overcome if one is not always weak. The Church will suffer mainly because of weakness."[8]

That same week, Renner responded to the inquires of the press in which the provisional chancellor reiterated that the "Republican Government had treated the Emperor in a kind and humane manner," and that "he had not as of yet taken any steps to have His Majesty arrested."[9] It was in this context that George V and the British War Office —responding to

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[4] Erich Feigl, ed., *Zita: Kaiserin und Königin* (Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1991), p. 101 Cited in Larry Wolff, *The Shadow of the Empress: Fairy-Tale Opera and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2023), p. 228.

[5] Bauer, *Austrian Revolution,* p. 93.

[6]AOS, Tom II, Index 705, undated (pre-March 24, 1919), letter from Karl von Habsburg (Eckartsau, Austria) to Archbishop Cardinal Piffl (Vienna, Austria) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 458-59.

[7] AOS, Tom II, Index 705, undated (pre-March 24, 1919), letter from Karl von Habsburg (Eckartsau, Austria) to Archbishop Cardinal Piffl (Vienna, Austria) found in Elisabeth Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?: Band 2: Politische Dokumente zu Kaiser und König Karl I. (IV.) aus internationalen Archiven* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2004), p. 458-59.

[8] Ibid.

[9] AAEESS: Fodo: Perido III [Pontificati Pio X (1903-1914) e Benedetto XV (1914-1922)], Austria-Ungheria, III Pos, 1326, fasc., 525, Ff. 54r-55r, March 22, 1919, letter from Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Vienna) to Vatican Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri (Vatican).

petitions for intercession from Karl as a "brother Monarch"—[10] entrusted Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Lisle Strutt with securing the safety of the Habsburg royal family and saving them from the same recent fate of the Russian Tsar and his family. Strutt was better prepared for such a mission than any other officer in the armed forces on account of his pre-war cultural connections with Austria, his own aristocratic lineage and Catholic faith.[11]

Upon arriving in Vienna, Strutt was informed by his Foreign Office contacts that Renner's government was drafting an anti-Habsburg ultimatum to have Karl renounce his family's claim to the throne and abdicate, thus being allowed to live in Austria as a private citizen, merely abdicate and be allowed to go into exile or should he refuse to abdicate, be imprisoned.[12] Strutt went right away to meet with Renner who he described with pugnacious prejudice as "a hairy, cunning-looking rascal with intelligent eyes," a "traitor to the emperor" being surrounded by "[t]hree Jewish scoundrels [Deutsch, Bauer and Adler]."[13] Pointing to a transnational common worldview between Catholic reactionaries, Strutt saw these men as not capable of impartiality on the Habsburg Question and even somewhat alien —if not outright malicious— to Austria. He would therefore juxtapose himself and Karl as gentlemen of honour belonging to a Christendom of old with these Left-wing revolutionaries who he looked down upon with insurmountable disdain. The British officer took the initiative to liberally interpret his mandate by making immediate plans to place Karl beyond the hands of the SPÖ and Red Guards by transporting him incognito away from the reach of Red Vienna and into Switzerland. Originally, he had planned for Karl to be disguised in a spare British Army officer uniform he had in his possession. This plan was rejected by the emperor. Ultimately Karl would leave Austria "in full Field-Marshal's uniform" and Strutt noted in his diary for that day; "as the train steamed off at 19.05. 'After seven hundred years,' the Emperor said to me with a

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[10] AOS: Tom. I, Index 43, August, 1919, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to King George of Great Britain and Ireland (London, United Kingdom) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 532-33.

[11] His day-by-day diary account of his mission from 21st February to 10th April 1919 —published as an appendix to both Gordon Brook-Shepherd's 1968 *The Last Habsburg* and Herbert Vivian's 1932 *The Life of the Emperor Charles of Austria*— gives unparalleled insight to life at the post-revolution Habsburg court and Karl's efforts to defend his Legitimist convictions.

[12] Gordon Brook-Shepherd, *The Last Habsburg* (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1968), p. 240.

[13] Herbert Vivian, *The Life of the Emperor Charles of Austria* (London: Grayson & Grayson, 1932), p.186.

whimsical smile."[14] Of all these dramatic events, Strutt wrote: "Except Eric Drummond, no British officials, parliamentary, peace treaty or military displayed the faintest interest in my late mission. Mr. Balfour and General Thwaites were frankly bored."[15]

Whether George V was acting out of genuine inter-monarchical solidarity, or a simple fear of repercussion should the worse happen, Karl's departure —while no definitive solution— did have the immediate short-term effect of de-escalating tensions in Vienna. While in the lead up to the 16th February 1919 elections the local bishops had acquiesced to having a letter from Karl read out from their pulpits, they would likewise not openly denounce the new republican order.[16] Once the results of this first election since 1911 returned a SPÖ plurality, the Austromarxists declared it a successful referendum on the republic.[17] The Holy See diplomatic corps further hypothesised that despite the "proverbial good-naturedness of the Viennese people" and relative weakness of the KPÖ, the environment was ripe for Marxist revolution with "the threat of Bolshevism" upon the horizon.[18] The Nuncio went on to highlight how the CSP were banking on a SPÖ failure to stabilise German-Austria and — seeing collapse as inevitable— conservatives wished not to share political responsibility in a coalition government with the Austromarxists.[19]

From the position of the Austrian —and broader European— Catholic Right, Bolshevism was simply a manifestation of the real enemy, freemasonry, which was conceived as an overarching malicious force for which political ideologies were mere instruments. The Vienna Nuncio suspected in 1919 that the former Austro-Hungarian minister of justice —and now rumoured to be future Foreign Minister– Dr. Franz Klein, despite his opposition to socialism, to be a Freemason. To have such a man shape policy of

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[14] Ibid., p. 190.
[15] Ibid., p. 192.
[16] AOS: Tom I, Index 490, 15 January 1919 letter from Karl von Habsburg (Eckartsau) to Cardinal Piffl (Vienna) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 432–35; RPM, 24 January 1919, 10 cited in Christopher Brennan, "Sinner, Saint—or Cipher?: The Austrian Republic and the Death of Emperor Karl I." in *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, ed. Paul Miller and Claire Morelon, 1st ed., (Berghahn Books, 2019), p. 246.
[17] VAA: Fodo: Perido III [Pontificati Pio X (1903-1914) e Benedetto XV (1914-1922)], Austria- Ungheria, III Pos, 1326, fasc., 525, Ff. Ff. 44r-51r, March 16, 1919, entitled: "Notizie politiche sull'Austria" from Papal Nuncio Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

the new state as State Secretary within the Foreign Ministry and a member of the peace delegation at the pivotal Saint-Germain negotiations was seen as contrary to the good of Austria and more specifically the Church. In that same 1919 report, the Nuncio makes clear that:

> "The Constituent Assembly has not yet dealt with the constitution of the state. However, the republican form is considered to be final."[20]

Here we can see retrospectively how the 16th February, 1919, election was interpreted by the SPÖ to having had been an indirect plebiscite on the future form of the Austrian state. The Nuncio, himself extremely sympathetic to the Habsburg dynasty, notes with a tone of remorse that while he had "learnt confidentially" that Karl was "not at all thinking of abdicating […] even the Christian-Socials, who were the last support of the monarchy, adhered to it without reticence."[21]

In the eyes of the Vatican and neutral states, German-Austria was rapidly descending to the status of a failed state. The Nuncio reported to Rome that the anti-Habsburg laws were "passed unanimously by the National Assembly, as many members of the Christian Social Party had abstained from Parliament [and] issued a protest in vague terms." It was clear that the CSP could not offer effective resistance to SPÖ efforts to shape the nature of the new state. That March, Budapest had been captured by Bolshevik revolution and a Soviet Republic declared. Confronted with revolutionary violence crossing into German-Austria the Nuncio assured the Vatican that "if events take a turn for the worse, [the diplomatic corps of neutral states] will meet at the Nunciature and all together will take the necessary steps to leave Austria together and go to Switzerland."[22] Implying that the Habsburg family could have suffered the same fate as the Romanov's of Russia, the Nuncio concluded his report remarking with relief: "Everyone considers it a real stroke of luck that the Emperor left in time."[23]

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[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] AAEESS: Fodo Perido III [Pontificati Pio X (1903-1914) e Benedetto XV (1914-1922)], Austria-Ungheria, III Pos, 1326, fasc., 525, Ff. 65r-68r, April 3, 1919, report N° 15605 from Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Vienna) to Vatican Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri (Vatican).
[23] Ibid.

This perceived instability of the new German-Austrian republic provided a glimmer of hope to the Legitimists cause. During his Swiss exile, not all of Karl's plans at immediate restoration were directed at Budapest. In his January 1921 correspondence with his wife, the emperor-king reveals his established connection with Johannes Schober[24] who was foreseeing an armed clash with the socialists by Spring 1921 under the initial guise of a strike and reactive police enforcement. This domestic upheaval would —in what was relayed by Schober to Karl— coincide with the disintegration of Czechoslovakia and the Bolshevisation of Germany induced by the Soviet Red Army's invasion of Central Europe. Having decades of experience leading the police forces of Vienna, Schober was the public face of law and order in both in the late-Imperial and now nascent Republican era.[25] With his presumed support, Legitimists would integrate themselves within "the still completely reliable police and gendarmerie" and restore the Habsburgs to power, and with them, order. Karl reassured Zita that Schober "believes this is the safest way to bring Austria to the monarchy by the Spring."[26] Showing the timeline Karl had in mind, he opined that the alternative was to "continue to passively look on, but then one could safely wait another year."[27] Even the Republic's founding fathers would concede the fact that "[a]t the time of the Revolution nobody believed that this remnant of the old Monarchy, torn out of its economic body by a forcible operation, would be able to stand on its own legs."[28]

Even after the failed Spartacist uprising in Berlin,[29] the Habsburg head of Household regarded these geopolitical events as not mere theory but currently unfolding, referencing how "the reports he [Schober] has from northern Germany are catastrophic

[24] Johannes Schober was Chief of Police in both late-Imperial and much of Interwar Austria and also served as an Independent non-affiliated Chancellor of the First Republic both from 1921 and 1922 but also 1929 to 1930.
[25] Alfred-Pfoser and Andreas Weigl, *Die Erste Stunde Null. Gründungsjahre der österreichischen Republik* (Vienna: Residenz Verlag, 2017), p. 115.
[26] AOS: Tom. II, Index 1575. January 4, 1921, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Disentis, Switzelrand) to Zita von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 713-15.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Bauer, *Austrian Revolution*, p. 63.
[29] The unsuccessful January 1919 German Communist attempt to seize power in Berlin following the Central Powers defeat two months prior.

[…] everything is drifting towards Bolshevism."[30] US reports likewise juxtaposed a stabilising Schober as a "man of unusual force and ability" to the "so-called citizen-soldiers" of the *Volkswehr* who were "presumed to obey the orders of the government but in reality are independent except for the will of the workingmen."[31] Seeking to exploit a convergence of objectives, Karl had made an appeal to the Western Powers to reorientate their threat assessment from the defeated Central Powers to the spectre of Bolshevism emanating from Russia. From his Swiss exile the Habsburg emperor offered to organise two Austrian divisions to a proposed international Western military coalition to defend Europe from the invading USSR. To this end, the exiled Emperor met with the Catholic monsignor Georges Prudent —in the presence of Prince René and Prince Félix de Bourbon Parme— to convey his message to France. Over the course of the hour and a half meeting, Karl claimed to be "in daily contact with the police prefect of Vienna, who is completely devoted to him."[32] This same source "had informed him that President Bauer has reached the end of his tether and that the army is no longer obeying orders."[33] The hope of the CSP for a SPÖ-discrediting and counter-revolution was seemingly coming to fruition.

Notably Karl stipulated how the "Entente must restore order without delay by sending international troops, but not Italians, as their arrival would certainly hasten Bolshevism."[34] This plan was likewise presented to England through Strutt, who, in his personal diary recounted how Emperor Karl, fearful of Bolshevik momentum, "asked me to write home to the King and Lloyd George to send [5,000] British troops to Austria-Hungary." Karl, pleading with Strutt, emphasized how this force could "organize what is left of my old armies behind yours. If you cannot send British, send Americans, but no French or Italians."[35] Despite this discrepancy as to Karl's trust in Quai d'Orsay, such anti-

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[30] AOS: Tom. II, Index 1575. January 4, 1921, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Disentis, Switzelrand) to Zita von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 713-15.
[31] NARA: Paris Peace Conf.184.011102/410, September 5, 1919, report no. 75 entitled "Review of conditions in Austria" from Albert Halstead (American Mission, Vienna) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[32] AOS: Tom. I, Index 100: March 31, 1919, report from Apostolic protonotary Msgr. Georges-Prudent-Marie Bruley des Varannes (St. Gall, Switzerland) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 465-67.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Brook-Shepherd, *The Last Habsburg*, p. 234.

Italian rhetoric —hinting at the nebulous forces of freemasonry— fell squarely into Vatican prejudices and took into account domestic conditions in Austria in which any further Italian occupation would be seen as another land grab.

Less than three weeks before Karl first return to Budapest, the local American Mission warned of an historic moment in which Hungary was "exposed to great danger, in view of the ignorant and fanatic attitude of the population" and calling for "energetic action on the part of the Allied Governments" to intervene.[36] Karl, not wanting to be seen to be a perpetrator of absenteeism, took the oath to the crown seriously and felt duty bound to return. Habsburg efforts were discreet enough that —even with the domestic centre-Left Swiss press alleging that Hotel de Rome at Fribourg had become a centre of legitimist plotting— the president of the Swiss Federal Council declared in February 1921, that "there were no Habsburg intrigues in Switzerland."[37] Nonetheless, Captain Werkmann, Baron Hye, and Count Apponyi were mentioned by name in US reports as having free reign to enter Switzerland and enact monarchist plans to facilitate Karl's return to Hungary.[38] Returning to Swiss territory from his Easter attempt in Budapest, there was mixed reactions to Karl's use of his host nations hospitality. Even if he had not used a Swiss –but rather a forged Spanish– passport in his travels and even if he was still officially recognised as the lawful King of Hungary, his continued presence there divided public opinion between the Catholic Right and the anti-clerical "Radical Party." The Austrian ambassador in Bern noted how for the idealists within the former group, the Habsburg Question was viewed within the context of their own domestic political polemics and decried what they saw as any attempt at "backing down in the face of liberal and Masonic influences."[39]

[36] NARA: 864.413/3, March 8, 1921, memorandum from Ulysses Grant-Smith (US, Embassy, Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[37] NARA: 864.00/387, February 23, 1921, memorandum from Ulysses Grant-Smith (US, Embassy, Budapest) to Bainbridge Colby (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[38] Ibid.
[39] AdR: NPA Karton 373 Liasse Personalia — Habsburg Karl I 1921-1936 Voraussichtliche baldige Abreise König Karls aus der Schweiz — Ff. 439-442, May 21, 1921, report from Leo di Pauli (Austrian Embassy, Bern) to Michael Mayr (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

Conscious to similar domestic divides in France, Karl openly appealed to her traditional geopolitical fears, namely continental encirclement. His emissaries communicated to Paris the exiled-emperor's warnings of SPÖ plans to work with Berlin to "form an immense Soviet that would turn Europe upside down" and that the Great Powers should rather focus "not on this or that border, this or that form of government: rather to destroy Bolshevism, which threatens the whole of civilisation, whatever the cost."[40] Karl paid special attention on the need to seek the immediate freedom of reliable Austrian officers detained in Italy as prisoners of war who could organise a counter revolution. In his mind the SPÖ revolution in Vienna was only possible because the *Volkswehr* and Red Guard —described by the Papal Nuncio as "a gang of murderers"[41] and by CSP Leadership as "a creature of the Social Democrats composed of loafers and thieves"—[42] had a monopoly of force and would otherwise easily be suppressed by pro-Habsburg officers were they not detained by the Entente.

In what Wolfgang Maderthaner refers to as a utopian restraint of the Red Guard, the armed revolutionaries had not attempted to capture Karl or the other members of the Imperial family at Schönbrunn.[43] Strutt's diary from his days in Austria presents the reader with a trilling account of protecting the Imperial family from the besieging Red Guard at their initial post-revolution refuge in Eckartsau, writing on 1st March: "I always slept with a revolver under the pillow." [44] Strutt paints the image of friendly nearby locals positively receiving an Emperor dressed in Field-Marshal's uniform. Karl –unceasingly reiterating never to have abdicated nor willing to ever do so— was the reported by the plenipotentiary British officer to be surrounded by up to 300 Red Guards with armoured cars and machine guns at their disposal to a mere "ten reliable Vienna police, armed with carbines and

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[40] AOS: Tom. I, Index 100: March 31, 1919, report from Apostolic protonotary Msgr. Georges-Prudent-Marie Bruley des Varannes (St. Gall, Switzerland) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 465-67.
[41] Ibid.
[42] NARA: 863.00/336, June 24, 1920, report no. 451 entitled "Interview with Leopold Kunschak, Christian Socialist Leader." from (American Mission, Vienna) to Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby (Washington D.C.).
[43] Wolfgang Maderthaner, "Utopian Perspectives and Political Restraint: The Austrian Revolution in the Context of Central European Conflicts" in *From Empire to Republic: Post-World War I Austria*, ed. Günter Bischof, Fritz Plasser, and Peter Berger, (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2010), p. 56.
[44] Vivian, *Life of the Emperor Charles*, p. 180.

revolvers but very little ammunition" defending the Imperial family.[45] Strutt privately resented how "Northcliffe press naturally followed suit" in repeating the "lies of the gutter Austrian and boche press," falsely claiming that the Habsburg court was living in opulence and not how, in his estimation: "All the Imperial children were suffering from want of nourishing food."[46]

While Karl was now safely located across the Swiss border, his opponents in Vienna were not oblivious to his persistent agitation, nor were they complacent in their recent victories. Even after failing to openly defend the Habsburg dynasty, the press arm of the SPÖ was not willing to exonerate their CSP political opponents from suspicion of treason. Reporting on land appropriations, the *Arbeiter Zeitung* decried how the CSP "raged until the last moment" before conceding to the anti-Habsburg laws.[47] The SPÖ while willing to give ground on many constitutional questions such as property ownership, federalisation, and the limits of executive authority, they would not move an inch on the Habsburg Question. Whereas Austromarxist policies ran directly contrary to the majority of National Assembly deputies, on the Habsburg Question, the SPÖ could rely in the support of the Pan-Germans and the Small Farmers Party. The SPÖ, unwavering and unwilling to compromise, saw in their ardent republican rhetoric a wedge to drive into a CSP which was much less unified on what to think and feel regarding the exiled Imperial house.

Two camps united against one, the CSP were forced to concede, reconciling themselves to nominal resistance in the form of proposing amendments and urging moderation. Ultimately they passively accepted the anti-Habsburg parliamentary consensus as inevitably inexorable. Even urging debate on the implications for "freedom of movement guaranteed by constitutional law" and the "security of property" earned the more pro-Habsburg sympathetic elements of the CSP the derision of their fellow parliamentarians. This contemptuous ridicule was targeted particularly at the "Viennese

[45] Brook-Shepherd, *Last Habsburg*, p. 180-81.
[46] Vivian, *Life of the Emperor Charles*, p. 179.
[47] Unknown, "Expropriateure werden expropriiert," *Arbeiter Zeitung*. April 3, 1919, p. 1; Unknown, " Die Landesverweisung der Habsburger: Die Verhandlung in der Nationalversammlung," *Arbeiter Zeitung*. April 3, 1919, p. 1-2.

Christian Social gentlemen," who, the SPÖ paper accused of having "been brought up in black and yellow servilism."[48] Bauer makes a sharp distinction between the CSP of Imperial Vienna who in his mind "were openly of a counter-revolutionary character" and the CSP of the rural peasantry. The former were "quite under the influence of monarchical circles: of the high clergy, the clerical nobility, the counter-revolutionary officers," and the latter he thought were merely "anti-plutocratic."[49] In this way the SPÖ hoped to present themselves as allies of the peasantry as a population but an enemy to their Viennese reactionary leaders, embodied in Seipel[50] and with "Dr. Weiskirchner at their head."[51]

This split in the CSP between the rural majority and Imperial faction centred in Vienna was not a mere figment of the Austromarxist imagination. The *Reichspost*[52] —in which Seipel wrote extensively— was targeted by the opposing SPÖ official press writing that "these Christian Socials, the Blacks [clerical-minded] around the *Reichspost*, still have more faith in Habsburg than in the Austro-German Republic."[53] The article concluded with triumphant jubilation, noting how:

> "Times have changed very, very much, and what once could not be achieved in decades is now the work of one [parliamentary] session. Social policy has moved beyond the realm of the controversial!"[54]

Seeing the failure of the CSP to make a unified hard stand vindicated Karl's decision to release those formally under his command from obedience to their oaths. Such a policy allowed pro-Habsburg Legitimists to gain office in the new republican order and become discrete agents of restoration rather than have them self-excluded from political power and cede a monology of influence to convinced anti-monarchists.

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[48] Unknown, " Die Landesverweisung der Habsburger: Die Verhandlung in der Nationalversammlung," *Arbeiter Zeitung*. April 3, 1919, p. 1-2.
[49] Bauer, *Austrian Revolution*, p. 96.
[50] Ibid., p. 204.
[51] Unknown, " Die Landesverweisung der Habsburger: Die Verhandlung in der Nationalversammlung," *Arbeiter Zeitung*. April 3, 1919, p. 1-2.
[52] A Catholic clerical-minded publication supportive of the CSP.
[53] Unknown, " Die Landesverweisung der Habsburger: Die Verhandlung in der Nationalversammlung," *Arbeiter Zeitung*. April 3, 1919, p. 1-2.
[54] Ibid.

Seipel was one such figure who had served under Karl's imperial cabinet and whom the exiled king singled out as the CSP rising star and valuable potential ally. Historians Klemens von Klemperer and John Charles Swanson highlight Seipel as exercising subtle Monarchism in office, discreetly seeking out Karl in his initial Swiss exile at Villa Prangins on 7th August 1920 proclaiming himself to be a genuine monarchist of conviction. There he would reportedly share his personal certitude "that it was only a matter of time before the return of the monarchy" and until then "he would have to wear a mask, for the time being, which he would shed at the correct moment."[55] In this meeting —one year before the Catholic prelate's rise to chairmanship of the CSP and two years before his first term as chancellor— Seipel met with Karl for two days in Prangins and signed a secret agreement. The terms of the agreement obliged Seipel and his allies to make a declaration in favour of a Danube Confederation and Habsburg restoration by the new year 1921 (five months away) or if, before that, an Anschluss seemed imminent.[56] Proponents of Republicanism like Bauer espoused: "Union with Germany would have meant the burial of their hopes for Hapsburg's return."[57] Karl's plan was clear. Maintaining Vienna's independence from Berlin as a paramount prerequisite, then encourage Central European collaboration and finally, when opportune, advocate Habsburg restoration to glue that supranationalism together.

Karl had certainly expected Seipel to act as apologist for the Feldkirch line that his 11th November 1918 "declaration as null and void" under the premise that no legal decree could be valid if made under coercion. Karl addressed Seipel in 1919 after the defeat of the neighbouring Budapest Soviet:

> "I am addressing you, my minister and privy councillor, at an historic moment. In Hungary, restoration is no longer a distant prospect, and the aim is to pave the way

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[55] Klemens Von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel: Christian Statesman in a Time of Crisis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972), p. 147-149. Cited in John Charles Swanson, "*Search for Stability in an Era of Transition: Austria and Hungary in the New European Order, 1918-1922*" (PhD thesis, University of Minnesota, 1996), p. 390.

[56] AOS: Tom. I, Index 63, August 8, 1920, Signed and authenticated agreement of Ignaz Seipel and Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 603-04.

[57] Bauer, *Austrian Revolution*, p. 115-116.

for the same in Austria. My manifesto of 11 November [1918] is a major obstacle to this development and a source of confusion among all well-meaning people."[58]

From such correspondence it was clear that Karl uncompromisingly considered Seipel to be bound by his Imperial oath and likewise considered the Rump-Republic as an illegitimate usurping entity. Clinging to his identity as a father to his people, he framed his struggle as one not against those that acquiesced to republican authority but rather the instigators of revolution themselves. Furthermore, Karl considered himself and his cause in much stronger position now a year after the wave of revolutions than when he made his concessionary non-abdication declaration retreating from public politics. He made his appeal to Seipel "as the responsible minister and co-author of this manifesto" to make it known that such a measure was only taken "because otherwise, with the complete lack of a reliable military, a bloody revolution would have broken out, which we would not have been able to control."[59] To Karl's mind, the Provisional National Assembly was the illegitimate domain of "fearful representatives, who have long since been estranged from the people, who proclaimed the glorious republic under pressure from the streets."[60] In this narrative of usurpation, the Austrian people themselves were denied the democratic rights which Karl had intended for them and all laws of the republic were therefore null and void as the product of ochlocracy.[61]

For Karl and other Legitimists, all unilateral developments from the October 1918 *Völkermanifest* manifesto were likewise invalid on account of the internal democratic and federalising reforms being subject to being undertaken with Imperial consent and not an unlimited license for republican national revolution. This to Karl was the "one and only correct interpretation of the law."[62] Convincing Seipel to hold this strict legitimist line not just privately but publicly was a herculean task. Nonetheless, Karl wrote to Seipel:

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[58] AOS: Tom. I, Index 19 and 106; TS 3223-3225, December 3, 1919, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to Ignaz Seipel (Vienna, Austria) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 548-49.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.

> "The people must be enlightened as to who their sovereign is and what has been done to offend him, without regard to current political advantages or disadvantages."[63]

Even if public professions of pro-Habsburg loyalty were all too lacking, there were many aristocratic monarchists who retained continuity of employment in the new revolutionary state. Within the technocratic Foreign Ministry where high-ranking diplomatic representatives had cultivated personal connections over many years. Within high society circles of the Great Powers the respectability these figures engendered served to cast the Vienna revolution in a softer light when compared to violent Bolshevism of nearby Munich and Budapest. The pro-Habsburg aristocratic baron de Vaux represented Austria in Switzerland working tirelessly to co-opt the Swiss into pleading Vienna's case to the US.[64] Another such example is that of Baron Georg von und zu Franckenstein who would continue to represent Austria in London, even receiving a promotion to ambassador in 1920 and joining the Austrian delegation to Saint-Germain in 1919.[65]

In his assessment on the downfall of the Empire, Seipel found himself in near total agreement with Karl who likewise identified German and Magyar intransigent sense of superiority as the poison to harmonious relations with the Empire's Slavic population.[66] In this narrative, efforts to appeal to a spirit of compromise alienated the Habsburg dynasty from their ever increasingly nationalist traditional Imperial core, leaving an ever more marginalised reactionary Catholic, aristocratic, and supranational base of support to rely upon. In seeking to please all parties in an all or nothing effort to defend their royal and imperial prerogatives, the Habsburgs now found themselves banished from all corners of their former realm. Kozuchowski surmised that in the wake of revolutions across Central Europe, "the Habsburg dynasty appeared to be politically bankrupt"[67] and within "Austria

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[63] Ibid.
[64] AdR: NPA, Karton 230 Liasse Österreich 5 – Diplomatische Vertretungen 7/III Deutschösterreichische auswärtige Politik – Instruktionen etc. 1918-1932, Ff. 85-95, December 27, 1918 telegram report from Baron Leo Bar de Vaux (Austrian Embassy, Bern) to Otto Bauer (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).
[65] Georg von und zu Franckenstein, *Zwischen Wien und London: Erinnerungen eines österreichischen Diplomaten; mit Briefen von Hugo von Hofmannsthal* (Graz: Stocker, 2005), p. 199.
[66] Ignaz Seipel, "Die demokratische Verfassung," *Reichspost*. November 21, 1918, p.1
[67] Adam Kozuchowski, *The Afterlife of Austria-Hungary: The Image of the Habsburg Monarchy in Interwar Europe*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), p. 4.

alone did the imperial legacy inspire popular sentiment."[68] This can be seen in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's presentation of his work *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (The Woman Without a Shadow) to the Viennese theatre stage.[69] Written during the recent war years for a triumphant Habsburg Empire, it was now premiering in defeated and demoralised Vienna, a city of reluctant revolution rather than Imperial splendour. Upon release, satirical lampooning of the play soon followed. Once such case was a fictious dialogue describing the production in which a working class Mrs. Schestak in her local idiomatic Viennese dialect pondered:

> "Well, there is an emperor and an empress, it happened in the olden days and I don't understand why people call it a 'modern' opera; in a modern opera there shouldn't be an emperor and an empress, but only a president and a president-ess."[70]

The play was nonetheless received well by the well-to-do Viennese audience, with one critic in October 1919 having concluded: "The enthusiasm seemed to have the aim of reaching the level of the seat prices. Certainly, no small feat."[71]

The recent failure to secure the objective of either *Anschluss* or territorial unity with South Tyrol and more peripheral German-speaking regions of the former Empire was a detrimental blow to the young democratic republic which had prostrated itself at the altar of Wilsonian idealism. Viennese parliamentary democracy had long in the minds of the Empires German-speaking population been inescapably associated with a perpetual cycle of concessions and chaos. The compounding struggle to stabilise the material condition of the population did not assist in efforts to disassociate from deeply rooted perceptions of parliamentarism held in the collective consciousness of the German-speakers of the former empire. Such views were not confined to the native German population, Arthur Hugh Frazier[72] surmised in 1920 that even in the new little Austria, "the pernicious atmosphere of the old parliament building where the Republican Assembly holds its sessions, seems to

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[68] Ibid., P. 12.
[69] Larry Wolff, *The Shadow of the Empress: Fairy-Tale Opera and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2023), p. 228.
[70] Unknown, "Die Frau ohne Schatten," *Wiener Bilder.* October 26, 1919, p. 15.
[71] Dr. M. M., "Theater und Kunst: Der Mann mit dem Schatten," *Der Abend*. October 11, 1919, p. 4.
[72] US Chargé d'Affaires pro tempore in Vienna from November 1921 to May 1922.

cast an evil influence on all who are called there to represent the Republic."[73] The dual risk of both political indifferentism and political radicalism threated the new post-1918 Austria. Seipel had summarised in November 1918 that the "old Austrian parliament was so barren because almost no bill could be introduced that did not become the subject of national bickering."[74] Furthermore, he warned that radical political polarisation would create the same dynamic in the new state if voters allowed political parties to serve their own interest and revert into blind tribalism. In truth, such insurmountable polarisation was perhaps inevitable when one considers the mutually exclusive visions of what the new state would be. To the SPÖ, their CSP opponents were capitalist exploiters of the working class hiding behind the Catholic faith and crypto-Monarchism. To the CSP, the SPÖ were Crypto-Bolsheviks momentarily hiding behind the respectable facade of parliamentary procedure. With such a chasm of uncharitable hyperbole, any common universally accepted civic culture was beyond reach.

Legitimists attributed this descent into factionalism as the result of the loss of Imperial authority as the visible principle of political unity in each of the Dual-Monarchy's crownlands. Continuing to refuse abdication and even declaring the Vienna SPÖ led government to be illegitimate, on March 24th 1919—as his last act on Austrian soil before embarking upon his initial exile into Switzerland— Karl issued his Feldkirch Manifesto and sent copies to Pope Benedict XV and King Alfonso XIII of Spain. In his reply from the Vatican a mere two days later, the Holy Father commended Karl for not falling into despondency after such trials and maintaining concern for "the peoples entrusted to [him] by Divine Providence."[75] Historian Larry Wolff summarises: "While these letters were piously sympathetic, they did not explicitly recognize the imperial rights of Karl and Zita."[76] However, Vatican documents show that beyond a general paternal concern for the spiritual welfare of the apparently deposed Imperial family. In his private correspondence to the Habsburgs, –and even other royals– the Holy Father was more than willing to maintain traditional pre-1918 diplomatic protocols such as the use of full titles and

[73] NARA: 863.001H12/1 December 17, 1920, telegram report no. 36 entitled "President Michael Hainisch" from Arthur Hugh Frazier (Austrian Legation, Vienna) to Bainbridge Colby (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[74] Ignaz Seipel, "Die demokratische Verfassung," *Reichspost*. November 21, 1918, p. 2.
[75] Wolff, *Shadow of the Empress*, p. 229.
[76] Ibid.

pronouns of royal dignity. Nonetheless, full recognition of the previous functions which such titles up until recently inferred, was a different matter. This did not deter Karl from writing to the Pope at the end of 1919 declaring that he was bound by honour not to abdicate as to do so would either destroy the Catholic Habsburg mission in Europe by granting a blank cheque to republican secularists or reduce crown prince Otto to a puppet of anti-Catholic forces.[77]

Many contemporary sources and even 21st Century historians mistakenly claim — often in passing— that "Emperor Charles abdicated" his Imperial and Royal office in his November declaration.[78] Karl's departing anti-republican manifesto left no ambiguity in this matter. The public declaration precipitated a legislative response which was as punitive as it was swift. A 27th March 1919 draft bill introduced to parliament by the SPÖ majority would see Habsburg property appropriated by the state without compensation; the family exiled from the territorial jurisdiction of the State; dynastic members forbidden from holding public office in the republic; and the unilateral nullification of "oaths taken to the Emperor in his capacity as Head of State."[79] Once the law passed the following week, the SPÖ *Arbeiter Zeitung* editors noted with a sense of satisfaction:

> "What the dynasty has amassed over centuries has become a legacy of history […] Those who have expropriated the people for centuries are now being expropriated by the people."[80]

The same article goes on to bemoan how a law which "does not want to abolish private property, but only distribute it" would "urgently need to be improved" as it would "not be in keeping with the dictates of the times, which urge the socialisation of property."[81] This connection in the minds of Austromarxists of political and economic revolution reveals a socio-economic dynamic of the Habsburg Question. Such language about the principle of equal ownership of land—without limiting principle— alienated moderate elements of the bourgeois electorate. There was fear that collectivisation if first applied to the Habsburgs,

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[77] TS 2180-2182: pre-December 2, 1919 Aide-mémoire from Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to Pope Benedict XV (Vatican City) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 545-47.
[78] Mary Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: The State that failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 42.
[79] Unknown, "Das Strafgericht über die Habsburg-Lothringer," *Freie Stimme*. March 29, 1919, p. 1.
[80] Unknown, "Expropriateure werden expropriiert," *Arbeiter Zeitung*. April 3, 1919, p. 1.
[81] Ibid.

would then be extended to the lower aristocracy, and then finally this would culminate with the Dekulakisation of the more well-to-do landowners. Thus, those who engaged in counter-revolutionary reaction may have had multiple overlapping reasons to do so, religious, economic, political, and sentimental.

Notwithstanding, the revolutionary attacks on the House of Austria were not exclusively aimed at their economic privilege. Over centuries of rule, Habsburg influence had intertwined itself into almost every aspect of daily life in Central Europe. As one of the premier Catholic Imperial powers in Europe, the Holy See had granted several dynastic privileges to the Habsburg emperor. One such privilege was a de facto veto which could be exercised against unfavourable candidates for the conclave election of a new Pope.[82] From the Vatican's perspective of witnessing decades of repeated victories of secular modernity and decline of visible Christendom, she had fostered entrenched scepticism towards secular influence in Church affairs. She now sought to repeal privileges granted to temporal rulers in previous times of mutual collaboration. One such remaining privilege was that of Imperial prerogative in the appointment of high Church offices.

Now that Karl was removed from the exercise of power —in his retrospective view removed against his will and without legal basis— it was a source of concern for the Holy See that the republican presidents which replaced him could claim to be the inheritors of his royal executive privileges. The Vatican therefore sought to obtain from Karl a formal renunciation of his Crown privileges in the administration of the Catholic Church in formally Habsburg lands. A Papal allocution of November 21st, 1921, clarified how these rights were considered specific Dynastic rights of the sovereign and not acts of state.[83] In that way the Vatican made clear that a Habsburg alliance of throne and altar could not be reconstructed and applied according to the purposes of new authorities in Prague, Vienna, or Budapest.

[82] A non-codified privilege which was formally revoked by Pius X after he had himself benefited from Habsburg support in the 1903 conclave.
[83] Marek Šmíd, *Mission: Apostolic Nuncio in Prague, Czechoslovakian-Vatican Diplomatic Relations between 1920 and 1950* (Prague: Karolinum Press, 2020), p. 145.

That same January 1920 there were detailed accounts reported back to the Vatican by her diplomatic network in Switzerland of efforts to instruct bishops and priests close to Karl's exile court to "advise His Majesty to make a renunciation [of royal patronage in the Church in Bohemia] deemed necessary for the salvation of souls." The same report warned of "spies, who watch the imperial residence, and reported to the Government in Prague" and hindered their efforts.[84] By the end of the month the Holy Father received a letter — written in Latin and composed on official K.u.K. headed paper—in which Karl demonstrated his filial loyalty to the Pope in officially renouncing all "ecclesiastical privileges in the various places in Austria-Hungary."[85] Historian Marek Šmíd notes how, to Liberal and Socialist political leaders in Prague, the Catholic Church was "an accomplice of the several-hundred-year Austrian oppression."[86] Therefore, anti-Habsburg revolution in Prague appeared outwardly Nationalist and anti-clerical, but behind the Wilsonian façade one finds a revolutionary state building project, the animating spirit of which was in fact multi-ethnic and religious.

Furthermore, Andrea Orzoff and Claire Morelon point to Czechoslovakian efforts to paint an "image of a nonviolent revolution on October 28, 1918 and a peaceful, democratic nation" to the international community.[87] Such self-presentation from Prague would not sway Legitimists. They, like Morelon, no doubt noticed how lèse-majesté laws were now flipped to apply to the new president Masaryk, whose elaborate ceremonial arrival in Prague "resembled that of the Belgian king in Brussels, with no clear equivalent among democratically elected leaders."[88] Keen to denounce such usurpation, Karl wrote to the Vatican in 1919 that "Slovaks are not and do not want to be Bohemians. They are

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[84] AAEESS: Fodo: Perido III [Pontificati Pio X (1903-1914) e Benedetto XV (1914-1922)], Austria-Ungheria, III Pos, 1441, fasc., 579. Ff. 56r-57r, January 5, 1920, report n. 3300 entitled: "Beneficii ecclesiastici di patrone della Casa d'Asbsburgo in Boemia" from Luigi Maglione (Bern, Switzerland) Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[85] AAEESS: Fodo: Perido III [Pontificati Pio X (1903-1914) e Benedetto XV (1914-1922)], Austria-Ungheria, III Pos, 1441, fasc., 579. Ff. 65, January 25, 1920, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to Pope Benedict XV (Vatican City).

[86] Šmíd, *Mission: Apostolic Nuncio,* p. 27.

[87] Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914–1948 (*New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) cited in Claire Morelon, *Streetscapes of War and Revolution: Prague, 1914–1920, Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024), p. 254.

[88] Morelon, *Streetscapes of War and Revolution:Prague, 1914–1920*, p. 269.

good, devout Catholics, which unfortunately cannot always be said of the Czechs."[89] The exiled emperor convinced himself of the impending departure of the Slovaks from Czechoslovakia for Hungary, this constituting "a circumstance that could at least severely shake the young state, or perhaps destroy it altogether."[90] Such a loss would certainly disturb the balance of ethnicities in Prague's state-building project, leaving comparable number of Slavs and Germans. There existed great tension between two forms of arguments of justification for Czechoslovakian statehood, one ethnic argument from nationhood and another historical argument from reawakened continuity. Prague walked this tightrope with great care. On one side she argued to be considered a reawakened suppressed Bohemia and, on another day, —to suit her apologetics— she considered herself a Slavic state, the northern counterpart to Yugoslavia.

[89] AAEESS: Austria 670, Prot. 68/TS 2180-2182, pre-December 2, 1919, memorandum of Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to Pope Benedict XV (Vatican) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 545-47.
[90] Ibid.

2.2: Peace Treaties and the Dynasty

Tara Zahra and Larry Wolff point to a US president Wilson as a man who "liked to fashion himself as the Abraham Lincoln" for the Old World.[1] The watchword of the latter half of the First World War and subsequent peace treaties would therefore be the emancipatory maxim of Self-Determination. The hotly contested ambiguity of this concept would prove a flashpoint without resolution. Interwar Anglo-German historian, Elizabeth Wiskemann, noted how even though the Western Entente had officially recognised Czechoslovakia as an allied co-belligerent, it remained an open question as to "[w]hat were its frontiers to be and who its citizens?"[2] Meanwhile the Sudeten-Germans likewise ran "to Wilson and self-determination with almost childish eagerness."[3] Siegfried Beer documents the flaws in American efforts to ascertain the facts on the ground in Central Europe leading up to the Paris Peace Conference.[4] Beer notes the side-lining of Austria as an afterthought to the planning for Germany and Hungary, the ump-republic being described by UK FO official Harold Nicholson as "strange misshapen orphan" and "a pathetic relic."[5] The Professor A. C. Coolidge Mission —building on Wilson's Inquiry— was a US fact-finding diplomatic expedition to Vienna which ran from the end of 1918 to the arrival of the Austrian delegation at Saint-Germain in May 1919. Noting the apathy to his counsel, Coolidge would gripe to Wilson's staff that "a letter to Santa Claus has a better chance of being answered than an inquiry sent to the delegation."[6]

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[1] Larry Wolff, *Woodrow Wilson and the Reimagining of Eastern Europe* (Stanford University Press, 2020) cited in Tara Zahra, "Afterword: Chutes and Ladders: Racialization in Habsburg Central Europe After 1918," in *Ethnicizing Europe: Hate and Violence After Versailles,* ed. Éva Kovács, Raul Cârstocea, and Gábor Egry (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2025), p. 282.
[2] Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans*, p. 79.
[3] Ibid., p. 82.
[4] Siegfried Beer, "Selectively Perceived Legacies of World War I: The Little-Known Halstead Mission in Austria, 1919." in *From Empire to Republic: Post-World War I Austria*, ed. Günter Bischof, Fritz Plasser, and Peter Berger, (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2010), p. 111-12.
[5] Ibid., p. 114.
[6] Ibid.

Displaying not mere apathy but distain, Samuel Hoare, British Conservative MP for Chelsea, declared in July 1919 that Habsburg rule to have had been "the essence of bureaucratic unscrupulousness and anti-national intrigue."[7] Speaking of the fall of eagles and the rise of a new Wilsonian age, he addressed his colleagues in Westminster during the debates on the Peace Bill:

> "These old organisations [Imperial dynasties] have got to be broken if the new world is to come into being. What, gives me to think is that there are still men —I am afraid many men— of the old Hapsburg and Hohenzollern Empires who are determined to piece together again the old machine and to make it again function."[8]

One such feared piecing-together was a proposal by the last Minister-President of Cisleithanian-Austria appointed by Karl, Prof. Heinrich Lammasch. He presented to the Great Powers the utility of a supranational "Alpine Republic" centred on —but not dominated by— Vienna, which would extend far beyond the mountainous Salzburg, Tyrol, Voralberg, Austrian duchies, most of Carinthia and Styria, Burgenland, and southern sections of neighbouring Moravia, Bohemia and even Bavaria.[9] Such supranational idealist ambition —while not directly objectionable to the interests of the UK and France— would meet with vehement resistance from the Little Entente. Nonetheless, the UK FO regarded the Austrian Imperial professor's assessment as "at the very best half true" and concluded "his schemes seem fantastic."[10]

Within this context of arriving at a conclusive peace, Karl saw himself and the Holy Father as two sources of paternal authority –one temporal and one spiritual– advocating for justice on behalf of *their* peoples. In this light, he wrote in late 1919 to Pope Benedict XV —as "the Father of Christendom"— pleading on behalf of "the peoples

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[7] House of Commons debate on Treaty of Peace Bill, July 21, 1919, found in House of Commons, *The Parliamentary Debates: Official Report, volume 118* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1919), p. 1038.
[8] Ibid.
[9] PRO FO: 608/11/10, March 28, 1919, memorandum by Professor Lammasch (suspected March, 1919), forwarded to Curzon by Acton, cited in Natasha Wheatley, *The Life and Death of States: Central Europe and the Transformation of Modern Sovereignty* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2023), p. 193.
[10] PRO FO: 371/3529, April 2, 1919, note by Lewis Namier referring to Rumbold to Curzon, March 19, 1919 (C 45905/5445/43) cited in Dragan Bakic, *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe: Foreign Policy and Security Challenges, 1919-1936* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p. 22.

entrusted to [him, Karl] by God" who were now "starving to death on the streets."[11] Karl painted the picture of an Austrian republic —with only nominal exercise of sovereignty— crippled by the recent treaty of Saint-Germain and irreconcilable internal division:

> "The crown lands do not want to remain with 'Red' Vienna, the city is much too big for the small state, […] The government's power extends only as far as the gates of the ministries."[12]

This carrying over of constitutional continuity of the Austrian hereditary crownlands into the new Wilsonian period as federal states within the new republic of German-Austria presented challenges for Legitimist and republicans alike.[13] Recognising their sovereignty as legal entities begged the question as to what degree Wilsonian Self-Determination could apply to them. Such a principle would be put to the test and found wanting in the case of Vorarlberg's attempted succession from Austria to join Switzerland.

The retention of the name Austria —at the behest of the victorious Great Powers anxious of a possible Anschluss— was a major victory for the conservative and legitimist movements. For the Pan-German and SPÖ camp, Natasha Wheatley notes: "Even the name appeared the dictate of the victors, and was disliked all the more because of it."[14] Nonetheless, in a challenge for Legitimists, Wheatley also concludes:

> "The atoms of the empire had broken apart, moved about, and recombined; there was no way of tracking 'the empire' as a stable identity through these sovereign mutations."[15]

In May 1919 –confronted with a Hungary vehemently claiming legal continuity with the Eastern half of the old Empire and a German-Austria rejecting continuity with the Western half of the Habsburg Dual-Monarchy– a polemic debate conducted in a series of UK Foreign Office memorandums written by Headlam-Morley and Lewis Namier contemplated how best to regard the new Austrian state and its relationality to the previous Old Habsburg Empire. Contributing to preparations to what would become the treaty of

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[11] AAEESS: Austria 670, Prot. 68/TS 2180-2182, pre-December 2, 1919, memorandum of Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to Pope Benedict XV (Vatican) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 545-47.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, p. 68.
[14] Wheatley, *Life and Death of States*, p. 194.
[15] Ibid., p. 196.

Saint-Germain, Headlam-Morley differentiated the case of Germany and Austria, of the former Habsburg monarchy asserting:

> "[W]e have not only to put an end to the state of war, but to deal with one of the greatest events which have ever taken place in European history, the dissolution of one of the oldest, the greatest, and most extensive States on the Continent of Europe."[16]

Whereas Headlam-Morley saw "dissolution," others in the FO such as Lewis Namier saw an obvious legal continuity between Cisleithanian Austria and the new remnant German-Austria state. Namier argued his case by pointing to the triple fact that, firstly; the new state was "returning more or less to its frontiers of 1526," secondly; the German-speaking population were historically the leading element of the monarchy's civilising mission, and thirdly; all of the "new" successor states did have some arguable past and now would "merely resume an existence broken by the action of the Habsburgs who had therein the support of the German Austrians."[17] This pro-continuity school of thought espoused by Namier provided a line of argument for Legitimists. Thus, rushing to the refuge of international law provided a defence against a Pan-Germanism increasingly seeing the little republic as ripe for Anschluss. This idea of a Habsburg state living still, now reverted to more-or-less its historic core —the so-called Hereditary Lands (*Erblande*)—was workable initial schema for many Legitimists.

However, this *Erblande* theory would not gain popular traction in German-Austria as it did not extend to the German-speaking lands previously found within the Bohemian and Hungarian crownlands.[18] In an era marked by Wilsonian idealism, the German-Austrian parliament in Vienna claimed the population of Transleithanian Burgenland and the Sudetenland[19] as citizens of the new rump-republic and sought to hold elections there,

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[16] PRO FO: 608/19/10, May 26, 1919, J. W. Headlam-Morley note on the Draft Austrian Treaty, found in Natasha Wheatley, *The Life and Death of States: Central Europe and the Transformation of Modern Sovereignty* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2023), p. 197-198.

[17] PRO FO: 608/19/10, May 31, 1919, Mr. Namier, Reference to Mr. Headlam-Morley's "Note on the Draft Austrian Treaty," found in Natasha Wheatley, *The Life and Death of States: Central Europe and the Transformation of Modern Sovereignty* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2023), p. 198.

[18] The lands of the crown of Saint Wenceslas and the lands of the crown of Saint Stephen were later 16th-century acquisitions to the house of Habsburg.

[19] Formerly contained within the Kingdom of Bohemia, Margraviate of Moravia, and Duchy of Upper and Lower Silesia under the rule of the Habsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire.

elections which were prevented by neighbouring states eager to assert their sovereignty over the same lands. The impact of the treaty of Saint-Germain on Austrian domestic politics of the interwar era can be little overstated. Keen to blame external subversion of supposed domestic working-class momentum, Otto Bauer would conclude: "The day on which the Treaty of St. Germain had to be ratified was the day when the proletarian predominance in Austria ended."[20] With the prohibition on Anschluss included in the dictated terms of the peace treaty, the partition of German-Austrian lands was codified. Furthermore, with mandated restrictions on military capacity, and punitive imposition of reparation obligations, Austria was depicted across all spectrums of the domestic press as destitute and shackled, doomed to despair.[21]

The universal opinion of German-Austrians was that —under Wilson's direction— the victorious French, Italian, and Czechoslovakian powers had carved up the peripheral German populations as spoils of war. This was depicted in the Viennese press with Alsatian Germans, South-Tyroleans, and Sudeten Germans as chess pieces on a black and yellow board[22] swept up by the greedy hands of Paris, Rome and Prague with the inscription reading: "So spoke Wilson: peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game."[23] This quote was directly taken from President Wilson's February 11th, 1918, address before a joint session of Congress.[24] Rejecting a distinct Austrian-ness as a foundational principle of political life, Social Democrats for their part promoted the idea that the root of their lamented German disunity found its genesis in a "quarrel between Hapsburg and Hohenzollern" and that now "the union of the race into one community seemed the natural consequence of the overthrow of the dynasties."[25]

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[20] Bauer, *Austrian Revolution*, p. 129.
[21] Unknown, "Deutschösterreichs Eintritt in die Friedensverhandlungen." *Kikeriki*. May 25, 1919, p. 1; Theo Zasche. "Vermögensabmeldung," *Reichspost*. June 2, 1919, p. 1; K. Vangralz, "In Saint-Germain," *Arbeiterwille*. July 27, 1919, p. 3; Karl Alexander Wilke, "Befehl ist Befehl," *Die Muskete*. September 25, 1919, p. 1; Unknown, "Die vorsorgliche Mutter," *Wiener Caricaturen*. January 10, 1920, p. 1.
[22] Yellow and Black being the Imperial colours traditionally associated with the Habsburg Empire.
[23] Willy Stieborsky, "Also sprach Wilson," *Die Muskete*. May 15, 1919, p. 1.
[24] "Address of the President of the United States Delivered at a Joint Session of the Two Houses of Congress, February 11, 1918" found in US Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, Supplement 1, The World War, Volume I.* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1933), p. 108-13.
[25] Bauer, *Austrian Revolution*, p. 63.

Karl had pleaded with France to not draw hard borders in a Central Europe which he characterised as containing "an intertwining of nationalities, even from one village to another."[26] Assenting to the terms of the treaty of Saint-Germain under obvious coercion and with no faction of Austrian politics refraining from "criticizing it with the greatest severity,"[27] an organic collegial solution seemed more impossible by the day. According to the Austromarxists –who only months before had looked to the Entente for license to revolt against Habsburg rule– the "imperialism of the Western Powers" had "turned against the Central European Revolution which […] victory had engendered."[28] In this context the idea that the new republics of Central Europe were artificial would gain traction.

In contrast, more ethnically homogeneous nation states emerging from the fires of the First World War —such as Poland and Ireland— were seen as natural and stable. Taking aim at the work of the treaties of Versailles, Saint-Germain, and Tironian, the aristocratic Lord Oranmore and Brown, Geoffrey Henry Browne –speaking before the British House of Lords in 1921– would describe newly independent Ireland as not "a new-fangled State like the mushroom Republics that the Entente Powers have set up on the ruins of the Hapsburg Monarchy."[29] Nonetheless, these "mushroom Republics" were just as much a manifestation of the expressed will of the victorious Entente Great Powers as their respective intellectual nationalist vanguard. France in particular had great geopolitical interest in acting as mid-wife to as many newly born states surrounding defeated Germany as possible. It was a guarantee of these states pro-French loyalty that they not only derived their existence from French diplomatic and economic support, but that they also contained

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[26] AOS: Tom. I, Index 100: March 31, 1919, report from Apostolic protonotary Msgr. Georges-Prudent-Marie Bruley des Varannes (St. Gall, Switzerland) to Vatican Secretary of State found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 465-67.

[27] NARA: Paris Peace Conf. 184.011102/410, September 5, 1919, report no. 75 entitled "Review of conditions in Austria" from Albert Halstead (American Mission, Vienna) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

[28] Bauer, *Austrian Revolution*, p. 79.

[29] House of Lords: Address in Reply to His Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, December 15, 1921, column 115.
Accessed February 11, 2023: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/1921-12-15/debates/3c14ec65-bcc9-449b-80d4-28717a573f05/AddressInReplyToHisMajestySMostGraciousSpeech.

within them sizeable German minorities which constituted a security risk that ensured they would look to Paris for military protection.

This punitive peace came at the price of any chance of seeking stability through reconciliation and ensured revanchism on the part of Berlin and Budapest. Yet, even beyond nationalist and Protestant circles of Central Europe, the final peace drew condemnation. The British-Catholic polemicist Chesterton, the Entente policy on Central Europe was conceived "by men who, in the most definite sense, did not know what they were doing."[30] He too would assess these new Central European states in relation to Ireland, taking the view that "it was entirely right to restore the medieval kingdom of Bohemia" but that one could "have never understood why it should change its name to Czechoslovakia, which is rather like restoring the ancient nationality of Ireland, adding a thin and arbitrary strip of Scotland, and calling it Celtocaledonia."[31]

In contrast, like Irishness, Magyar identity was much more well-established. Natasha Wheatley in her 2023 work *The Life and Death of States* makes careful note of how a newly independent —but truncated— Hungary was keen to assert legal and historical continuity with the Transleithanian half of the former Habsburg Monarchy, taking "their historical rights with them into the new world order."[32] As leader of the Hungarian delegation to the Paris Peace Council, Count Albert Apponyi addressed the victorious Entente powers on January 6th, 1920, summarizing the Magyar constitutional narrative, arguing that Hungarian territorial sovereignty, conceptualised as "The Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen" predated Habsburg rule and traced its genesis to the turn of the eleventh century saintly king that bares the crown's name.[33] In their presentation to the victorious powers of the Paris Peace Conference, the Hungarian delegation in their words, sought:

> "To establish the fact that Hungary is no new State born of the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and so cannot be compared from this point of

[30] G.K. Chesterton, *The End of the Armistice* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1940), p. 41.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Wheatley, *Life and Death of States*, p. 190.
[33] Ibid.

view to German-Austria, to the Czecho-Slovak, nor to the Yougoslav [sic.] State." [34]

The one-thousand-year continuity of Magyar sovereignty in public law was therefore used to argue in favour of her territorial integrity.[35] This juxtaposition between constitutional continuity and revolutionary novelty found a warm reception in the minds of a niche group of conservatives across Europe. It resonated particularly with Catholics in England which too invoked historical constitutional motifs —such as Magna Carta (1215) and anti-Willemite Jacobitism (1688)— to make contemporary political arguments. Nonetheless, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the royal lands of St. Stephen would not be afforded the same consideration as that of the similarly heterogenous –and less historic– Kingdom of Belgium.

Furthermore, this Hungarian argument went parallel to a rival Czechoslovakian narrative of Bohemian statehood being suppressed by Habsburg tyranny for centuries. This Wenceslaus-ian principle was, however, extended to not just that of traditional Bohemia but also Moravia, Silesia and Slovak-populated northern Transleithania. In contrast, for revolutionaries in Vienna, historical continuity was an obstacle to their political agenda. This desire to break fully with the past is seen in the deputy-leadership of Otto Bauer over the SPÖ, who himself as the director of the young republic's foreign affairs wanted to use the fall of the Habsburg Empire as a "Tabula rasa with the past,"[36] even rejecting the very name Austria for the new state. The Austrian Catholic Right fretted that Otto Bauer –as SPÖ Foreign Minister of nascent state from November 1918 to July 1919– would promote a counter-supranationalism attempting to reconcile Bolshevism with Social Democracy under the framework of the Third Communist International. His domestic policy was shaped by the notion of a "gradual revolution" to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat through a "model of a parliamentary-democratic, peaceful road to socialism."[37] Despite disassociating from the means of the USSR, the mainstreaming of what Bauer referred to

[34] Ibid., 190.
[35] January 14, 1920, Note II ("Presentation Note") entitled "Memorandum concerning the evolution of relations between Austria and Hungary, from the point of view of public law," in Jenö Cholnoky, *The Hungarian Peace Negotiations*, (Budapest: Victor Hornyánszky, 1921), p. 34 cited in Wheatley, *Life and Death of States*, p. 190-191.
[36] Pfoser and Weigl, *Die Erste Stunde Null*, p. 45.
[37] Ewa Czerwińska-Schupp, *Otto Bauer (1881-1938): Thinker and Politician* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), p. 169.

as a "revolution under the majesty of law"[38] in a time of parallel violent Bolshevik revolution in neighbouring Hungary was a cause of trepidation in the minds of the moderate middle ground of domestic electors and the international community alike.

Zsolt Nagy points to the "emotional response" of British diplomats —such as Harold Nicolson— who represented the UK at the Paris Peace Conference to the writings of Slavophiles such as Seton-Watson and how they derived from them "interpretations of the current and historical realities of the [Central European] region."[39] Key UK FO official at Saint-Germain and Trianon, Allen Leeper, would even write to Seaton-Watson in January 1920 confiding in him:

> "I'm also having pretty good tussles over Hungarian & other things & if I can, as I'm now somewhat rashly trying, down & damn Habsburgism for good & ever, I can die happy!"[40]

Nonetheless, other UK FO officials such as Sir Francis Oppenheimer in the lead up to the treaty of Saint-Germain argued that the "new Austria" was "neither politically nor economically the heir of the late Austrian Empire" and "on the verge of famine."[41] This opinion on legal continuity withstanding, the material deprivation of the republic centred on Vienna was universally recognised. Seeking to stabilise the young republic and anchor it in the Entente camp —and echoing the supranational logic of Karl and the Vatican— Westminster saw Austria as an effective "bar to German designs in the Balkans" and during the deliberations of the treaty of Saint-Germain noted in the summer of 1919:

> "[I]t seems almost inevitable that Vienna must remain in the future, as in the past, the commercial and financial capital of the congeries of States which once formed the Austro-Hungarian Empire."[42]

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[38] Ibid., p. 177.
[39] Zsolt Nagy, *Great Expectations and Interwar Realities: Cultural Diplomacy in Horthy's Hungary* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2017), p. 133-34.
[40] School of Slavonic and East European Studies: SEW /8/2/1, January 31, 1920, Allen Leeper to Seton-Watson, private, cited in Dragan Bakic, *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe: Foreign Policy and Security Challenges, 1919-1936* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p. 23.
[41] PRO FO: 94817/5445/3, June 3, 1919, Foreign Office memorandum entitled "Memorandum by Sir Francis Oppenheimer relative to the situation in Austria" enclosed in report No. 4577 cited in *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939. 1st Series Volume 6 1919* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1956), p. 43.
[42] PRO FO: 118025/5445/3, August 15, 1919, Foreign Office memorandum entitled "The advantages, commercial and political, of giving financial assistance to German-Austria." found in *Documents on*

Austria could not be treated in isolation but rather in relation to these "congeries" of successor states of which —in the words of the UK FO— "Vienna is the natural centre."[43] The Habsburg empire was therefore seen as an organic phenomenon, the existence of which —in some form or another, with or without the Dynasty— should be preserved into the new post-war period. Bauer expressed his position on Danubian supranationalism to local American Mission diplomat Robert W. Heingartner, "that those who advocate a federation have in mind the reestablishment of the old Habsburg monarchy," something he described as "an actual danger for Central Europe."[44]

Legitimists surrounding Karl in his Swiss exile remained resolute in their proposals for a "Danube Confederation" as the solution most advantageous to both the Western Entente and Central Europe. German-speaking Austrians were not confined to the new rump state but rather scattered in significant quantiles throughout the Empire from the Sudetenland, to Marburg of Lower Styria, and ever further afield in Transylvanian Sibenburgen. Yugoslavia, Poland, and Romania in contrast were legitimate states in their own right, but which had annexed Habsburg lands, and nonetheless would be welcome additions to the newly proscribed regional confederation. With notable ambition, the exiled court theorised that once the conditions were ripe, Poland "would gravitate towards the Danubian Confederation and would all the more naturally and intimately bind itself to it, as its first sovereign might eventually be a member of the House of Habsburg."[45]

Of the new rump state centred on Vienna the old Imperial elite concluded when speaking to the international press: "What is called Austria now is only a German-speaking part and a very small part too, of the Austrian Empire."[46] It was thus "ignorance" and an injustice to hold this new state as the sole "legal heir" of the old Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, rather the new state was only an equal component of the Habsburg

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British Foreign Policy 1919-1939. 1st Series Volume 6: 1919 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1956), p. 156

[43] Ibid.

[44] NARA: 863.00/299, June 4, 1920, report no. 426 entitled "Interview with Dr. Bauer" from American Mission (Vienna) to Bainbridge Colby (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

[45] AOS: Tom. II, Index 706: July 1919, "Interview eines englischen Journalisten mit Nikolaus Graf Revertera von Salandra" found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 525-31.

[46] Ibid.

Monarchy —never legitimately dissolved— along with the other states of Czechoslovakia and Hungary.[47] In contrast to the harsh tone of Westminster and Fleet Street, the plight of Austria received favourable sympathy from Catholic Ireland. The *Irish Independent* — fighting its own anti-Imperial struggle— noted that the new Austria as created in November 1918 "had never been at war with anyone."[48] The fellow Irish publication *Freeman's Journal* termed Austria "the smallest and poorest and most peace loving of the States which arose out of the former Monarchy" and should not be "expected to bear alone this consequences of the mistakes made by Hungarian, Polish, and Slovene statesmen."[49] While not absolving Austria as the much of the Irish press had, this view was in part shared some in the UK FO such as Oppenheimer, who, in the lead up to the peace conference, argued against scapegoating Austria with the full burden of the Habsburg Empire's defeat."[50] Meanwhile, Central European German Catholics took refuge in pointing to concepts of moral philosophy such as *Jus Gentium* (The Law of Nations) which emphasised how "the state must, without further ado according to natural law, have at its disposal all the means and measures required for this natural purpose" of securing the common good.[51] To pro-actively conspire to deny a state the means of achieving its end was therefore an injustice.

Lewis Namier likewise saw the challenge that a German-Austria standing alone would present to the post-war order crafted by the victorious Entente. Nonetheless, he and his colleagues considered the prefix "German" to be unacceptable as a viable candidate for the name of the new state as it presumed that this territory would either be annexed to a greater-Germany, or conversely, be the German component of a wider greater Austria.

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Unknown, "Another Austrian Note," *Irish Independent*. June 19, 1919, cited in Lili Zách, "Irish Perceptions of National Identity in Austria-Hungary and its Small Successor States, 1914-1945" (PhD thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway, 2015), p. 106.

[49] Unknown, "'Never at War with Anyone' Novel Point for the Paris Conference. "Divide the Indemnity,'" *Freeman's Journal*. June 19, 1919, cited in Lili Zách, "Irish Perceptions of National Identity in Austria-Hungary and its Small Successor States, 1914-1945" (PhD thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway, 2015), p. 106.

[50] PRO FO: 94817/5445/3, June 03, 1919, Foreign Office Memorandum entitled "Memorandum by Sir Francis Oppenheimer relative to the situation in Austria" enclosed in report No. 4577 cited in *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939. 1st Series Volume 6: 1919.* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1956), p. 43.

[51] Otto Schilling, *Das Völkerrecht nach Thomas von Aquin* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung,1919), p. 26.

Whether out of pragmatic advantage or principled constitutionalism, this logic prevailed in the halls of Westminster, much to the dissatisfaction of the SPÖ and Pan-Germans in Vienna. Notwithstanding, a challenge for Legitimists was presented by the fact that there was no comparable theory in Austria to that of the function played by the crown of St. Stephen in neighbouring Hungary nor the Bohemian Crown of Saint Wenceslas in nascent Czechoslovakia.

Three weeks after interviewing Bauer, the American mission would seek out a similar private audience with the CSP leader Leopold Kunschak to sound out his perspective on the Habsburg question. Away from the lobbying pressure of opposing conservative factions, Kunschak, when asked privately by US officials as to the CSP's response in the eventuality of the secession of Alpine federal states from rump-republic, "shrugged his shoulders and said he did not know."[52] Kunschak was certainly no Legitimist and inspired no confidence in either wing of the conservative camp. In contrast, Ignaz Seipel and the *Reichspost* were highlighted by SPÖ president Karl Seitz at this time as the impetus for the monarchist wing of the CSP which was typified by its open clericalism. Regardless whether a SPÖ attempt to paint Seipel in a negative light in the mind of the American diplomats or a genuine expression of Austromarxist thinking, the US diplomatic mission to Vienna nonetheless concluded that the CSP "is, conservatively estimated, composed of at least fifty percent reliable anti-monarchists."[53] Seitz was of the rather idealist view —typical of Wilsonian thinking— that over time as liberal parliamentary culture entrenched itself in the life of the First Republic, the "anti-monarchist wing of the Christian-Socialists [would] demand good order and absence of extreme radicalism in the government even if a monarchy must follow."[54]

Extreme scepticism of alleged Jewish influence in political life —particularly in questions of constitutional law and international policy— was mainstream in all political

[52] NARA: 863.00/336, June 24, 1920, report no. 451 entitled "Interview with Leopold Kunschak, Christian Socialist Leader" from American Mission (Vienna) to Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby (Washington D.C.).
[53] NARA: 863.00/184, September 15, 1919, report no. 3 from American Mission (Vienna) to Secretary of State, Robert Lansing (Washington D.C.).
[54] NARA: 863.00/337, June 24, 1920, report no. 454 entitled "Political Parties in Austria." from American Mission (Vienna) to Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby (Washington D.C.).

camps and within the Church. The premier newspaper on the Habsburg-sympathetic Right, the *Reichspost* ran regular antisemitic cartoons[55] and bore the frequent emboldened inscription: "In the Christian home, no Jewish newspapers!"[56] One such notable case came in August 18th, 1919, with the publication of a prominent front-page anti-Semitic cartoon in which the *Reichspost* alleged that the perceived tension within the CSP over specifically the Habsburg question was a manufactured crisis by malicious Jews, satirically termed the "the most exquisite forces of Israel."[57] Demonstrative of the pervasive power of anti-Semitism, it was an effective rhetorical device to de-legitimise opposing political movements by painting them as infiltrated by Jewish forces. The Papal nuncio in Vienna reported back to Rome in July 1919 that Otto Bauer, "with his background and his ideas bordering on Bolshevism," had close ties to Lenin and "with his secretary Kautsky — Jewish like himself— and a female employee of the ministry, alone held the strings of Austrian foreign policy."[58] While showing less private hostility on account of his ethnicity, this assessment of Bauer as a scheming extremist was shared by the Entente powers who attributed his political attitudes to his time as a prisoner of war in Russia.[59]

In a US report Albert Halstead wrote of Otto Bauer that —despite his protests to the contrary— he was nonetheless perceived as "a Bolshevik […] who is cautious enough

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[55] Fritz Schönpflug, "Der 'Michelreiter'," *Reichspost*. September 1, 1919, p. 1; Robert Wosak, "Zweierlei Schlepper," *Reichspost.* September 29, 1919, p. 1; Theo Zasche, "Wiener Typen," *Reichspost*. October 13, 1919, p. 1; Fritz Schönpflug, "Misverständnis," *Reichspost*. January 5, 1920, p.1.

[56] Unknown, "In das christliche Haus keine jüdischen Zeitungen!" *Reichspost*. May 27, 1920, p. 2; Unknown, "In das christliche Haus keine jüdischen Zeitungen!" *Reichspost*. July 24, 1920, p. 4; Unknown, "In das christliche Haus keine jüdischen Zeitungen!" *Reichspost*. April 20, 1921, p. 2; Unknown, "In das christliche Haus keine jüdischen Zeitungen!" *Reichspost*. April 21, 1921, p. 3; Unknown, "In das christliche Haus keine jüdischen Zeitungen!" *Reichspost*. April 23, 1921, p. 2; Unknown, "In das christliche Haus keine jüdischen Zeitungen!" *Reichspost*. April 27, 1921, p. 2; Unknown, "In das christliche Haus keine jüdischen Zeitungen!" *Reichspost*. July 21, 1921, p. 2; Unknown, "In das christliche Haus keine jüdischen Zeitungen!" *Reichspost*. October 26, 1921, p. 4.

[57] Robert Wosak, "Der Schlager der Saison," *Reichspost,* August 18, 1919, p. 1.

[58] AAEESS: Fodo: Perido III [Pontificati Pio X (1903-1914) e Benedetto XV (1914-1922)], Austria-Ungheria, III Pos, 1326, fasc., 525, Ff. 85r-87v, July 31, 1919 letter no.17707 entitled "Dimissioni del Ministero degli Esteri dell'Austria Tedesca" from Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[59] PRO FO: 94817/5445/3, June 3, 1919, Foreign Office memorandum entitled "Memorandum by Sir Francis Oppenheimer relative to the situation in Austria" found in *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939. 1st Series Volume 6: 1919.* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1956), p. 43.

to wait until conditions are favorable for the realization of a proletarian dictatorship."[60] Bauer was, in Halstead's contemporaneous estimation, the "leader of the left or radical and communistic wing of the Social Democratic party" and "a Jew […] physically and mentally typical of that race."[61] This assessment of Bauer permeated both CSP and Pan-German media with uncharitable anti-Semitic satirical drawings from Theo Zasche[62] and Rud Kristen[63] emphasising the SPÖ leader's non-Germanic heritage. After lengthy personal conversations with the SPÖ leader Halstead concluded:

> "Dr. Bauer is evidently not sincere. He poses as a social democrat of moderate views and in perhaps unguarded moments makes statements which reveal his real connections."[64]

Bauer himself was aware of his image in the eyes international observers and was swift to denounce what he saw as unwelcomed radicalism in the revolutionary fervour of the streets, accusing the Red Guard of acting destructively on their own initiative on account of being "infected with the revolutionary romanticism of Bolshevism."[65] This criticism would be used to justify the creation of a "paid volunteer army," what would become the *Volkswehr*, a reliable instrument in the enforcement of SPÖ political power. Bauer would go so far as to state that the "creation of the *Volkswehr* was a revolutionary act, indeed, the first act of the proletarian revolution which was beginning to overshadow the national revolution."[66]

Bauer was not alone in rejecting the transfer of the name Austria to the new rump state. Whereas Hungary had much to gain by stressing her Transleithanian heritage, going into the Saint-Germain treaty deliberations Austria had only much to lose in allowing herself to be acknowledged as the legal successor to the Cisleithanian half of the former Habsburg Monarchy. The alternative proposed by Renner and Bauer was to rename the

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[60] NARA: 863.00/357, July 13, 1920, report no. 478 entitled "Dr. Bauer on Bolshevism" from Albert Halstead (American Mission, Vienna) to Bainbridge Colby (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[61] Ibid.
[62] Theo Zasche, "Der Vorsichtige," *Reichspost*. April 20, 1921, p. 2.
[63] Rud Kristen, "Das erste Opfer des Rucksackverbots war ein Bauer, der, stark belastet, aus Feldkirch gekommen war," *Kikeriki*. August 3, 1919, p. 2.
[64] NARA: 863.00/357, July 13, 1920, report no. 478 entitled "Dr. Bauer on Bolshevism" from Albert Halstead (American Mission, Vienna) to Bainbridge Colby (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[65] Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, p. 56.
[66] Ibid. p. 59.

new state German-Alpland [*Deutsch Alpenland*].[67] Accompanying this title we can see an international appeal to a pro-*Anschluss* teleology, the existence of the new rump state implied to be ordered towards unification with Germany, thus denying the fundamental independent viability of the new republic. The imposed removal of this prefix was a source of embitterment for the November revolutionaries, some going so far as to state:

> "Austria is the victim of this violation of the national revolution by imperialism. The Peace Treaty robbed the Republic even of its name."[68]

We see in the post-1918 period three concurrent usages of the term "Austria" in contemporary political parlance. Firstly, the inherited meaning of greater Austria preserved by the supernational-oriented Legitimists. Secondly, a small Austria conceived of as a temporarily extraterritorial province of Greater Germany. Finally, the small Austria striving to be a nation state in its own right, but nonetheless existing within the broad cultural (and non-political) sphere of the German-speaking world (*Deutschentum*).

The name Austria was considered by Karl Renner[69] to be "ahistorical."[70] "Austria" was, for the November revolutionaries, an anachronistic term, unfit for a 20th-Century based on the principle of republican, nationalist and socialist, democracy. It's adoption — mandated by the Great Powers— and prohibition of Anschluss was a welcomed reprieve to those sympathetic to the old Empire. Nonetheless it remained a source of bitterness for all sides of the domestic political spectrum that Wilsonian benevolence would neither bestow the South Tyrol, nor the Sudetenland. Furthermore, the CSP, unlike the Pan-Germans and SPÖ were not ideologically enthusiastic for Anschluss with Germany[71] and remained divided on the question of Legitimism. With the fundamental nature of the new Austrian state unilaterally decided by the treaty drafters, the CSP had political cover for a new period of apparent simultaneous de-actualisation of the Habsburg question and national question. Now the pathway of a CSP endorsed Austrian patriotism with regional

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[67] NARA: 863.00/190, September 16, 1919, report no. 4 from American Mission (Vienna) to Secretary of State, Robert Lansing (Washington D.C.).
[68] Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution* (trans. H. J. Stenning) (London: L. Parsons, 1925), p. 126.
[69] The first chancellor of the new state.
[70] Karl Renner, *Österreich von der Ersten zur Zweiten Republik* (Vienna: Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1953), p. 23 cited in McGregor-Bulloch, "Promotion of an Austrian Identity," p. 54.
[71] Pfoser and Weigl, *Die Erste Stunde Null. Gründungsjahre der österreichischen Republik,* p. 45.

supranational collegiality became increasingly persuasive to a large sector of the domestic electorate as the only course available to the nascent state.

Urging regional supranationalism, Karl in a direct letter to his "brother" monarch the king of England highlights how the new treaty cannot provide an obligation to reject *Anschluss* without providing the right and means to achieve that end.[72] Appealing to British Albion's century-old desire to secure a balance of power on the continent, Karl presented his Habsburg-style federation as a solution which "would constitute a counterweight to northern Germany, which appears to serve the interest of Europe as a whole."[73] Historian Thomas Lorman notes that in 1920, under pressure from the Labour Party to seek out a more Liberal democratic regime in Budapest following the Civil War there, it was the view of a Tory Whitehall that "Britain had neither the means nor the inclination to intervene in Hungarian affairs."[74] While seeing Vienna's plight, Westminster was in no mood for forwarding grand federations in Central European and rather sought to pursue regional stabilisation by means of focusing her diplomatic energy toward extending lines of credit and the establishment of a League of Nations.[75]

With the Irish War of Independence well underway in May 1919, the UK FO put forward the view that —under their same logic applied to Austria— if the union of Great Britain and Ireland were immediately dissolved without provision, Ireland would revert to a 1799 Gratton-ite parliamentary political order.[76] In this way Natasha Wheatley notes that "temporal logics of sovereignty were not bound into a one-way historical progression."[77] For Karl his obligations to Tyrol were no less serious than his title as emperor. Even if the

[72] AOS: Tom. I, Index 43, August, 1919, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to King George of Great Britain and Ireland (London, United Kingdom) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 532-33.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Thomas Lorman, "'In Praise of Stability': The Foreign Office and the Bethlen Consolidation, 1920–1925," in *British-Hungarian relations since 1848*, eds. László Péter and Martyn Rady (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, 2004), p. 141.
[75] Joseph Maiolo and Laura Robson, *The League of Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025), p. 61.
[76] Wheatley, *Life and Death of States*, p. 199.
[77] Ibid.

Dual-Monarchy has ceased to exist, he retained the title of "princely count of the Tyrol."[78] Furthermore, even if the Vatican was to be formally excluded for the peace treaty negotiation, this did not prevent Karl from exerting political influence on representatives from the local Church hierarchy to petition the Great Powers on his behalf. From Prangins, Karl was in direct contact with Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli regarding the coordination of a diplomatic offensive aimed at the UK in seeking to advocate for Tyrol's continued political unity. To this end the anti-Modernist Cardinal Francis Bourne[79] was requested "to intercede with the English government."[80] The alpine county was traditionally zealously loyal to the Habsburg dynasty. During the 1848 revolutionaries across Europe, when the streets of Vienna and Budapest were barricaded by Liberals, the Imperial court found refuge in Innsbruck. It was considered by Karl that South Tyrol would never surrender to Italian rule and that the spirit of the anti-Napoleon folk hero Andreas Hofer would persist; in his Panglossian calculation manifesting itself in "unceasing guerrilla warfare and in three years' time Tyrol will end up breaking away from its oppressors one way or another."[81]

Sensing anti-republican momentum in South-Tyrol's resistance to Italian occupation, on December 16th, 1920, Karl would write to personal friend, the auxiliary bishop of Brixen, Sigismund Waitz:

> "I note with the greatest satisfaction a revival of the spirit throughout Austria […] If the nations to whom I have dedicated all my thoughts and aspirations and my best work over the years increasingly turn away from the revolutionary ideas that

[78] AAEESS: Austria 674, Prot 94.289, July 22, 1919, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli (Munich, Germany) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 531-32.
[79] Catholic Archbishop of Westminster in England.
[80] AAEESS: Austria 674, Prot 94.289, July 22, 1919, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli (Munich, Germany) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 531-32.
[81] AOS: Tom. I, Index 100, March 31, 1919, report from Apostolic protonotary Msgr. Georges-Prudent-Marie Bruley des Varannes (St. Gall, Switzerland) to Vatican Secretary of State found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 465-67.

> led them to my bitter sorrow on 12 November 1918, you, dear bishop, can take credit for this. I gladly acknowledge this."[82]

The Church was a willing private collaborator in the Habsburg attempts to lead the Tyrolean anti-partition movement. While the pro-Supranational faction of the CSP was centred on Vienna and the pro-Anschluss supporters amongst the CSP were more broadly scattered throughout the rural countryside and small towns, there was a third, smaller faction, mainly based in Tyrol, which sought to advocate for a "Catholic South German State."[83] This new state was theorised to come about via a collaboration between the House of Habsburg and the Bavarian House of Wittelsbach.[84]

The recent revolutions had brought about an ideological radicalisation and a loss of public paternal authority in political life. Karl wanted to assert his temporal paternal function over Central Europe and sought to co-opt the Holy Father's spiritual paternal function to this end. The exiled Emperor therefore petitioned Benedict XV to urge Westminster to heed his consul on matters of Central European geopolitics as he wrote in December 1919:

> "It may sound terribly immodest, but I am the only one in the monarchy who stands above the parties and the aspirations of the individual nations, and I therefore believe that I am fairly impartial where all nations are equally close to me."[85]

Academically, this open question of continuity was anchored in rhetoric of international law, specifically the rights and obligations of states. For one school of thought international law presumed the existence of states, appealing to geopolitical realities as the result of the sheer fiat of the Great Powers. For others this new category of law was something outside the existence of states, something preceding and above the very

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[82] Diözesanarchiv, NL Waitz; Bischof Waitz und das österr. Kaiserhaus, Kap. 9, December 16, 1920, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to auxillary bishop Brixen, Sigismund Waitz (Brixen, South Tyrol) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 712.
[83] McGregor-Bulloch, "Promotion of an Austrian Identity," p. 56.
[84] NARA: 863.00/365, July 27, 1920, report no. 137 entitled "A statement concerning Austria by one of her highest officials" from Dubois (American Legation, Vienna) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[85] TS: 2180-2182, pre-December 2, 1919 Aide-mémoire from Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to Pope Benedict XV (Vatican City) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 545-47.

existence of the state yet not rooted in nature but the nominalist judgements of Man. This cohort, legal positivists, argued for a "new theory of the primacy of international law" in the service of earthly fraternity between men.[86] A third school was that of the Thomistic understanding of a Law of Nations written in the Natural Law in which there were "rules that are given by the nature of things and are self-evident."[87] This final lens stressed "that mutual relations between states must be governed by the principles of justice and goodwill" on the grounds that "the whole of human society is a great community under God" and administered by his delegates.[88] This final theory was that of Karl and his supporters.

However, four months later, in an attack on the then ratified treaty of Saint-Germain with its one-sided Self-Determination, a unilateral April 24th, 1921, plebiscite in the now truncated Tyrol went in favour of leaving Austria and joining Germany with upwards of 98% of the vote.[89] Never missing an opportunity to take aim at Karl, in the wake of the Tyrol Anschluss plebiscite, the SPÖ *Arbeiter Zeitung* declared:

> "And at the same time, this result of the vote, against which the Habsburg supporters in Tyrol and Vienna have used all their guile and evil arts, is the most miserable exposure of Habsburg-ism in its entirety and its masterminds."[90]

There was some truth in this claim. Not only had the vote been in favour of Pan-Germanism —contra Saint-Germain— but it was an indirect vote for Berlin over Vienna. Even if the population would not consider their desire for Anschluss as a repudiation of Austrian-ness over Prussian-ness, Karl saw a significant loss in the symbol vote which demonstrated the population's confidence in German nationalism over Habsburg supranationalism. The SPÖ could plausibly argue that Anschluss in 1921 was "the undivided will of the vast majority of the German-Austrian people."[91] The CSP —

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[86] Wheatley, *Life and Death of States*, p. 245.
[87] Schilling, *Das Völkerrecht nach Thomas von Aquin*, p. 27.
[88] Ibid., p. 38.
[89] Unknown, "Der Anschluss Tirols an das Deutsche Reich nahezu mit Einstimmigkeit gefordert," *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*. April 25, 1921, p. 1; Unknown, "Ein Freudentag in Nordtirol—ein trauertag in Südtirol. Das Volk hat gesprochen," *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*. April 25, 1921, p. 1.
[90] Unknown, "Die Tiroler Volksabstimmung für den Anschluss," *Arbeiter Zeitung*. April 25, 1921, p. 2
[91] Ibid.

speaking through the *Reichspost*— could only respond with muted forbearance, reporting the election tally results without accompanying meaningful commentary.[92]

[92] Unknown, "Die Abstimmung in Nordtirol," *Reichspost*. April 25, 1921, p. 1.

2.3: Civil War and Easter Crisis

Across the river Leitha,[1] as early as November 27th 1918 —foreshadowing dark events to come— the Hungarian bishops had united in urging the Vatican to recognise the original post-Empire Liberal Republican regime writing to the nuncio in Vienna that "it is better not to resist the [new Budapest] government, because a more socialist one would be even more of an enemy to the Church."[2] While the Habsburg dynasty was seen to be one of many —albeit preferable— means to secure the freedom of the Church, it was however, not considered an absolute end to be defended in principle. Meanwhile, in his initial Swiss exile Karl was keen to not provide "a source of complications" for his host nation in refraining from open political activity. Count Nikolaus Revertera von Salandra —a close advisor within Karl's exile court— remarked to an English journalist: "He considers Himself as a spectator who is naturally greatly interested in the events of the day. From His retreat He keenly follows all that is going on."[3] Other court allies, such Count Moritz Pálffy in his correspondence with the Holy See —expressing a political theory rooted in the same thinking which would produce the papal encyclical *Quas Primas* six years later— sought to make a connection between the Bolshevik anarchy on the Left and those on the Right among the protestant Magyar nobility who would deny Karl his right to rule. In his view "King Karl was crowned with the crown of St. Stephen amid the quivering enthusiasm of all Hungary" and that such a "solemn act of the coronation endows the King with an indelible character with all the duties and rights that derive from it." Therefore, to his mind, it could be concluded:

> "[Those who would] want to destroy this principle sanctioned by law and by often centuries-old tradition would mean to throw Hungary further and further into the

[1] The historical point of demarcation between the western (Cisleithanian) and eastern (Transleithania) halves of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
[2] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 795, Fasc. 8, Ff. 295-296, Novemebr 27, 1918, letter from primate of Hungary, Archbishop of Strigonia to Papal Nuncio Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Vienna).
[3] AOS: Tom. II, Index 706, July 1919, "Interview eines englischen Journalisten mit Nikolaus Graf Revertera von Salandra" found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 525-31.

labyrinth of anarchy, as well as to destroy the religious foundations on which the edifice of the Hungarian State has rested for more than a thousand years."[4]

Appealing to the Vatican's religious interest both in principle and in practice, Pálffy –on Karl's behalf– argued that if Hungary were to live up to her ambition as an *Antemurale Christianitatis*, just as previous generations "were called to protect the West against the invasion of Islam, so too the Hungary of tomorrow will have before it the noble task of confronting the schismatic East and fighting the Semitic leviathan that is consuming its marrow."[5] Pálffy therefore —by means of bellicose friend-enemy distinction— urged the Holy Father to petition the Hungarian bishops and the English government to either not impede or ideally facilitate Karl's return.[6]

Before the signing of the treaty of Saint-Germain –with the August 1919 rise to power in Hungary of Archduke Joseph von Habsburg in the wake of the suppression of the Soviet regime in Budapest– the SPÖ in Vienna trembled at the prospect on an impending domino effect which would reach Austria. This manifested in what was described by Albert Halstead as a 13th August 1919 anti-Habsburg demonstration "in which several thousand of the *Volkswehr*, gendarmerie, police, and citizens took part [and] was symptomatic of the feeling in Vienna against any attempt to restore the monarchy."[7] It was considered by Halstead that while the CSP, aristocrats and rural population would welcome Karl's return, the main obstacle was the hard opposition of the political Left and scepticism of the political middle ground who would "regard the return of a Habsburg to the throne, no matter how liberal a constitution might be provided, as a dangerous reaction."[8] Across the border in Hungary, reaction was in no short supply. There Karl could not rely on an almost uniformly pro-Habsburg Catholic segment of the aristocracy and agrarian population. There was however likewise great popular demand for a true

[4] AAEESS: Austria 697, Prot. 97.555 October 20, 1919 Promemoria from Count Moritz Pálffy (Bern, Switzerland) to Pope Benedict XV (Vatican City) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 537-40.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] NARA: Paris Peace Conf. 184.011102/318, August 14, 1919, report no. 39 entitled: "Protest against the restoration of the monarchy" from Albert Halstead (American Mission, Vienna to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[8] Ibid.

"National" Magyar King,[9] many seeing Archduke Joseph as such a candidate who could bridge the divide between Legitimists and Free-Electors. While Joseph was sternly loyal to his King, relations between Karl in Switzerland and his Habsburg relatives in Budapest were not of perfect harmony. Karl would confide to Zita in January 1921: "Albrecht's[10] behaviour towards me is a blatant disobedience,"[11] and a little over a year later —to the protestation of Hungarian Legitimists— Albrecht would not attend Karl's Budapest Requiem Mass.[12] Nonetheless, the more authentically Magyar Habsburg Archduke Joseph —who had been regent for two weeks in August 1919— would maintain dynastic discipline publicly. Even after the death of Karl —his first cousin once removed— he would immediately formally accept Otto as head of the House of Austria and Zita as regent.

In the wake of the victory of Horthy's White Forces in the Hungarian civil war, the US diplomatic mission in Vienna was subject to requests by local anti-Habsburg forces to "take steps to make the restoration of the monarchy impossible" in Austria.[13] However, while it was Washington's goal to create a Europe "made safe for Democracy,"[14] the American chief of mission in Vienna was keen to maintain vis-à-vis Budapest that formally "the policy of the American Government is not to interfere with the form of government of a foreign nation."[15] Nonetheless, to the polar spectres of Bolshevism and Habsburg restoration, a liberal Wilsonian democratic parliamentary republic was implicitly assumed by international observers to be a happy, stable, middle ground.

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[9] Baron Géza Lukachich, "Eine Erklärung des Feldmarschallleutnant Barons Géza Lukachich," *Pester Lloyd*. December 4, 1920, p. 2.
[10] Archduke Albrecht Franz von Österreich-Teschen (1897-1955) would briefly pose as pretended to the Hungarian throne but later acknowledge Otto's succession after Karl's death.
[11] AOS: Tom. II, Index 1575. January 4, 1921, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Disentis, Switzelrand) to Zita von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 713-15.
[12] VAA: Fodo Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 57-60, 5th April 1922 letter entitled "Per la morte di Re Carlo IV" from Archbishop Lorenzo Schioppa (Apostolic Nunciature, Budapest) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[13] NARA: Paris Peace Conf. 184.011102/318, August 14, 1919 report no. 39 entitled: "Protest against the restoration of the monarchy" from Albert Halstead (American Mission, Vienna) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[14] April 2nd, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson address before a joint session of Congress.
[15] Ibid.

Notwithstanding, navigating this Wilsonian era, Karl, in his diplomacy with the Great Powers, was not negotiating with solidary monolithic institutions but representatives of these states, many of whom had personal sympathies or animosities towards the Habsburg dynasty. Albert Halstead communicated to Washington in August 1920 that his French counterpart, Henri Allizé, was accused in the local press of "not only with encouraging the movement toward a monarchy while in Vienna but with continuing these activities in Switzerland in the same direction" and was therefore soon transferred away to represent France in Switzerland.[16] Both the Czechoslovakian foreign minister writing to London —and Austromarxists amongst themselves— suggested that Allizé, in addition to Colonel Cunningham and several other UK and French military commanders on the ground in the allied occupation of Austria and Hungary, were promoting a personal union of the two states under Habsburg rule without a mandate from their respective governments.[17] To some extent this was true, Cunningham for his part attempted to persuade the FO that Paris and the Vatican were pushing for Karl's immediate restoration in Budapest, a momentum, the existence of which was however, rejected by his civilian superiors.[18]

Within this confusion, Habsburg efforts to petition the French Reparations Commission to secure their Bohemian properties remained unsuccessful. The French reply pointed to the Paris Peace Treaties explicitly granting local Habsburg possessions — private and Imperial— to the new Czechoslovakia. Austrian properties in contrast, could: "if it might be proven that the goods were purely private property" be contested in court. The bemused exiled empress remarked to Karl, "this somewhat mysterious explanation is supposed to be a certain concession."[19] This dividing up of every last spoil of war between successor states was described by Karl to the King of Spain as an "illegal measure which

[16] NARA: 863.00/372 August 24, 1920, report no. 540 entitled "Events in Austria" from Albert Halstead (American Mission, Vienna) to Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby (Washington D.C.).
[17] AdR: NPA, Karton, 233, Liasse Österreich 7 – Außenpolitik, Ff. 587-93, June 8, 1919 letter from Otto Bauer (Ministry for External Affairs, Vienna) to Karl Renner (Chancellor's Office, Vienna); NARA: 863.00/230, January 11, 1920, report no. 215 entitled "Austrian Outlook" from Albert Halstead (American Mission, Vienna) to Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby (Washington D.C.).
[18] Bakic, *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe*, p. 23.
[19] AOS: Tom. II, Index 1575, January 4, 1921, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Disentis, Switzelrand) to Zita von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 713-15.

gives me much concern, since it would be apt to deprive the members of my House of all means of existence."[20] Nonetheless, for the exiled emperor-king, claims to titles of sovereignty were worth infinitely more than palaces. Karl was not prepared to offer any constitutional concessions in return for the retention of any personal property, writing in his private correspondence to Alfonso XIII: "I could never make such concessions, even if […] my family and I were exposed to unspeakable hardship."[21] The all-or-nothing uncompromising stance of the Imperial court in exile was therefore evidently leaning closer and closer to seeking total restoration.

Toward that end, it was a source of encouragement that Hungary —unlike neighbouring Austria— since a counter-revolutionary civil war remained a self-declared Kingdom. Furthermore, a 31st October 1918 telegram from Miklos Horthy to Kaiser Karl expressed his "unshakable loyalty" to the Habsburg king as sovereign.[22] In the intervening period, between Horthy's declaration and Karl's arrival from his initial Swiss exile — while the Austrian republican state was taking shape— Hungary was rapidly descending into the open political violence which Vienna had so narrowly escaped. Karl, drawing on his self-perceived paternal duty acquired from the indelible character transmitted by his coronation, sought to return to a post-Bolshevik Budapest and restore order from the risk of a further cycle of revolution and reprisal. This would result in two ambitious journeys to Hungary from Switzerland, the first on 26th March 1921 (the so-called Easter Crisis) and the second more daring 21st October March on Budapest of the same year.

The Republicans of young Red Vienna foresaw a domino effect of Habsburg restoration in Budapest spreading over to Austria as the natural consequence of "the triumph of the counter-revolution" over the Budapest Soviet.[23] They would exert all their influence in ensuring that Karl did not gain a foothold in Central Europe. In this effort they would find a willing collaborator in CSP chancellor Michael Mayr. Karl wrote in

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[20] AOS: Tom. I, Index 600, August 22, 1919, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzelrand) to King Alfonso XIII (Madrid, Spain) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 535-36.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Robert Gerwarth and Ugur Ümit Üngör, "The Collapse of the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires and the Brutalisation of the Successor States," *Journal of Modern European History*, no. 13 (2) (2015): p. 226.
[23] Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, p. 225.

confidence to Zita that Mayr was —in terms of the Habsburg Question— "an unreliable person" who he had hoped would resign on health grounds to give way to more hard-line anti-Socialists such as Schober.[24] Otto Bauer likewise regarded Mayr as "a Republican [who] declined to be influenced by the monarchistic wing of his party."[25] In the context of Karl's failure to hold power in Budapest in the March 1921 Eastern crisis, forced to return to Switzerland via Austria under Czechoslovakian, Romanian and Yugoslavian threats of invading Hungary, such a view of Mayr held by Bauer goes so far as to imply that under the CSP chancellor, Austria had temporarily joined the LE. Lauding the power which the SPÖ had over the nominally conservative chancellor, the Austromarxists boasted that "the Mayr Government only granted him [Karl] permission to travel through Austria upon conditions drawn up by the Social Democratic Party." These conditions would be designed to humiliate the Emperor-King and dissuade any future ambitions on his part:

> "a prisoner of a detachment of the Republican Federal Army, which was commanded by a Social Democratic officer, escorted by two Social Democratic deputies."[26]

After this first failed attempt in Budapest, the UK press satirised the powerlessness of Karl and his Imperial House with the Austrian embassy there gleefully noting: "The tone of the published articles was sarcastic, and not a single voice was raised in favour of the Habsburg restoration."[27] Whereas in 1919 the UK press jokingly derided him as "the former reigning Mouse of Austria,"[28] three months after his first reappearance in Budapest, the same publication termed the dynasty as the "Perhapsburgs," describing Karl as travelling under a mandate of the "League of Notions."[29]

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[24] AOS: Tom. II, Index 1575. January 04, 1921, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Disentis, Switzelrand) to Zita von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 713-15.
[25] Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, p. 228.
[26] Ibid., p. 229.
[27] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 269-71, April 6, 1921, report no. 30 entitled "Stellungname der englischen öffentlichen Meinung zu der versuchten Rückkehr König Karls nach Ungarn" from (Austrian Embassy, London) to Michael Mayr (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).
[28] Unknown. "Alas, poor Karl!" *Punch.* May 7, 1919, p. 369.
[29] Unknown. "The Last of the Perhapsburgs," *Punch.* August 24, 1921, p. 158.

The Little Entente saw a reactionary Hungary as a threat, desiring guarantees on the lines which the counter-revolutionaries would not be tolerated to cross. The political pendulum swing of Horthy's suppression of Bolshevism would not be indulged in seeking a unilateral solution to the Habsburg King question nor territorial revisionism. On November 13th, 1919, the Czechoslovak delegation to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace composed a memorandum demanding that Hungary "would have to renounce completely every policy of fostering irridenta in the neighbouring states" the only alternative being "a policy of chauvinism and revenge" on the part of Budapest. Appealing to American sensibilities, Prague accused the interim short-lived István Friedrich government in Budapest of pursuing the latter course, alleging that "Magyar magnates, the feudal lords and the clergy are again in the control of power in Hungary" and with that "everything is being prepared to set the Habsburgs back into power."[30]

This memorandum, handed by the Czechoslovakians to Secretary General of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace (Joseph C. Grew) in the lead up to the treaty of Trianon, [31] was entitled "The Policy to be Pursued in Hungary." Therewithin the neo-Hussites juxtaposed the new order of Wilsonian open international collaboration with the private scheming of a clique of self-interested Emperors. Furthermore, they prophesised a domino effect should a restoration take place in Budapest and Vienna. Proposing a policy of Imperialist containment, the Prague warned that to make an exception for the Habsburgs:

> "Would inevitably lead to the restoration of the Hohenzollerns in Germany; thus resuscitating the Mid-European militarism, Tsarism in Russia and the Holy Alliance against the Western Powers and, to-day, against the League of Nations."[32]

Masaryk and Benes were not content to merely prognosticate, but rather were eager to advocate that "[t]his menace can be eradicated by an energetic and quick action."[33]

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[30] NARA: 864.01/55, November 13, 1919, letter with enclosed memorandum from Czechoslovak delegation entitled: "The Policy to be Pursued in Hungary" from Joseph C. Grew (Secretary General, American Commission to Negotiate Peace) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[31] The signing of which was delayed to June 1920 on account of the previous Hungarian Soviet Republic's refusal to hold negotiations with the Entente Powers.
[32] NARA: 864.01/55, November 13, 1919, letter with enclosed memorandum from Czechoslovak delegation entitled: "The Policy to be Pursued in Hungary" from Joseph C. Grew (Secretary General, American Commission to Negotiate Peace) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[33] Ibid.

Specifically the memorandum called for the victorious powers to; firstly, "eliminate the Friedrich Government" to make way for a system "in which the working classes should be properly represented," and secondly, called for the League of Nations "to eliminate the monarchistic leaders of the Horthy White army and reorganise the Hungarian army under the direct supervision and direction of the Peace Conference."[34] Regardless of the recklessly charged word "eliminate," such terms would naturally constitute a further national humiliation for Hungary, potentially compounded by additional catastrophic territorial losses. While the Czechoslovakian elite were ever persistent that Habsburg restoration in neighbouring Austria or Hungary would be an attack on their own domestic sovereignty, they were likewise eager to plot with the US for a more prominent position of the Social Democratic movement within Hungarian politics. Prague's delegation wrote of the centre-left: "of all Hungarian Parties, stands the nearest to the ideas represented by the western nations and gives us the best guarantee against the restoration of the Hungarian Monarchy under the Habsburg rule."[35]

Furthermore, in their petition seeking formal recognition, in contrast to the later Horthy Regency, the Nuncio was told by the provisional Szeged government that the primary question is the form of state, with the secondary question being the territorial demarcation of said state. It is in this context that the heterogeneous anti-communist forces allude to the Habsburg question, writing that the "first question to be settled concerns the right of the Apostolic King of Hungary to the Supreme Patronage, which, together with the final decision on the form of the State and the new delimitation of its territory, will be the subject of deliberation."[36] One can speculate that by this communication of a potential open door to Habsburg return, the Szeged forces hoped not only to expedite its recognition from the Vatican, but achieve the internal goal of solidifying Legitimist support in the short-term while not making any long-term binding commitments.

With the Habsburg dynasty no longer capable of acting as a safeguard of the Catholic faith in Central and Eastern Europe, the 11th July 1919 letter to Pope Benedict XV, via the Papal Nuncio in Vienna, emphasised that Hungarian Catholics faced the

[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.

prospect of persecution (on the grounds of faith not just ethnicity) should they find themselves annexed into neighbouring Orthodox Romania and Serbia or anti-clerical Czechoslovakia.[37] Nonetheless, in what the archbishop of Strigonia saw as the battle for the preservation of "European culture," he proposed that the best policy was to urge his fellow bishops and Vatican to moderate their hard-line monarchist approach and shift towards a broad-tent strategy of incorporating rather than alienating moderate republican and right-wing nationalist elements of Hungarian society.[38] In a charitable evaluation we can see here the perceived first duty of Bishops to protect the faith, even at the expense of their own temporal political preferences. All the same, when the abandonment of the alliance of Throne and Altar —for the sake of avoiding the persecution of the Church— had proven ineffective in dissuading Bolshevik revolution, Legitimists pointed to their vindication.

In the Autumn of 1919, the UK FO had been pessimistic of Karl's prospects of successful restoration in Budapest.[39] Regardless, Legitimists were first eager to court the support of a hopefully cool-headed England, failing that, they would have to put their faith in the conservative faction of the French institutional elite prevailing over their freemasonic and socialist counterparts. By December 1919 the House of Lords debated the material distress which the fragmentation of Central Europe into new Wilsonian-inspired states had left Austria. One peer, the Baron Parmoor (Sir Charles Cripps) lamented how "no provision was made in order to protect the conditions of the commercial union by which Austria was supplied under the Hapsburg Dynasty."[40] Nonetheless, Karl himself was keen to assert that the binding principle of Danube region was not merely economic utility but rather the Habsburg dynasty as expressed in his paternal authority. However, for

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[37] Ibid.; VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 795 - Fasc. 8, Ff. 363, circa 1919 propaganda pamphlet "Danger immienet pour 1,100,000 catholiques!"

[38] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 795, Fasc. 5, Ff. 188-190, July 3, 1919, letter warning of the consequences of European indifference to Bolshevism from primate of Hungary, the Archbishop of Strigonia to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[39] PRO FO: 156886/5445/3, November 23, 1919, Sir G. Clerk (Budapest) to Earl Curzon, found in *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939. 1st Series Volume 6: 1919.* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1956), p. 402-405.

[40] House of Lords: Debate on Distress in Austria, December 22, 1919, column 487. Accessed February 11, 2023: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords%E2%80%8F/1919-12-22/debates/8bc1c50a-e3fa-430b-9279-28ecc6f4ef97/DistressInAustria?__cf_chl_f_tk=NIahnlCO.SSX3Z51Bk7Dse7wawuCccC60h39JNkjhGo-1744400953-1.0.1.1-sXA7PbGdNMC8DhCoGOtHBVYqw4DxgM4VP5AzIImCUKE.

UK Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, for Earl Curzon, exiled Karl was the very obstacle to any future supranational or multi-lateral regional solutions. He would write to the acting First Secretary in Diplomatic Service, Wilfrid Athelstan-Johnson, in the wake of Trianon: "[T]he restoration of this dynasty could not fail to ruin all prospects of future cooperation between the Danubian States."[41]

In July 1919, UK foreign secretary, Earl Curzon received a memorandum entitled "the Political Situation in Hungary" in which Dr. Benes expressed his concern that "the Magyar nobility has numerous personal relations, or even family ties, with the French and English nobility."[42] While the UK was a somewhat neutral arbitrator interested in peace and stability in the region, she also thought herself above the petty squabbles of the various Danube states. Dragan Bakic notes how in the Autumn of 1919 UK officials in Vienna perceived "strong monarchical feeling among the officers of the Austrian Army," with the former Imperial elites thinking restoration in Budapest was imminently assured and longing for the chance of joining their counterparts in subsequently marching on Vienna for a similar success.[43] Two weeks later, the UK embassy in Vienna lamented to London that it "seems almost impossible to get people here to realize that the British Government cannot and will not take any definite action in this matter, and that the setting up of a British prince on the [Hungarian] throne would lead to endless complications."[44]

The LE of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania would constitute an immoveable obstacle to the ambitions of Legitimists. Urged on by this East-Central European Alliance, on February 2nd, 1920, the Ambassadors conference issued a declaration to the press proclaiming:

> "The principal allied powers consider that such a [Habsburg] restoration of a dynasty which to its subjects represented a system of coercion and domination in

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[41] *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, Vol. XII, No. 283, Curzon to Athelstan-Johnson, November 27, 1920, cited in Dragan Bakic, *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe: Foreign Policy and Security Challenges, 1919-1936* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p. 24.
[42] PRO FO: 98945/1193/3 Earl Curzon to Mr. Balfour (Paris) July 10, 1919, found in *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939. 1st Series Volume 6: 1919.* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1956), p. 67-70.
[43] PRO FO: 371/4384, November 1, 1919, cited in Dragan Bakic, *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe: Foreign Policy and Security Challenges, 1919-1936* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p. 22.
[44] Ibid., p. 193.

> alliance with Germany over other races would not be consistent either with the principles for which this war has been fought or with the results of liberation of subject peoples which has been achieved."[45]

In this declaration we see a logic which takes it upon itself to go beyond the rhetoric of Self-Determination or democracy and presents a re-interpretation of what the recent world war had been fought for. The document goes on to expound that while not wishing "to interfere with the internal affairs of Hungary," nonetheless, the Great Powers "cannot admit that the restoration of the Hapsburg dynasty can be considered merely as a matter interesting the Hungarian nation."[46] These "misleading rumors" —which in the admission of the local ambassadors of the Great Powers were impetus for the February 2nd declaration— were no doubt the result of a combination of factors. Firstly, LE anxiety regarding the reactionary momentum of a counter-revolutionary Hungary which openly rejected what they would later come to termed "the tragedy of Trianon." Secondly, an outright bluff on the part of Legitimists, who by means of claiming Entente support, could better achieve a restoration and hope a passive and reluctant international community would accept their unilateral action as unreversible. Thirdly, such rumours could have been brought about by unauthorised or unofficial endorsements of pro-Habsburg representatives of the Great Powers.

Within this fog of war there existed covert promises, diplomatic claims and counterclaims. It is difficult to decipher what was betrayal and what was mere implication or presumption as there was a deliberate effort to minimise official written record to foster strategic ambiguity and plausibly deniability. In the aftermath of the June 1920 Treaty of Trianon, Karl wrote to archbishop of Esztergom–Budapest, cardinal János Csernoch, in September 1920 asking for a reliable priest to serve as an envoy facilitating communication between himself and the Hungarian bishops as he had "much to say to your Eminence that cannot be put into a letter."[47] Having been the very Church representative who had placed the crown on Karl's head, the cardinal would write to the

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[45] NARA: 864.01/60 telegram February 2, 1920, Wallace (US Embassy, Paris) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[46] Ibid.
[47] Primási Leveltár, NL Csernoch, Cat. B 2439/1920. September 9, 1920, letter from to Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to Archbishop of Esztergom, Cardinal János Csernoch (Esztergom, Hungary) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 694-95.

exiled king in November 1920 warning of potential Little Entente military intervention should he return asserting his royal prerogatives.[48] Csernoch claimed to have been informed by Horthy in a 12th November, conversation that the head of the local English mission that they would not support Karl's return on account of risking establishing a precedent which would allow for Hohenzollerns restoration in Berlin. France for her part was seen by Csernoch as not willing to risk imperilling their Little Entente vassals. Furthermore, Italy was, in his assessment, much less opposed to Karl's return, naturally having its interest in opposition to that of Belgrade.

Whether a genuine expression of Prague's disposition or a careful calculated effort to put pressure on London to dispel such apprehensions, the immediate interwar Czechoslovakian narrative of Benes was that, while few in numbers, the CSP in Vienna were "openly propagandising for the restoration of the monarchy in favour of the former Emperor" and that Legitimists in exile had financial resources and "very extensive personal connections in England, France and the United States."[49] For Prague international passivity allowed Hungarian and Austrian Legitimists to collaborate in an effort to "establish a sort of personal union between Austria and Hungary."[50] To some extent this was true. Karl did have many sympathisers in England and without the direct intervention of king George and Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Lisle Strutt he could well have found himself suffering imprisonment or worse. For Benes "no peaceful collaboration would be possible" between Prague and Budapest so long as any Habsburg held the Transleithanian throne.[51] Currently understood, the bearer of the crown had sworn an oath to protect the lands of St. Stephen which included most of modern-day Slovakia. Such an implicit claim to sovereignty —unless explicitly repudiated— was considered an existential threat to the Czechoslovakian project, a situation described by American negotiators in Paris as

[48] Primási Leveltár, NL Csernoch, Cat. B 2763/1920, fol. 16-19. November 18, 1920, letter from Archbishop of Esztergom, Cardinal János Csernoch (Esztergom, Hungary) to Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 707-09.
[49] PRO FO: No. 4636 [98945/1193/3]. Earl Curzon to Mr. Balfour (Paris) FOREIGN OFFICE, July 10, 1919, found in *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939. 1st Series Volume 6: 1919.* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1956), p. 67-70.
[50] Ibid.
[51] NARA: 864.01/47, August 15, 1919, letter from Joseph C. Grew (Secretary General, American Commission to Negotiate Peace) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

"extremely dangerous for the peace of Central Europe."[52] Nonetheless, even amid LE warning of Habsburg reactionism, some democratic liberals saw Karl as a check to Horthy's power which could prove useful in irredentism. They would welcome his return —with constitutional restraints— to mitigate the chance of a military dictatorship or political chaos "possibility followed by [another] revolution and a dictatorship of the peasants."[53] Further adding complexity to the Habsburg question, anti-monarchism was not exclusively secular in nature. Many in the Small Farmers Party held republican attitudes and the US noted that the "protestant bishop Baltazar of Debredszin is said to be the foremost leader of the present republican movement in Hungary."[54]

Hungarian Prime Minister from July 1920 to April 1921, Count Pál Teleki was responsible for the handling of the political crisis induced by Karl's first return to Budapest. In a 4th December 1920 press interview before Karl's first attempt, the Prime Minister was presented with the questions "What did the Allied démarche of February 2nd contain?" and "What is considered as a casus belli by the Little Entente?" Teleki responded:

> "I have categorically declared on every occasion that this is an internal matter of Hungary […] In this question we will permit no interference. It is purely our own affair as to what decision we will make."[55]

These comments by Teleki created a diplomatic and political crisis and his conservative party would impose a moratorium on debating the Habsburg question.[56] Former K.u.K. Lieutenant Field Marshal Baron Géza Lukachich von Somorja of the Party of Independent National Kingship sought to capitalise on the existing crisis with the swift issuing of his own 3rd December 1920 declaration from Budapest calling for: "An independent Hungary! National Kingship! This is the only way out of our present situation."[57] For Catholic

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[52] Ibid.
[53] NARA: 864.00/413, May 9, 1921, report entitled "The Political Situation in Hungary" from Grant-Smith (US Embassy, Budapest) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[54] Ibid.
[55] Unknown, "Die Gegensätze in der Mehrheitspartei," *Pester Lloyd*. December 4, 1920, p. 2; NARA: 864.00/369 Memorandum December 27, 1920, J. Grant-Smith (Budapest) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.).
[56] Unknown, "Budapest, 3. Dezember," *Pester Lloyd*. December 4, 1920, p. 1.
[57] Baron Géza Lukachich, "Eine Erklärung des Feldmarschallleutnant Barons Géza Lukachich," *Pester Lloyd*. December 4, 1920, p. 2.

conservative members of parliament like Alexander Ernst, the free election of a king "would have been tantamount to the dethronement of the House of Habsburg," something which they "would never have given their consent."[58]

The "King Question" as a circumscription of the Habsburg Question was undoubtedly seen to have had the potential to split the ruling government party. The December 4th 1920 interview —the same week as the first L.O.N. meeting in Geneva—[59] published in the press was followed by a private intervention in which "the Allied Representatives would take the occasion to speak personally with the Prime Minister on the subject."[60] The interviewer of the 16th December article rightly pointed out that the Prime Minister's remarks at the beginning of the month seemed to have "had claimed that the Entente Great Powers had expressed their disinterest in the Habsburg question to the Hungarian government."[61] Walking back his earlier comments, in this new media intervention, Teleki argued to have had intended to "simply point out that no Entente démarche had been made on the Habsburg question in recent weeks."[62] The "minutes of the meeting of the diplomatic representatives of the principle allied powers held on Budapest on December 18th, 1920" — two days after Teleki's second interview— demonstrate how the Prime Minister's comments were at the very forefront of the Ambassadors' Conference agenda.[63] It was clear that the Great Powers —prompted by the catalyst of Little Entente protests— would not tolerate even unilateral hints at resolving the Habsburg question in Hungary. Patrick Crowhurst attributes this success to the persistent efforts of Benes "in the face of British and Italian opposition."[64]

US *Chargé d'Affaires pro tem*, Ulysses Grant-Smith, on the ground in Budapest reported back to Washington that while the declaration by the LON powers had a

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[58] Unknown, "Die Gegensätze in der Mehrheitspartei," *Pester Lloyd*. December 4, 1920, p. 2.
[59] Unknown, "Die Erste Tagnung des Völkerbundes in Genf," *Österreichische Illustrierte Zeitung*. p. 1.
[60] NARA: 864.00/369 Memorandum December 27, 1920, J. Grant-Smith (Budapest) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.).
[61] Unknown, "Graf Teleki und die Königsfrage," *Pester Lloyd*. December 16, 1920, p. 2.
[62] Ibid.
[63] NARA: 864.00/369 Memorandum December 27, 1920, J. Grant-Smith (Budapest) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.).
[64] Patrick Crowhurst, A History of Czechoslovakia Between the Wars: From Versailles to Hitler's Invasion (London: I. B. Tauris & Company, Limited, 2015), p. 59.

significant consequences for Hungarian domestic politics and regional diplomacy, the Habsburg and broader constitutional question should nonetheless in no way be considered settled. The watchword of the day was dreaded "opportunism."[65] A February 1920 "inter-party caucus" had agreed to an executive branch regency under the format of a constitutional monarchy in what Grant-Smith terms "a chief executive clothed with royal prerogative." This Kingdom would feature limitations on executive authority along the lines of the relationship between parliament and sovereign in the United Kingdom. With the stepping aside of Archduke Joseph, Horthy had no realistic challenger for the position of regent and therefore felt he had latitude to negotiate the terms of office. US diplomatic officials noted that Horthy had "manifested strong disinclination to accept the post subject to such limitations" as conceived by parliamentary moderates. He would need guarantees such as the power to veto legislative and freedom from requiring assent of the National Assembly to promulgate executive decrees such as in the area of foreign policy.[66]

Testing the National Assembly's resolve, the would-be Regent declined the original offer of a hollowed out "figurehead" office on March 1, 1920, preferring to continue to lead the armed forces.[67] This calculation made clear that it was better in his mind to retain de facto power than relinquish it for de jure institutional power. Horthy, in wanting the competency to dismiss parliament and issue declarations of war displays a neo-realist understanding what political scientist Carl Schmitt would formulate in the maxim that the "sovereign is he who decides on the exception."[68] This interim solution did not resolve the divide between the two factions, "one side emphasizing legitimacy and the maintenance of the legal succession from October 31st, 1918, the other side advocating free election of a King."[69] The Little Entente would prefer a non-Habsburg military dictatorship over a constitutional monarchy with a Habsburg sitting on the throne.

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[65] NARA: 864.01/63 telegram February 15, 1920, Grant-Smith (Budapest) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.).
[66] NARA: 864.01/65 telegram February 17, 1920, Grant-Smith (Budapest) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.).
[67] NARA: 864.01/67 telegram March 1, 1920, Grant-Smith (Budapest) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.).
[68] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty,* trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 5.
[69] NARA: 864.01/65 telegram February 17, 1920, Grant-Smith (Budapest) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.).

Nonetheless, by Horthy's successful standoff with the Magyar parliament, the US embassy noted that the LE "countries will never consent to withdraw their troops from their proposed treaty frontier nor to facilitate trade relations can be safely prophesied."[70] Horthy, in March 1920, was seen by the Great powers as a safe bet for short-term peace and crushing Bolshevism. While nonetheless a revisionist of the recent peace treaty, they foresaw that "he regards a period of peaceful reconstruction as indispensable condition precedent thereto."[71]

February 1921, one month before the so-called "Easter Crisis," there was a discernible momentum of the Habsburg question in the mind of Hungarian parliamentarians and international observers. The Catholic clergy of the country were accused, in parliament by former Prime Minister Sándor Simonyi-Semadam, of conspiring with Karl in exile to recognise his rule upon his return to Budapest.[72] Co-founder of the Catholic Party of Hungary and Catholic ecclesial Primate, Cardinal János Csernoch, was likewise accused of partaking in conspiratorial correspondence with Karl. This substance of this communication alleged that the exiled king was "respectfully asking whether the month of March would not be an opportunity for him to invade Hungary and seize the Hungarian throne."[73] The press recounted the scene:

> "Simonyi-Semadam's revelation at the assembly was a huge sensation. The Carlist members of the government were particularly shocked. Teleki already pale face had turned deathly pale."[74]

Teleki acknowledged the existence of the letter without going into specifics but did importantly point out that Paris and London's view on the question was more favourable than months prior so that a "return should not be regarded as impossible." [75]

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[70] NARA: 864.01/67 telegram March 1, 1920, Grant-Smith (Budapest) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.).
[71] Ibid.
[72] NARA: 864.00/387 Memorandum February 23, 1921 Grant-Smith (Budapest) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.).
[73] Uknown, "Csernoch nem korohiiz uj klräliit: Habsburgi Károly levélvéltása a hercegprimással," *Becsi Magyar Ujsag*, February 6, 1921. 1-2.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.

Simonyi-Semadam's speech —described by US observers as "a bitter invective against the Clergy and in particular Archbishop Csernoch for their part in the Carlist movement"—was so provocative as to be deemed worthy of the imposition of press censorship.[76] An article containing the entire speech was however, published on the front page of the Vienna-based emigre newspaper *Becsi Magyar Ujsag*.[77] In his correspondence with the chief Hungarian ecclesiastic, Karl —referred to in the article as the "hermit of Prangins"— was keen to emphasise, well-founded or otherwise, that French feeling on the house of Habsburg had improved significantly. The Cardinal-Archbishop's reply to Karl was said by the newspaper across the border in Austria to have accepted the exile monarch's narrative and provided a commitment not to crown another in Karl's stead while the head of the Habsburg house remained alive and could, or would, not abdicate, "even if he were to be removed from his position as Prince-Primate."[78] The Vienna article even claimed, "if there were a high priest in Hungary who would crown anyone other than Charles, Csernoch would regard this illegitimately crowned king as an anti-king and would thus refuse to obey him," such were his Legitimist convictions.[79] This was strong encouragement to Karl and his exiled court.

Despite Karl seeing glimmers of hope from France, Csernoch in his correspondence with the exiled-Emperor adopts a strong anti-French line claiming that Paris was pro-actively weaponizing the Little Entente as she was "anxious to destroy Hungary, which has risen from the dead."[80] This prohibition on restoration was contested on many fronts by Legitimists. Some argued that these foreign powers had no right under international law to interfere in the sovereignty of another state by dictating their constitutional structure or interpretation. Other Legitimists such as professor Dr. Johann Reiner, published legal papers arguing that Karl had his continuity of kingship recognised by the Hungarian state, that the Soviet revolutionary regime had not been the official

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[76] NARA: 864.00/387 Memorandum February 23, 1921 Grant-Smith (Budapest) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.).
[77] Uknown, "Csernoch nem korohiiz uj klräliit: Habsburgi Károly levélvéltása a hercegprimással," *Becsi Magyar Ujsag*, February 6, 1921. 1-2.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Primási Leveltár, NL Csernoch, Cat. B 2763/1920, fol. 16-19. November 18, 1920 letter from Archbishop of Esztergom, Cardinal János Csernoch (Esztergom, Hungary) to Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 707-09.

government of Hungary and there was therefore no restoration to speak of or object to. The anti-Habsburg clauses of the treaties of Trianon and Rapallo were therefore considered moot.[81]

Immediately subsequent to the February 1920 declaration being made public, Archduke Joseph "had published a statement formally withdrawing his candidacy" for king.[82] The US and other great powers noting that with such a development, "it was practically settled Admiral Horthy would be head of the new Government."[83] Despite hostile attitudes from Allen Leeper[84] and Earl Curzon,[85] disputed conflicting remarks made between a Horthy government —not wanting outside influence on the Habsburg Question— and a local British High-Commissioner in Budapest Thomas Hohler —who was seen by Hungarians, American High-Commissioner and Austrian Ambassador as going beyond his official mandate in dictating to the Hungarian government the wishes of the LE— was a source of encouragement to Karl.[86] Hohler's unilateral anti-Habsburg intervention in the Hungarian press "gave the impression of an official démarche of the greatest importance" and alienated him from his colleagues, provoking a Hungarian Foreign Minister (Dr. Gusztáv Gratz)[87] who was now making comments to the Austrian embassy which were deemed "characteristic of the attitude of the more or less legitimist-minded government."[88] Division and uncertainty among his opponents could be exploited. Nonetheless, Karl would have to contend with a Horthy who was consolidating power in a political environment in which supranational-minded German-Hungarian Legitimists such

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[81] AdR: NPA 727 Liasse Ungarn XII—1/II, Ff. 84-91. July 19 1921, confidential report Zl. 165./Pol. Entitled: "Königsfrage" from Austrian Embassy, Budapest) to Johannes Schober (Federal Minister for External Affairs, Vienna).
[82] NARA: 864.01/61 telegram February 9, 1920 Wallace (Paris) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.)
[83] Ibid.
[84] School of Slavonic and East European Studies: (SSEES), SEW /8/2/1, Allen Leeper to Seton-Watson, private, January 31, 1920 cited in Dragan Bakic, *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe: Foreign Policy and Security Challenges, 1919-1936* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p. 23.
[85] Documents on British Foreign Policy (DBFP), Vol. XII, No. 283, Curzon to Athelstan-Johnson, November 27, 1920 cited in Bakic, *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe,* p. 24.
[86] AdR: NPA 727 Liasse Ungarn XII-1/II, ff. 76-79, 8th February 1921 report no. Zl. 23/pol entitled "Die Habsburgerfrage" from Austraion Embassy, (Budapest) to Ministry for External Affairs, (Vienna).
[87] Dr. Gusztáv Gratz would later go on to collaborate with Karl in his October 1921 second return to Budapest.
[88] AdR: NPA 727 Liasse Ungarn XII-1/II, ff. 76-79, 8th February 1921 report no. Zl. 23/pol entitled "Die Habsburgerfrage" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Ministry for External Affairs, (Vienna).

as Gusztáv Gratz —who would seek to rebuild close relations with Habsburg sympathetic counterparts across the border in Austria—[89] were increasingly politically marginalised. Furthermore, one observes how Masaryk's wartime diplomatic network would bear fruit in the Interwar period with former collaborators such as men like Thomas Hohler,[90] having previously fostered good relations with the Czech leader in North America and now sympathetic to carry on that legacy anti-German and anti-Magyar activism.

[89] Jenö Gergely, "Christliche Parteien Und Die Politischen Alternativen in Mitteleuropa in Den 20er Jahren." *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 35, no. 1/4 (1989): p. 211-12.
[90] Thomas Hohler. *Diplomatic Petrel* (London: John Murray, 1942), p. 237-38.

2.4 October March on Budapest and Banishment

Once Karl was escorted back to Switzerland, planning soon commenced for his second return later that October, this time not incognito, but in command of a loyal army of supporters. The Austromarxist press and leadership would be quick to point to what they saw as "the Habsburg Putsch."[1] For them events in Budapest were in continuity with the previous March 1920 Berlin Kapp Putsch to re-install a Hohenzollern monarch in Prussia after Wilhelm II abdicated on 28th November 1918. For Magyar-Nationalists, Karl's re-banishment and later definitive deportation should be seen as a second, more moderate, consolidating, revolution, constituting the total victory of the National principle and a serious blow to supranational Habsburg Legitimism.

It was in a climate of uncertainly, with much debate centred on Horthy's response to Karl's return, specifically as to whether the regent had reacted to the king's Easter return with outright betrayal or a well-meaning effort to have his best interest at heart, protecting him from definitive defeat at the hands of internal enemies and the Little Entente. In the wake of Karl's first failed effort to regain his throne, Legitimists set their sights on Horthy. No pretence of good-faith regency could be accepted any longer by Count Julius Andrassy and M. Benetzsky.[2] Reciprocating such charged feelings, Karl's defeated restoration resulted in his opponents taking the pre-emptive measure of codifying anti-Habsburg forces into a political block, the Party of National Unity under Count Bethlen.

Two non-mutually exclusive potential avenues of action presented themselves to the Legitimist movement, either seek the removal of Horthy for a more amenable regent or alternatively, commence immediate planning for a return of Karl to Hungarian soil, this time prepared to resort to military contingency the should political intrigue fail. Such a course of action might well lead to a second civil war, this time within the political Right. Such a latter course of action would not be a total surprise to the Free-Elector faction.

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[1] Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, p. 229.
[2] NARA: 864.00/412, May 11, 1921, report no. 1256, from Grant-Smith (US Embassy, Budapest) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

After the events of March, the US embassy claimed to have "learned from good authority" that:

> "The anti-legitimists Calvinist element under Horthy threatened, in case Charles moved on Budapest with the Lehar army, to retire to Debredzsin, set up a peasants parliament and declared as unconstitutional the king's prerogatives."[3]

Karl had fostered good relations with the Romanian royal family, with Queen Mary paying a personal visit to his exile court in Switzerland.[4] Central European US State Department officials simultaneously noted that while the governments of the Czechoslovak-Romanian alliance was "perturbed at the prospect of being obliged to make good their threats by adopting military measures," they had "reliable information" that newly constituted Yugoslavia was willing to "resort to force to compel the departure of the King" should he return.[5] Whispers in Budapest were that the Little Entente —shocked at the speed and ease that Karl had appeared in Budapest—were conspiring to issue an ultimatum in order to procure a formal declaration of dethronement from the Hungarian parliament. This move was considered by the US as "a likely eventuality."[6] The astute assessment of the US embassy in Budapest sent to Washington D.C. concluded that the Habsburg question in Hungary was as much a proxy polemic than an isolated constitutional question, pertinent "not due to its own merit or from conviction but as a weapon in the struggle for or against land reform and the struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism, and a las of course, in the effort to regain the lost territories."[7] Grant-Smith juxtaposed the "irridenta movement" of popular appeal to the Habsburg question as "one which does not so much interest the masses, but which is meat in the hands of the politicians."[8]

Karl had the impossible task of needing to win international support for the restoration by portraying himself as a stabilising force in the region, but nonetheless, at the

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[3] NARA: 864.00/413, May 9, 1921, report entitled "The Political Situation in Hungary" from Grant-Smith (US Embassy, Budapest) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[4] Lucian Leuştean, "The Late Start of the Little Entente. Regional Cooperation within East-Central Europe in Times of Adversity (1920-1921)," in *Disintegration and Integration in East-Central Europe: 1919 – Post-1989*, ed. Wilfried Loth and Nicolae Pãun, 1st ed. (Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2014), p. 39.
[5] NARA: 864.00/412, May 11, 1921, report no. 1256, from Grant-Smith (US Embassy, Budapest) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[6] Ibid.
[7] NARA: 864.00/413, May 9, 1921, report entitled "The Political Situation in Hungary" from Grant-Smith (US Embassy, Budapest) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[8] Ibid.

same time, appeal to Magyar nationalists' notions of a Trianon tragedy and vow to overturn the unjust peace. Rumour and counter rumour spread as to Karl's willingness to compromise —or potential authenticity of any agreement— vis-à-vis the Austrian crown in order to return to Budapest.[9] In addition to the divide between pro-Free Elector and pro-Habsburg Monarchists, the US official further subdivided the Legitimists into two camps, the minority supranational "Black-Yellow legitimists" and secondly the majority nationalist Legitimists who "demand that the king be purely a Hungarian king, renouncing all rights to the Austrian throne." The US saw the latter as "a strong party drawing from various and diverse elements of the population" whereas the former were predominately made up of the old Imperial —non-nationalist— aristocracy "and some of the military class."[10] In short, the main dividing line was as to whether there should be a dual-monarchy or independent monarchy in principle. However, in practice both could unite to put Karl on the throne once more, as for the former this was a means and for the latter it was an end.

During this stalemate, the Swiss received private thanks transmitted from the Hungarian ambassador to Vienna for once more facilitating Karl's exile, a King —in the words of Budapest— "who, according to the Hungarian law in force and in view of the general European situation, is not in a position to exercise royal power." Concluding with sincere petition, the Magyar representative communicated that his government would be "indebted if the question of His Apostolic Majesty's permanent residence in Switzerland could be settled as soon as possible in a favourable manner."[11] This move by the Horthy regime was swift and calculated. Such a request demonstrates on the part of Horthy that there was no will to resolve the Habsburg Question in the coming years or decades, not to mind months. It also should be seen as attempt to induce Switzerland to seek commitments that such refuge would be contingent on Karl ceasing any political activity, terms most acceptable to anti-Habsburg forces in Budapest and some within the domestic Swiss political scene. Such leverage would be applied to Karl to make him fade away into obscurity.

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[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] CHA: 2001 (D) c 1/2, April 12, 1921, internal report of La Division des Affaires étrangères du Département politique aux Légations de Suisse, Bern.

In Hungarian constitutional law, and thus "from the point of view of international law" Karl was nonetheless Karl IV "Apostolic King." Notwithstanding, while bi-lateral agreements to host a foreign sovereign with extraterritoriality was procedurally well precedented, this situation of a lawful king in regency-imposed exile, lacking formal dethronement, was certainly novel. Karl did see himself as a guest rather than captive of the Swiss. He would go so far as to claim to Zita that "Switzerland itself had asked through Baumberger to get a monarchist-minded Austrian ambassador who could act as a counterweight against Czechs etc" and that Bern would not place unreasonable burdens upon their hospitality.[12] The position of the Swiss government was indeed not anti-Habsburg in principle. Their internal calculations were permeated with statements of sympathy for Karl's predicament. In their estimation Karl was indeed given occasion to hope by the French, commenting:

> "It should be recalled that in the summer of 1920, M. Peretti della Rocca, Director of Political Affairs at the Quai d'Orsay, had informed the guest at Prangins that the French Government was in no way hostile to his restoration in Hungary or even entirely in Austria; that he had only to bide his time and that the moment might come when he would even be asked to return to his throne as a matter of urgency."[13]

Whether this itself was a stalling action, or counsel made in good faith is ever difficult to determine. One cannot regard Quai d'Orsay as a monolith. For one faction in Paris waiting was a prelude to restoration, for the other, waiting was a pretext to prevent him for exercising the functions of sovereign and thus allow the regency to solidify its hold in Budapest. With Poland under the pressure of Soviet invasion in 1920 and the contrasting Czechoslovak passivity towards Moscow, the Swiss and others feared that Hungary could once more become a "boulevard de l'Europe"– a warzone plateau serving as a pathway to foreign invasion.[14] In this context the French saw some utility in a Habsburg alternative in

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[12] AOS: Tom. II, Index 1575, January 04, 1921, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Disentis, Switzelrand) to Zita von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 713-15.
[13] CHA: 2001 (D) c 1/2, April 12, 1921, internal report of La Division des Affaires étrangères du Département politique aux Légations de Suisse, Bern.
[14] Ibid.

Central Europe proposed by Karl which could simultaneously ward off Bolshevik invasion and Pan-German hegemony.[15]

Horthy and Karl had been of one mind that any return would have to wait till after the signing of the treaty of Trianon, any unilateral action by Hungary before then running the risk of incurring the disfavour of the Great Powers.[16] Nonetheless, regarding the possibility of military intervention in March 1921, the Swiss were privy to information that during this standoff, ministers of the Great Powers had met at Rambouillet and resolved "not to mobilise any soldiers against Carlist Hungary and to prevent the Little Entente from starting an armed conflict."[17] Later in May 1921 the US refer to "practically authentic information" that Karl had in his possession a letter which certified that he "was supported in his undertaking by persons in the closest confidence of [Aristide] Briand," the Republican-Socialist Party Prime Minister of France.[18] In his writing of this episode, historian Gordon Brook-Shepherd regards Briand as the "warmest personal supporters, and one of the best advocates the Habsburg dynasty as such had in Paris."[19] The French Prime Minister would later deny giving encouragement and to what degree this was a mere bluff to sway Horthy's decision to step aside is the subject of much debate. Nonetheless, Thomas Sakmyster terms this interaction as a "private line of diplomacy aimed at restoring the Habsburg monarchy in Budapest and Vienna." Karl certainly believed based on his "secret negotiations" Briand that if he could "manage to carry out a *fiat accompli* in Hungary" that he would have the support of Paris and passive acquiescence of both Rome and London.[20]

Gordon Brook-Shepherd — historian and sympathiser with the Habsburg dynasty— shares Empress Zita's account of Karl's communication with Paris.[21] Therein

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[15] Ibid.
[16] Brook-Shepherd, *Last Habsburg*, p. 254.
[17] Swiss Federal Archives: 2001 (D) c 1/2, April 12, 1921, internal report of La Division des Affaires étrangères du Département politique aux Légations de Suisse, Bern.
[18] NARA: 864.00/413, May 9, 1921, report entitled "The Political Situation in Hungary" from Grant-Smith (US Embassy, Budapest) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[19] Brook-Shepherd, *Last Habsburg*, p. 256.
[20] Thomas Sakmyster, *Hungary's admiral on horseback: Miklós Horthy, 1918-1944* (New York: Columbia University Press 1994), p. 91 & 415.
[21] Importantly, carried out in verbal notes through trusted third-party intermediaries travelling between Paris and Prangins such as Prince Sixtus and Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Lisle Strutt.

she maintains that constant support was transmitted from Briand to the Habsburg court in exile in Switzerland from the Summer of 1920 all the way up until October 1921, uninterrupted even by the March 1921 Easter crisis.[22] Zita argued that private goodwill for the Habsburgs was not limited to Briand but rather permeated French political —and especially Army Generals— circles, many seeing Monarchy as an antidote to Magyar military dictatorship and viewing Karl as reliably pro-Peace or even anti-Prussian.[23] The Empress quotes the French Prime Minster as promising Karl should he succeed in securing power in Hungary domestically: "we [Paris] shall support him officially and keep Hungary's neighbours quiet. If the attempt fails, we can of course do nothing."[24] Secure in the knowledge that Karl had a powerful —and increasingly under pressure— base of support in Hungary and that the LE were vassals of Paris not prepared to act unilaterally, planning for a second —more forceful— return to Budapest could proceed in earnest.

Furthermore, on the very eve of Karl's second direct attempt at restoration —the so-called March on Budapest— Austrian ambassador in Budapest reported to his superiors in Vienna:

> "Horthy's candidacy for the Hungarian throne, is something I had never taken very seriously […] Horthy should initially support Archduke Albrecht, but at the same time be prepared to support King Karl if necessary."[25]

By July 1921, there were louder calls from an increasingly better organised Magyar Free-Elector faction for "an ultimatum […] attempt to dethrone the crowned king" in what neighbouring Austrians concluded would be "a revolutionary act."[26] Facing an apparent closing window, Karl was seemingly pressed into dilemma; wait in Switzerland or strike, this time with armed loyalists. With such a prognosis of Horthy's public support being possible —personal animosity withstanding— and Free-Elector agitation becoming more assertive, Karl deemed the time to strike as opportune.

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[22] Brook-Shepherd, *Last Habsburg*, p. 256.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., p. 257.
[25] AdR: NPA 727 Liasse Ungarn XII—1/II, Ff. 84-91. July 19, 1921, confidential report Zl. 165./Pol. Entitled: "Königsfrage" from Austrian Embassy, Budapest) to Johannes Schober (Federal Minister for External Affairs, Vienna).
[26] Ibid.

Horthy continued in "strongly advocating postponement of the decision on the royal question."[27] Nonetheless, Austrian authorities concluded that "the further exclusion of the 'King question' from Hungarian politics is no longer conceivable" as no meaningful constitutional reforms could be conducted without first resolving the fundamental question of the exercise of political authority.[28] Before Karl would begin his armed march on Budapest, the Austrian ambassador located in the Hungarian capital reported to Vienna that Vilmos Vazsonyi[29] and others "made no secret of their optimistic view of the situation and predict that Karl will return 'much sooner than is generally assumed'."[30] Such a prophesy would be more accurate than the ambassador could ever imagine. Secret plans were already set in motion. In early October 1921 Viennese police feared an Italian and Hungarian conspiracy to reinstall Karl and initiated a covert surveillance operation on the local Hungarian embassy and "the 600-700 Hungarian citizens staying in various hotels in Vienna."[31] Such a conspiracy —according to what was touted as "a reliable source" — would involve a "Frontkämpferkreisen" group of former WW1 veterans, many from Tyrol, seeking to occupy the Austrian parliament and invite Karl to re-establish an Austro-Hungarian Union.[32]

Nonetheless, the Austrian diplomatic corps was not of one mind on Karl's next course of action. Commenting on having done his duty in warning Swiss authorities as to rumours that a second —and more confrontational— Habsburg journey to Hungary was in motion, the local Austrian ambassador in Bern admitted to Vienna on 22nd October 1921:

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] The former Transleithanian Imperial minster for Justice, Vilmos Vazsonyi, was described by Scottish Slavophile R. W. Seton-Watson as a "vain Jewish demagogue who had attached himself to the Legitimist cause"; R. W. Seton-Watson, *The Slavonic Review* 1, no. 3 (1923): p. 676.
[30] AdR: NPA 727 Liasse Ungarn XII—1/II, Ff. 84-91, July 19, 1921, confidential report Zl. 165./Pol. Entitled: "Königsfrage" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Johannes Schober (Federal Minister for External Affairs, Vienna).
[31] AdR: NPA Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919 – 1933 — Ff. 159-163, October 4, 1921, Polizeidirektion Wien report entitled "Situationsbericht mit Rücksicht auf die Vorfälle in Westungarn. In Nachhange zum h.ä. Berichte Pr.Z.IV-2778 vom 17th September, zur telephonischen Mitteilung des Presseamtes vom 22. September betreffend den Aufenthalt auffällig vieler Ungarn in Wien und zur Mitteilung vom 2. Oktober 1921 betreffend Mitteilung der italienischen Gesandtschaft über die Rückkehr des früheren Kaisers" to Austrian Ministry of External Affairs (Vienna).
[32] Ibid.

> "I had considered a new coup by King Charles to be unlikely due to both political and ethical objections."[33]

The news that Karl had successfully flown over Austria en-route to assert his royal title in Budapest came as a shock to the local authorities in Switzerland who had "trusted the king's word blindly" that he would have any movements pre-approved by them.[34]

Paramilitary forces, in both Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, would go on to profoundly shape interwar political life, portraying themselves as saviours of the nation against rival forces of barbarism and thus the epitome of the best of the nation, a vanguard of activity leading the passive masses. Notably, more than half of Hungarian National Army were former officers of the Austro-Hungarian armed forces[35] and a significant portion of the lower ranks of paramilitary movements were increasingly the new generation of young men just now coming of age. Seen to have missed out on the opportunity to prove their heroism in the recent Great War, these younger men received the narrative that organised violence —paramilitary or otherwise— was "a positive value in itself, as a morally correct expression of youthful virility."[36] Years of pro-longed industrial warfare in the form of trench stalemate had bred a degree of indifferentism amongst most conscripted soldiers. In contrast, the flame of idealism and purpose, similar to that of the spirit of 1914, had not yet been extinguished in the hearts of much of the interwar youth who had seen the previous war solely from the perspective of the Homefront.

This phenomenon can be clearly observed in Horthy's reaction to Karl's armed advance on Budapest which was only halted outside the city limits by armed Magyar-nationalist university students. By the 1930's it would be become apparent that this paramilitary intervention had become a legend of the new political order, with men like future Prime Minister Gyula Gömbös intervening to block Charles' access to Budapest and "ordering amid hesitating generals the opening of fire on the royal train carrying his

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[33] AdR: NPA 748 Liasse Ungarn 9/11 Ff. 52-53, October 22, 1921, report no. 151 entitled "König Karl's Abreise" from Austrian Embassy (Bern) to Johannes Schober (Ministry for External Affairs, Vienna).
[34] Ibid.
[35] Gerwarth and Üngör, "Collapse of the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires," p. 235.
[36] Ibid., p. 238.

former supreme war lord."[37] In 1940, Bertita Harding would describe Gömbös as the vanguard "self-appointed leader of an anti-Legitimist" faction, who in recruiting Nationalist students "had an easy task; the adolescent mind, unburdened by memories, could be enlisted for any cause involving heroism"[38] and be deployed to provide the founding myth for a new nationalist second synthesis revolution.

With Karl unwilling to force his way through the student blockade by shedding blood, the ad hoc intervention on the part of Magyar Nationalists made direct LE intervention superfluous. Surrendering himself to forces under Horthy's command, the question thus now arose as to what would be done with the Imperial family, a dilemma which —for Karl's domestic Magyar enemies—was best solved sheltering behind the guise of reluctant adherence to the coercive will of the international community. Among the English aristocracy observing events from a distance, there was no one singular understanding of Empire. While standing for an old Imperial order in the British Isles and likewise on the continent, the influential aristocratic Baron Newton (Thomas Legh) in the UK House of Lords —who himself had been a pre-war diplomat in the Balkans—[39] would position himself in extreme contrast to the recent support Karl had received from the UK establishment in the form of Catholic Strutt's mission two years prior. In the wake of Karl's second conclusive failure, Baron Newton summoned a debate on the topic of "the Hapsburg Dynasty." While denouncing Trianon as a "gross injustice" and urging his colleagues to have mercy for the "small and helpless nation," Newton would confidently assert that "the recent adventure of the ex-Emperor" was a "criminal attempt [which] has ignominously failed."[40] Commenting on Karl's exile to Madeira, he dismissively remarked that the Emperor had retired "to a health resort where, presumably, he will finish his days, and I do not know that we need waste any further sympathy upon him."[41]

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[37] Emil Vadnay, "Goemboes Checks Restoration Talk: Hungarian Premier Says that Legitimists are fooling the People by Promises, Press assails Hapsburgs," *The New York Times*. December 15, 1935 found in AdR, BKA/Inneres, 22/Gen, Karton 4945.
[38] Bertita Harding, *Imperial Twilight: The Story of Karl and Zita of Hungary* (London: George G. Harrap & Company LDT., 1940), p. 207-08.
[39] Mark Cornwall, "The Flickering Lighthouse: Rethinking the British Judgement on Trianon," *The Hungarian Historical Review* 9, no. 1 (2020): p. 8-9.
[40] House of Lords: The Hapsburg Dynasty, December 9, 1921, column 229-45. Accessed February 11, 2023: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1921/nov/09/the-hapsburg-dynasty
[41] Ibid.

While Lord Newton had called for the debate, he by no means went unopposed. For a certain segment of the British aristocratic political elite, the initial demands of Benes that Czechoslovakia be rewarded the cost of her military mobilization from Budapest's depleted coffers had left them "staggered by this ultimatum." They were happy to view Habsburg exile as an agreeable middle-ground. Others, such as Lord Sydenham, were willing to raise their heads above the parapet and voice support for Karl's plight. Sydenham responded that, for his part, should the Hungarian people want Karl as their King: "I cannot see the slightest moral right on our part to object."[42] Sydenham —having previously served as British governor of Bombay and rose to prominence through his recent Anti-Semitic interventions in public discourse—[43] asserted that it was "absolutely true, and no one can contradict" the fact that Hungarian Prime Minster Count Bethlen was correct in claiming that Karl's arrival was no cause but rather a pretext for threats made by the Little Entente." [44]

Sydenham was not alone in his opposition to Newton's anti-Habsburg intervention. The Anglo-Irish Lord Oranmore and Browne (Geoffrey Henry Browne) challenged that he "should be glad to know how His Majesty's Government can reconcile it [UK role in Karl's exile] with the principle of self-determination, about which we have heard so much of late."[45] He led voices of support which even surprisingly critiqued Karl's handling of events from a position that he had acted not assertively enough, claiming:

> "[If] instead of acting as a constitutional monarch and being guided by his responsible Ministers, had acted as an absolute monarch, he would probably have been on the throne of Austria-Hungary at the present time."[46]

Such a perceived need for a strong hand had indeed be seen by Karl himself in speaking with Strutt in 1919 regarding his domestic reforms as Emperor.[47] However Karl's

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[42] Ibid.
[43] George Clarke (Baron Sydenham of Combe). *The Jewish World Problem*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1921), p. 1-14.
[44] House of Lords: The Hapsburg Dynasty, December 9, 1921, column 229-45. Accessed February 11, 2023: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1921/nov/09/the-hapsburg-dynasty
[45] House of Lords: The Hapsburg Dynasty, December 9, 1921, column 229-45. Accessed February 11, 2023: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1921/nov/09/the-hapsburg-dynasty
[46] Ibid.
[47] Brook-Shepherd, *The Last Habsburg*, p. 235.

willingness to unilaterally impose his will had limits. He had been willing to force Horthy's hand into making a clear decision of committing to his oath or retaining power; nonetheless, he would not risk open civil war once his opponents choose —by force of arms— to prevent his arrival in Budapest. Such a course of action —should he survive— would risk forever forfeiting his legacy as a "Peace-Emperor" and his claim to be the stabilising principle of Central Europe.

The Swiss of their part as hosts to Karl had paid close attention to developments. Bern considered carefully that —objectively speaking— no one singular position could be ascertained on the part of Paris.[48] This narrative corelates with Legitimist thinking which conceived of a true Catholic France and a false counter France dominated by freemasonic corruption. Nonetheless, with Philippe Berthelot—described by Gordon Brook-Shepherd as "an implacable enemy of the Habsburgs"—[49] directing French foreign policy, the public-facing institutional anti-Habsburg facade was foreseeably indefinite.[50] The result of July 1921 talks between Budapest and Prague reported by Benes to Vienna was that:

> "Czechoslovakia is firmly determined to act ruthlessly together with Yugoslavia and, should King Karl in Hungary show himself, to arrest him and deport him to an island in the Adriatic Sea."[51]

Noteworthy here is that Benes' perspective about Habsburg exile had shifted between July and October 1921. In the wake of Karl's second attempt, the Adriatic plan seemed to

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[48] CHA: 2001 (D) c 1/2, April 12, 1921, internal report of La Division des Affaires étrangères du Département politique aux Légations de Suisse, Bern.
[49] Brook-Shepherd, *The Last Habsburg*, p. 280.
[50] Philippe Berthelot (1866-1934) served as Secretary to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and keen upholder of French anti-Habsburgism. See AdR: NPA Karton 232, Liasse Österreich 7/1, Ff. 371-373, April 1, 1921, declaration of the Conference of Ambassadors found in 13th August 1935 report 158/Pol. entitled "Französisches Schema eines Donaupaktes; Stellungnahme der österreichischen Bundesregierung" from Austrian Embassy, Budapest to Egon-Waldenegg (Minister for Exteral Affairs, Vienna); Edmund Glaise von Horstenau, *The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire* (Trans. Ian F.D. Morrow) (London: J.M. Dent, 1930), p. 217; David Robin Watson, *Georges Clemencau: A Politcal Biography*. (Plymouth: Eyre Methuen, 1974), p. 336; Miklos Zeidler, "Charles IV's attempted returns to the Hungarian Throne" in *Karl I. (Iv.), Der Erste Weltkrieg Und Das Ende Der Donaumonarchie*, ed. Andreas Gottsmann (Vienna: Verlag Der Österreichischen Akademie Der Wissenschaften, 2007), p. 272.
[51] AdR: NPA 727 Liasse Ungarn XII—1/II, Ff. 80, July 5, 1921, confidential report Zl. 369./Pol. Entitled: "Minister Dr. Benes über die ungarnished Königsfrage und über Westüngarn" from Ferdinand Marek (Austrian Embassy, Prague) to Johannes Schober (Federal Minister for External Affairs, Vienna).

constitute more of an Elba than a St. Helena solution in the eyes of the LE. Security in distance offered more assurance to Prague, Budapest and Belgrade.

In late October 1921, Austrian officials in Budapest scoured for up-to-date intelligence on the plans the LE and Great Powers had in mind for the Habsburgs, ultimately foreseeing that Malta would be the location of the Imperial couple's exile:

> "The game is up! The tragic fate that has haunted Habsburg rulers of recent is playing out in a particularly tragic way for King Charles of Hungary. The king was imprisoned in his own palace. There is already talk of his forced abdication and his imminent internment on Malta."[52]

Christopher Brennan notes how Madeira was a supposedly British proposed compromise to a LE-desired St. Helena counter-offer to Malta as the first choice of the Great Powers.[53] Yet, Empress Zita in her 9th November 1921 diary-entry documents how there was even some uncertainty en route to Madeira as to their final destination.[54] To her reporting, none other than the English captain himself pondered whether they would yet receive orders to proceed all the way to Ascension Island, considered to be the harshest punishment short of execution.[55]

Once the imperial couple was on Madeira, there was significant fear that Zita could use the opportunity to collect the Imperial children in Switzerland to instigate a renewed restoration attempt in Budapest[56] or take advantage of the "renewed vigor" within the Legitimist movement and speak before the Swiss parliament.[57] It was in this context that

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[52] AdR: NPA Karton 748 Liasse Ungarn 9/11, Ff. 104-110, October 26, 1921, report no. Zl. 167/P entitled "Der Karlisten-Putsch in Ungarn" from Wilhelm Storck (Austrian embassy, Bucharest) to Johannes Schober (Federal Minister for External Affairs, Vienna).

[53] Erdödy, 291; AZM, October 27, 1921, 1, 5; RPM, 26 October 1921, 1, 3; 27 October 1921, 2; 29 October 1921, 2 cited in Christopher Brennan, "Sinner, Saint—or Cipher?: The Austrian Republic and the Death of Emperor Karl I." in *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, ed. Paul Miller and Claire Morelon, 1st ed., (Berghahn Books, 2019), p. 231.

[54] November 9, 1921, diary-entry of Empress Zita as recorded in Brook-Shepherd, *The Last Habsburg*, p. 310.

[55] Ibid.

[56] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, ff. 454-55, January 24, 1922 report ZL: 11/pol entitled: "Gerüchte über neurliche Putschpläns der Exkönigin Zita" from Maximilian von Hoffinger (Austrian Embassy, Belgrade) to Johannes Schober (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

[57] NARA: 864.00/487, January 24, 1922, report no. 47 from American Mission (Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

the Great Powers warned should any "Karlist agitation" persist, the Habsburg family would suffer "internment under close guard on a remote island,"[58] the dreaded St. Helena solution. To hold the Imperial-Royal family on the territory of a successor state, for example in Yugoslavian Dalmatia, would either give the impression that Karl and his family were prisoners of the new revolutionary regimes or alternately that they had not left Cisleithanian Austria, in which case any location there would become a site of pilgrimage and intrigue for Legitimist allies. Thus, a compromise of the Portuguese North-Atlantic archipelago of Madeira arose as a suitable location for the Emperor-King's definitive exile.

After Karl's second departure —this time under the guise of deportation— the Habsburg question threatened the cohesive unity of the Hungarian Right going forward. In this context, continued pro-Habsburg activism was seen by Horthy as "likely to fan the flames of sectarian strife […] and thus to disturb the work of consolidation on a Christian national basis."[59] Horthy urged Cardinal Csernoch as the leading representative of Catholicism in Hungary to help him dispel perceptions of "denominational motives and anti-Catholic tendency on the grounds that the majority of the government's cabinet members are Protestants" and this was the primary motivation of their rejection of Karl.[60] In his reply three days later, the Cardinal Archbishop made a calculation —motivated by prudential lower-case "e" ecumenism— seeking to argue the Habsburg question on its constitutional merits rather than the specific interests of Political Catholicism.[61] Furthermore, in this way the Hungarian episcopate claimed to have been supporters of Karl but not his unilateral immediate return, preferring that he had waited till an indeterminate future point when such a return would be less objectionable to the Little Entente.[62]

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[58] Ibid.
[59] Primási Levéltár, NL Csernoch, Cat. B. 3511/1921. November 3, 1921, letter from Horthy (Budapest) to Archbishop of Esztergom, Cardinal János Csernoch (Esztergom) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 802-03.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Primási Levéltár, NL Csernoch, Cat. B. 3511/1921. November 6, 1921, letter from Archbishop of Esztergom, Cardinal János Csernoch (Esztergom) to Horthy (Budapest) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 804-07.
[62] Ibid.

Efforts of formal dethronement would materialise in the wake of the king's second restoration attempt in November 1921, with intensified efforts to seek the free election of a new dynastic house. This campaign would be aided by the foundation previously laid by Horthy in his July 1921 provisional constitutional reforms which included a declared "expiration of the Pragmatic Sanction with regard to the indivisibility of the Habsburg Empire."[63] The sole obstacle remaining to achieving this objective was the need to neutralising the opposition of Habsburg- sympathetic Political Catholicism. Nonetheless, Cardinal Csernoch's claim to Horthy in 1922 that for him and his brother-bishops, "both his Majesty's undertakings were against our knowledge and advice"[64] does not entirely stand up to scrutiny when compared to his personal correspondence to the exiled king. In November 1920 the same cardinal wrote to Switzerland advising Karl:

> "We, who are looking forward to your Majesty's coming, must do our utmost to prepare the people for your Majesty's coming, for it is certain that the longer your Majesty's absence lasts, the more the people will be alienated from the King."[65]

The risk of absenteeism —a noted fear of Karl's— was even highlighted by the Cardinal-Archbishop. Despite subsequent pivot, the warnings concerning the precarious geopolitical position were not therefore unequivocal admonishments against returning in the near future.

Far from facilitating the nationalist Magyar agenda of Horthy and the free-electors, the letters from Esztergom to Switzerland went so far as to indulge Karl's supranational schema for Central European reconstruction. Furthermore, they agreed with the King-Emperor that the Budapest's "poor situation and the shallowness of her financial resources" will necessitate alliances, and in this effort "nothing will attract them so much as to have a common ruler in some form."[66] Moreover, Csernoch's brother bishop

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[63] AdR: NPA 727 Liasse Ungarn XII—1/II, Ff. 84-91. July 19, 1921, confidential report Zl. 165./Pol. Entitled: "Königsfrage" from Austrian Embassy, Budapest) to Johannes Schober (Federal Minister for External Affairs, Vienna).

[64] Primási Levéltár, NL Csernoch, Cat. B. 3511/1921, November 6, 1921, letter from Archbishop of Esztergom, Cardinal János Csernoch (Esztergom) to Horthy (Budapest) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 804-07.

[65] Primási Leveltár, NL Csernoch, Cat. B 2763/1920, fol. 16-19, November 18, 1920 letter from Archbishop of Esztergom, Cardinal János Csernoch (Esztergom, Hungary) to Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 707-09.

[66] Ibid.

responsible for the Hungarian military ordinariate went even so far as to state: "It desirable that your Majesty should take the throne sooner rather than latter, and believes that the threats of the Entente need not be taken seriously."[67] Seen all together, these were hardly definitive advice from the Magyar episcopate for Karl to remain in content exile.

Beyond "ensuring that politics does not hinder the Church's free exercise of her ministry," the Cardinal reassured Horthy that "politics is not the Church's vocation" and She would restrain herself exclusively to matters of faith and morals.[68] Csernoch as keen to align himself with the new Horthy order centred on ecumenical reconciliation; writing to Horthy: "We Catholics ask no privileges. We want liberty and justice, and we gladly grant them to all other denominations."[69] Despite the claim that the bishops of Hungary were not willing to concern themselves with matters distinctly political beyond the restrictive bounds of faith and morals, Csernoch was more than happy to us his influence to encourage Karl in 1920 to advocate for Hungary's retention of the disputed Burgenland border region.[70] Nevertheless, —after two failed restoration attempts— the cardinal was willing to take the pre-emptive measure to exert influence on the organising committee of the Hungarian Catholic Day conference to not to permit any discussion of the King Question so as not to "endanger sectarian peace."[71] Having been successful in neutralising Catholic dissent, that same day, November 6th, 1921, the anti-Habsburg dethronement law was passed in Budapest.

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[67] Ibid.

[68] Primási Levéltár, NL Csernoch, Cat. B. 3511/1921, November 6, 1921, letter from Archbishop of Esztergom, Cardinal János Csernoch (Esztergom) to Horthy (Budapest) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 804-07.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Primási Leveltár, NL Csernoch, Cat. B 2763/1920, fol. 16-19. November 18, 1920 letter from Archbishop of Esztergom, Cardinal János Csernoch (Esztergom, Hungary) to Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 707-09.

[71] Primási Levéltár, NL Csernoch, Cat. B. 3511/1921, November 6, 1921, letter from Archbishop of Esztergom, Cardinal János Csernoch (Esztergom) to Horthy (Budapest) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 804-07.

Chapter 3 Orphaned Republics and the "Kingship of Christ" (1921-1927)

Chapter three investigates the consequences of Karl's death in exile and the resulting ramifications for the Habsburg cause. The competing regencies of Zita and Horthy and the phenomenon of Legitimism as an outside force will be assessed in light of Vatican efforts to re-engage the Catholic laity around the world for a campaign to enthrone Christ as King of nations and states. Up until his deathbed, Karl remained optimistic about Habsburg ability to deliver to Central Europe a lasting peace and order built upon a supranational and supernatural *Reichsidee*. Furthermore, while his death galvanised the zeal of adherents to Legitimism, it also provided his more nominal allies in Hungary with a logical escape from their allegiance to Habsburg authority and an opportunity to consolidate their own political power. Therefore, as the decade progressed, Legitimist efforts would increasingly shift away from the goal of regional restoration in Hungary as steppingstone to resurrecting their empire. To this end, they would prioritise the attaching of their colours to efforts of the assurgent Catholic political Right in Austria.

3.1: Death and Refuge on the North-Atlantic

The new post-Karl era presented a challenge for the Central European mind, Legitimist and Republican alike. Karl's opponents in Vienna, Budapest, and the new capitals of Central and East-Central Europe had hoped that the short-lived Emperor would fade into total obscurity. In contrast to the exile of despair suffered by Napoleon who died almost exactly one hundred years before Karl, the 21st February 1952 testimony of the Imperial family's local interim chaplain, the Fr. Antonio Homen de Gouveia, —then 83 years old— paints a picture of relative domestic tranquillity and undaunted strategic optimism on Madeira. Fr. de Gouveia recounts how Karl "never uttered a word of indignation against his enemies, but instead sought to exonerate them by saying that they were instruments of Divine Providence."[1] The chaplain further noted that Karl, "regardless how urgent the matter, he never dealt with important correspondence without first going to pray before the Blessed Sacrament."[2] Such meekness stands in great contrast to the post-war grievances of ex-Kaiser Wilhelm in a comparably luxurious Dutch exile.

Wilhelm would see Karl as a traitor against the German world, his family being nothing more that French infiltrators with desires on Bavaria and the Danube region. Along the same line as Ludendorff,[3] the abdicated Hohenzollern would declare a conspiracy by Jesuits, Jews and Freemasons to stab Germany in the back. An alleged 2nd April 1923 letter written by the Prussian monarch from his Doorn residence to a relative (Prince Wilhelm of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen), came into Vatican possession, in which the former-Kaiser claimed:

> "The anti-Prussian, anti-Hohenzollern attitude of Rome and propaganda is evident! The plan for a 'southern empire' is a fact […] Rome did not lift a finger to support

[1] Congregatio De Causis Sanctorum. *Beatificationis Et Canonizationis Servi Dei Caroli E Domo Austriae Imperatoris Ac Regis (1887-1922): Positio Super Virtutibus Et Fama Sanctitatis Vol.* I.. Vatican City: Tipografia Guerra s. r. l., 1994, p. 897.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Patrick J. Houlihan, "Was There an Austrian Stab-in-the-Back Myth?: Interwar Military Interpretations of Defeat," in *From Empire to Republic: Post-World War I Austria*, ed. Günter Bischof, Fritz Plasser, and Peter Berger (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2010), p. 69.

or secure the throne that had best nurtured the Catholics! It allowed Emperor Karl to betray me: on the contrary, the Nuncio in Vienna helped and abetted."[4]

This planned "*Donaureich*" was in the mind of Prussian Junker class a French geopolitical objective which flowed naturally from Habsburg supranationalism and suspicions if Zita as a puppet of Paris, who, in-turn, was puppet master over Karl. Such a re-born unified Danubian Empire —no matter how theoretical— was considered more potent an enemy than any multilateral Little Entente collective security alliance.

The Imperial couple initially made the most of their unfortunate circumstances and, once their children arrived after receiving safe passage from Switzerland, went about establishing a reasonably stable homelife after recent trials and tribulations. Demonstrative of how the Habsburg saga does not exist in isolation of broader European trends, their new North-Atlantic island home of Madeira —as part of the First Portuguese Republic— had until eleven years earlier been ruled by the House of Braganza. Its deposed sovereign King Manuel II of Portugal was himself in exile in England.[5] Jeffrey Bennett describes the Portuguese republican regime from 1910 to 1926 as one in which "the revolutionary eradication of Catholicism was conceived of as a life-giving break with the past."[6] Not unlike her Central European counter-parts, the Iberian nation had also been the site of a failed 1919 monarchist counter-revolution.[7] The Habsburgs were not consoled to discover that such a state —and not neighbouring friendly Spain— had been approached by the Great Powers to offer a floating prison to the banished dynasty. Nonetheless, far from the republican eye of Lisbon, the Imperial family found a warm reception on remote North-

[4] VAA: Archivo della Nunziatura Apostolica di Berlino-Bonn, Arch. Nunz. Berlino 25, 3. Pos V Sovrani; 1 Famglia Imperiale della Germania, Fasc, 3, Ff. 99-102, April 2, 1923, letter from ex-Kaiser Wilhelm II (von Hohenzollern) to Prince Wilhelm of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen contain in report "Copia della lettera dell'Imperatore Guglielmo II al principe Guglielmo di Hohenzollern-Sigmarien."

[5] The Braganzas, similar to the woes of their Austrian counterparts, suffered the regicidal assassination of their heir-apparent Luís Filipe and the ruling King Carlos I in 1908 at the hands of a conspiratorial terror cell, the freemasonic Portuguese Carbonária. See: Degaut, Marcos, "Out of the Barracks: The Role of the Military in Democratic Revolutions," *Armed Forces & Society* 45, no. 1 (2019): p. 86; Nuno Luís Madureira,. "Revolution and Policy Failure: The 1910s Portuguese Republic," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 17 (4): p. 647–63; Jeffrey Bennett, "Symbolic Inversion in the 1910 Republican Revolution in Portugal," *History & Anthropology* 23, no. 3 (September 2012): p. 283–300.

[6] Bennett, "Symbolic Inversion," p. 292.

[7] Ernesto Castro Leal (Translated by Richard Correll), "Acção Realista Portuguesa: An Organization of the Anti-Liberal Right, 1923–26," *Portuguese Studies* 30, no. 1 (2014): p. 58.

Atlantic Madeira, a local sympathiser even providing a home to the recently arrived Imperial family in the hills outside the regional capital, Funchal.

On January 11th, 1922, the council of ambassadors resolved that, to "ensure proper watching of Charles and Zita at Madeira,"[8] the Habsburg family would be forewarned that should any infraction occur:

> "[T]he principal power would be compelled to intern both the sovereigns on one of their remotest islands where they would be kept under strictest surveillance."[9]

For the Little Entente especially —fearing further attempts at restoration in Budapest— the island of Maderia was regarded more of an Elba than a Saint Helena for the Imperial family's exile. With a copy of the January declaration, Vienna further received an added strongly-worded suggestion —or instruction— that Johannes Schober's "Austrian Government keep a watch on its frontiers" for "the possibility of a new attempt by the former Queen Zita to return to Hungary."[10] With this message, the Great Powers chose to "express the hope" that the new Vienna anti-Socialist government "will take all measures in its power" to not even passively tolerate any Habsburg presence on its territory which would, internationally, be taken with the utmost seriousness.[11]

Nonetheless, Karl set about once more re-establishing his court in exile. There was some difficultly in certain high-ranking Legitimists finding their way from Hungary to Madeira and elsewhere. Their freedom of travel was restricted by anti-Habsburg attitude of Vienna which —in the wake of the two restoration attempts in Budapest— refused to grant travel visas and proved willing to detain Legitimists at their frontiers. Nonetheless, once more, there were further discrepancies between the attitude of the Great Powers as expressed by Conference of Ambassadors and as expressed by the on-the-ground behaviour of military officers acting on their own initiative to ferry pro-Habsburg

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[8] NARA: 864.00/751, April 22, 1931, report no. 88 from Nicholas Roosevelt (Legation of The United States, Budapest) to Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[9] NARA: 864.00/491, January 29, 1922, report no. 58 from American Mission (Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[10] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, ff. 432-437, January 23, 1922, report entitled "Versuch einer neuerlichen Rückkehr der Exkönig Zita nach Ungarn" containing French and Italian Embassy in Vienna letters to Austrian Federal Chancellor.
[11] Ibid.

aristocrats out of Hungary despite Horthy's protestations.[12] While the daily movements of the Imperial couple on Madeira were closely followed by the great powers, nonetheless, Karl and other members of the family could stroll the streets in civilian attire without security and an impromptu court in exile soon coalesced around them. [13] Furthermore, as isolated as Madeira was, mainland Spain —and with it, the potential aid of Alfonso XIII— was reasonably near at hand being just over 1,000km of blue ocean away. Karl had been in constant contact with Alfonso thanking him for his assistance in securing the arrival of the Imperial children and petitioned him to use any influence he may have with the Great Powers:

> "It was a real ray of light for me in these gloomy times, gestures that seem to have died out today […] may God reward you."[14]

On Madeira, Karl was compiling pro-active schema for his return to the heart of Europe including a detailed "top secret draft Constitution" for "the new Greater-Austria" based upon a quadripartite framework of an Austrian Empire, Kingdom of Hungary, Lands of the Throne of St. Wenceslas, and finally, the United Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Illyria.[15] This new Habsburg Greater-Austria would align herself geopolitically with France on the basis that "both would have two common enemies, the Prussians and the Italians [and] are also dependent on each other as the two largest Catholic states."[16] This was a proscriptive plan which Karl deemed ready for implementation. Far from despondent at having suffered defeat in the recent war, the exiled Emperor privately pondered:

> "A victory in the World War would have been our downfall; we would have been turned into voluntary serfs of Prussia by our Germans and Hungarians." [17]

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[12] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 440-441, January 26, 1922, report entitled "Ladislaus Eduard Almasy, Anhaltung" to Walter Breisky (Austrian Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Vianna).
[13] NARA: 863.001/24, January 4, 1922, report no. 57 from D.W. Tell (American Consulate, Funchal) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[14] AOS: Tom. I, Index 639, February 5, 1922 letter from Karl von Habsburg (Funchal, Madeira) to Alfonso XIII (Madrid) found in Elisabeth Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?: Band 2: Politische Dokumente zu Kaiser und König Karl I. (IV.) aus internationalen Archiven* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2004), p. 898-899.
[15] AOS: Tom. I, Index 53, Karl von Habsburg. *Verfassungsentwurf, Streng Geheim* (December 1921 to March 1922) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 816-833.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

However, rather endorsing any quixotic quadripartite schemata for re-structuring Central Europe —now needing to make the most of the current geopolitical reality— the Vatican was keen to temporarily de-politicise the Catholicity of the Imperial family. Cardinal-Secretary Gasparri, in writing to the bishop of Madeira —notably now referring to the Habsburgs as "former sovereigns"— made clear to the local hierarchy on isolated Catholic Madeira that every effort was to be made in providing the sacraments and spiritual assistance to the exiled family but that he would be "pleased to see that you have refrained from making any political statements in order to freely carry out your religious mission."[18] The bishop replied —this time using Karl and Zita's imperial titles— that he was in compliance with Vatican instructions and further positively noted the atmosphere on the remote island:

> "Their Majesties have received all kinds of attention from the local authorities, and that the entire population of Funchal is charmed by Their noble and pious sentiments."[19]

It therefore came as a true shock to all when news broke on the eve of 1st April 1922 that Karl was on his deathbed. Christopher Brennan argues that "the aftermath of Karl's death confirmed that legitimism in Austria was dead—indeed, it had never existed in any meaningful form since the empire's collapse."[20] Superficially, the response to Karl's death in Vienna may lead one to concur with such an assessment. Besides Seipel who addressed a CSP meeting with "words of genuine sympathy for the deceased," the Papal Nuncio in Vienna reported to the Vatican:

> "The death of the former Emperor Charles has left this Viennese population, at least apparently, unmoved."[21]

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[18] AAEESS: Austria 837, Prot. 28.048, November 25, 1921, letter from Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican) to Bishop Antonio Emanuele Pereira Ribeiro (Funchal, Madeira).
[19] AAEESS: Austria 837, Prot. 28,048, December 14, 1921, letter from Bishop Antonio Emanuele Pereira Ribeiro (Funchal, Madeira) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[20] Christopher Brennan, "Sinner, Saint—or Cipher?: The Austrian Republic and the Death of Emperor Karl I." in *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, ed. Paul Miller and Claire Morelon, 1st ed., (Berghahn Books, 2019), p. 245.
[21] VAA: Fodo Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 53, April 4, 1922, letter entitled "Morte dell'ex-imperatore" from Francesco Marchetti Selvaggiani (Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican)

Such pessimistic reports of apparent apathy were only compounded by the vitriolic media offensive on the part of the political Left. In the preceding months, Karl had been depicted in left-wing press cartoons as a weak-minded alcoholic under the control of his Franco-Italian wife searching through the *Reichspost* newspaper for any glimmer of hope.[22] Christopher Brennan notes how "[i]n particular, the groundless, though widespread, portrayal of Karl's wife, the Empress Zita, as a Franco-Italian anti-German Lady Macbeth created a type of Austrian *Dolchstoßlegende* [stab-in-the-back myth]."[23] The Austromarxist press for their part spared neither formality nor sympathy for the Imperial family's tragedy in their reporting. The Styria- and Carinthia-based *Arbeiterwille* wrote:

> "'Thanks be to God' that this era is over for us, otherwise the bigoted Zita would have become our regent and an eight-year-old boy our emperor. We Social Democrats have always been republicans."[24]

These comments constitute a rewriting of the history of the late imperial period in which the SPÖ since Engelbert Pernerstorfer were principled Republicans in a political system based upon the coerced devotion to the Imperial household on the part of the oppressed masses. Alfred-Pfoser and Andreas Weigl argue on the contrary that while Imperial-era SPÖ wanted to remove the emperor's veto on Mayoral elections in Vienna and saw that the war in 1914 would bring new opportunities for their programme of social and political reform, they were no republicans and ascribed themselves willingly to the defence by blood of the Dual-Monarchy.[25]

Continuing this biblical motif —despite his pointing to having mere acted under LE coercion— Legitimists saw Horthy as the Judas to their blameless Karl. While the early Republic of Austria under SPÖ and CSP Michael Mayr had openly proclaimed her hostility to the Imperial House, Horthy, however, styled himself as a loyal regent. In their

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[22] T. Gebauer, "Schwere Enttäuschung," *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (evening edition). October 30, 1921, p. 1 found in Alfred-Pfoser and Andreas Weigl, *Die Erste Stunde Null. Gründungsjahre der österreichischen Republik* (Vienna: Residenz Verlag, 2017), p. 172.

[23] Général Baron Albert de Margutti, *La Tragédie des Habsbourg: Mémoires d'un aide de camp* (Vienna: Les Éd. G. Crès, 1923), p.159–60 cited in Christopher Brennan, "Sinner, Saint—or Cipher?: The Austrian Republic and the Death of Emperor Karl I." in *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, ed. Paul Miller and Claire Morelon, 1st ed., (Berghahn Books, 2019), p. 230.

[24] Unknown, "Der Kaiser ist tot — es lebe der Kaiser!" *Arbeiterwille*. April 4, 1922, p. 1.

[25] Pfoser and Weigl, *Die Erste Stunde Null,* p. 191.

eyes, had it not been for Horthy's betrayal, Karl would still be alive. The Magyar head of state would send a telegram to Zita expressing his condolences writing:

> "The Hungarian Nation shares the grief of the family around his grave. I beg Your Majesty to deign to accept the expression of my deepest condolences."[26]

The Vatican also noted Count Bethlen's telegram as "President of the Hungarian Council" regarding the "deep and general emotion" of the "Hungarian Nation" which also outlined the state mandated procedures for public mourning.[27] The US noted that Horthy's sending of sympathetic condolences to the bereaved Imperial family was "a disappointment to the Karlists, who had expected to make capital from the hoped-for adoption of an indifferent attitude on the part of the Government."[28]

Nuncio to Budapest Archbishop Lorenzo Schioppa reported to the Holy Father his satisfaction that Karl would be granted "a solemn Funeral with all the pomp due to the very high rank of the deceased."[29] The death of Karl was used as an opportunity to reconcile a bitterly divided Hungarian Right. Horthy personally mandated "the closure of all theatres and entertainment venues for the 2nd [April] and the day of the Funeral; the display of the black flag at all public military and civil buildings."[30] The Nuncio himself did not know for sure what significance to extrapolate from Horthy's conciliatory reaction. To his mind it was either a "posthumous homage to the poor Sovereign, who four months ago was chased out of Hungary with cannon fire, handed over without regret into the hands of his enemies" or alternatively, he posed the question as to whether it was "a symptom of the Hungarian Government, ready to consider the law of dethronement as a sheer piece of paper at the first opportunity?" [31] Ulysses Grant-Smith, reported to Washington:

> "[N]ews of the decease of ex-King Charles IV […] made a deep impression in Budapest. The members of the Government are particularly grieved in view of the

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[26] Unknown, "Il dolore dell'Ungheria," *L'Osservatore Romano*. April 3-4, 1922, p. 1.
[27] Ibid.
[28] NARA: 863.001K14/10, April 3, 1922, report no. 125 from *Chargé d'Affaires pro tem* Ulysses Grant-Smith (American Mission, Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.)
[29] VAA: Fodo: Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 57-60, April 5,1922 letter entitled "Per la morte di Re Carlo IV" from Archbishop Lorenzo Schioppa (Apostolic Nunciature, Budapest) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

part which they were forced to play in his being removed to the Island of Madeira."[32]

Legitimists certainly doubted the sincerity of such gestures by Horthy which were reported to the Vatican as "crocodile tears."[33] Prime Minister Count István Bethlen had been originally considered by the UK FO as a "realist" and a "liberal."[34] By 1922 Bethlen's position was becoming increasingly untenable as the state-approved pro-Habsburg ritualistic mourning had aroused both the indignation of the Little Entente and the accusations of hypocrisy from the once-friendly Legitimists.

Grant-Smith foresaw that within the Hungarian counter-revolutionary Christian Right "party bitterness promises to become intensified rather than attenuated."[35] Emblematic of this, upon exiting the Budapest Requiem, Bethlen was met with a crowd of Legitimists exclaiming: "here is the King's murderer."[36] Even the more moderate and mainstream *Reichspost* openly pondered if whether Karl —the weakness of whom's lungs was well known to all—[37] had been deliberately "banished to that distant island, whose climate, one must well have known would prove disastrous at this time for one weakened by spiritual pain?" The Catholic Right concluding of Horthy, the LE and Great Powers: "If that is so, then his tormentors have achieved their goal."[38]

Further adding to the momentum of a rapidly developing cult of devotion, Karl's last words were reported as: "I offer my lie to my good People. My God and My Lord:

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[32] NARA: 863.001K14/10, April 3, 1922, report no. 125 from *Chargé d'Affaires pro tem* Ulysses Grant-Smith (American Mission, Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.)
[33] VAA: Fodo: Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 57-60, April 5, 1922 letter entitled "Per la morte di Re Carlo IV" from Archbishop Lorenzo Schioppa (Apostolic Nunciature, Budapest) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[34] Thomas Lorman, "'In Praise of Stability': The Foreign Office and the Bethlen Consolidation," in *British-Hungarian relations since 1848*, eds. László Péter and Martyn Rady (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, 2004), p. 143.
[35] NARA: 863.001K14/10, April 3, 1922, report no. 125 from *Chargé d'Affaires pro tem* Ulysses Grant-Smith (American Mission, Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[36] VAA: Fodo: Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 57-60, April 5, 1922, letter entitled "Per la morte di Re Carlo IV" from Archbishop Lorenzo Schioppa (Apostolic Nunciature, Budapest) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[37] Unknown, "Schwere Verschlimmerung im Befinden Kaiser Karls," *Reichspost*. April 1, 1922, p. 1.
[38] Unknown, "Tod in der Verbannung," *Reichspost*. April 2, 1922, p. 1.

Into Your hands I not only give up myself but also my wife and my children."[39] On Madeira itself witnesses recounted to the Vatican:

> "It wasn't long before the fame of his virtues had spread throughout the island. Attracted by these virtues, people even came to his funeral from the most distant parts of the island." [40]

As in Hungary itself, the US consul in Funchal relayed to Washington how on the remote Atlantic island, "the majority of the business houses and stores were closed and many flags were half masted."[41] Meanwhile in Austria, even if welcoming the termination of republican revolutionary power with the 17th October 1920 election, Legitimists considered the new Michael Mayr as no improvement and their activism continued uninterrupted. In the wake of Karl's death —a crime to which Mayr was considered by them an accessory— Legitimists held rallies and published propaganda in defiance of anti-sedition laws. Once such case investigated by police authorities was an April 1922 leaflet which declared of Karl's death: "That was murder! Premeditated murder!" and entreated their fellow countrymen: "We Austrians will always remain loyal to our Emperor! Long live Austria! Long live our Imperial House! Long live Emperor Otto!"[42]

Indeed, the rallying to Otto as undisputed successor to Karl by Hungarian Legitimists was equally as swift with a declaration proclaiming Otto II as King of Hungary the day following Karl's death.[43] Furthermore, emboldened by the suspiring news from Madeira, the German-language Budapest newspaper, *Pester Lloyd*, didn't shy from

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[39] NARA: 863.001K14/8, April 3, 1922, telegram report entitled "Death of Ex-Experor Carl of Austria" from D.W. Tell (American Consulate, Funchal) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

[40] Congregatio De Causis Sanctorum. *Beatificationis Et Canonizationis Servi Dei Caroli E Domo Austriae Imperatoris Ac Regis (1887-1922): Positio Super Virtutibus Et Fama Sanctitatis Vol.* I.. Vatican City: Tipografia Guerra s. r. l., 1994, p. 898.

[41] NARA: 863.001K14/8, April 3, 1922, telegram report entitled "Death of Ex-Experor Carl of Austria" from D.W. Tell (American Consulate, Funchal) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

[42] AdR: NPA, Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2 – 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919 – 1933, F.f.184-88, April 15, 1922, report Pr.zl.IV-241/9 entitled: "Vorteilung monarchistischer Flugblätter" from Police Headquarters (Vienna) to Leopold Hennet (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

[43] VAA: Fodo: Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 57-60, April 5, 1922, letter entitled "Per la morte di Re Carlo IV" from Archbishop Lorenzo Schioppa (Apostolic Nunciature, Budapest) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

polemics and openly reported that "the death of King Karl" had proven to vindicate "he, who like a hero, had twice rebelled against fate and sought to regain through love what had been taken from him through hatred."[44] Meanwhile, —in line with Horthy's campaign for unity— the editorial of the more Magyar Nationalist-minded *Szozat* urged its readers: "Now that he [Karl] is dead, let us set aside all strife, because it would be very frivolous to start to make propaganda around a coffin."[45] Such subsequent extension of olive branches could not contain the indignation of the Legitimist movement. Count Albert Apponyi would make a public declaration the day following Karl's death:

> "The Monarchy is not dead with the death of one King. We have said to ourselves: should the tragedy happen, the loyalty of Hungarians would not waiver there would be no indecision, they would all shout in unison: 'Long live King Otto'."[46]

Nonetheless, in the week following Karl's death, Budapest made clear its position that despite their condolences, there would be unilateral action on the Habsburg Question.[47] This clarification was designed to satiate LE demands for reassurance that ritualism would not overflow into constitutional developments. The representatives of the Great Powers in Budapest thus faced a precarious dilemma, would they follow Hungarian diplomatic protocol in acquiescence to the expected consular norm of likewise displaying the black flag of mourning, of resist such pressure and gain favour with the LE? Ultimately, the UK and France chose to join the LE in non-compliance. Not so for Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, the United States and the Holy See, all of whom did display their consular flags at half-mast. The Nuncio justified this decision on grounds that they were "representatives of Powers neutral in the Habsburg question." Furthermore, he asserted: "I did not feel I could forget that the late Sovereign bore the title of 'Apostolic King'."[48]

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[44] Unknown, "König Karls Tod," *Pester Lloyd*. April 2, 1922, p. 1.
[45] Count Albert Apponyi, "König Karl IV," *Pester Lloyd*. April 2, 1922, p. 2 cited in NARA: 863.001K14/11, April 53, 1922, report no. 126 from *Chargé d'Affaires pro tem* Ulysses Grant-Smith (American Mission, Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[46] Count Albert Apponyi, "König Karl IV," *Pester Lloyd*. April 2, 1922, p. 2.
[47] Unknown, "Dopo la morte di Carlo d'Asburgo," *L'Osservatore Romano*. April 5, 1922, p. 1.
[48] VAA: Fodo: Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 57-60, April 5, 1922, letter entitled "Per la morte di Re Carlo IV" from Archbishop Lorenzo Schioppa (Apostolic Nunciature, Budapest) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

Before his death, Karl had previously warned of the dangers of abdicating and allowing an underage Otto to rule which would, in his words: "enable some clique which is in power today to continue to rule with the child, under their tutelage, brought up by the state, being morally destroyed."[49] The Vatican reported that "[t]he former Emperor left a meticulous will containing political clauses," one such clause being the regency of Empress Zita.[50] Within the Legitimist camp, this request was immediately and near-unanimously adhered to.[51] Unlike similar European Monarchist movements,[52] family members within the Habsburg house and their supporters, despite anticipatory speculation to the contrary, remained staunchly united. This created the situation of a rival Zita regency to Horthy's claimed exercise of office.

With the death of Karl atop the cold mountainous Atlantic exile of Madeira, the Monarchs, chancellors, presidents, and prime ministers of Europe faced a decision, how now to regard the Habsburg family? Zita was described by the Vatican press as an "august consort; heroic example of bride and mother."[53] Furthermore, the *L'Osservatore Romano* ran a front-page condemnation of the treatment of the Habsburg family at the hands of the Great Powers reading:

> "[T]o force a Widow and tender children who were subject to the lightning of war into a deportation would in truth be supremely ungenerous and at the same time cruelly grotesque!"[54]

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[49] TS 2180-2182 pre-December 2, 1919 Aide-mémoire from Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to Pope Benedict XV (Vatican City) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 545-47.

[50] Unknown, "Gli ultimi momenti – La morte," *L'Osservatore Romano*. April 3-4, 1922, p. 1; NARA: 863.001K14/13, January 12, 1923, report no. 132 Theodore Brentano (American Mission, Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

[51] VAA: Fodo Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 57-60, April 5, 1922, report entitled "Per la morte di Re Carlo IV" from Francesco Marchetti Selvaggiani (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[52] Such as the example of France where royalists were divided amongst the houses of Bourbon, Orléans, and Bonaparte,

[53] Unknown, "La morte di Carlo d'Asburgo," *L'Osservatore Romano*. April 3-4, 1922, p. 1

[54] Ibid.

Legitimists across Europe did their best to publish propaganda and lobby monarchs[55] regarding their duty to demonstrate solidarity and chivalric fortitude in intervening to make provision for Zita and her children's voyage to the European mainland. Despite the opposition of the Little Entente, the French government was receptive to "the Holy Father's warm appeal on behalf of the Habsburg Widow and her family" to be allowed to leave Madeira.[56] These efforts were aided by the Catholic monarchs of Belgium and Spain which joined forces with the Vatican to put pressure on the conference of Geneva.[57]

While bitter and mournful, proponents of the Habsburg cause could now make their arguments on humanitarian grounds rather than constitutional polemics. There was much rhetorical power in emphasising the need for mercy to be shown towards an apolitical widow and her grieving family. Otto had not been crowned, there was an argument in Hungarian law that the King Question had been conclusively resolved, for, if the 1717 Pragmatic Sanction had indeed been nullified —a point vigorously denied by Legitimists— the young Habsburg pretender had no standing to assume succession, that instead being a matter for the Magyar national assembly to decide. Karl's unexpected death reflected poorly on the Great Powers and this constitutional narrative put forward by Horthy and the Free-Elector faction of Hungarian politics did have the fortunate effect of softening the vindictive anti-Habsburg approach of Paris and London. This apparent shift of French thinking was a cause of scandal in Prague, where it was extrapolated as a mark of ambiguity regarding the French Position on the return of Habsburgs to Central Europe.

All eyes were now on a Madrid under relentless pressure to act in response to the sudden exigent circumstances. With the LE's claim of national security weakened, Spanish King Alfonso XIII was now prepared to work with the Pope "so that the family of the

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[55] AdR: NPA Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 182-189, April 15, 1922, Polizeidirektion Wien report entitled"Verteilung Monarchistischer Flugblätter" to Leopold Hennet (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).
[56] VAA: Fodo Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837. Ff. 64; VAA: 1. Pos V Sovrani; Principe Sgnior Gerogio di Sassonia communica visita al S.P., Fasc, 2, Ff. 132; VAA: 1. Pos V Sovrani; 1 Famglia Imperiale della Germania, Fasc, 6, Ff. 16.
[57] VAA: Fodo Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837. Ff. 71-72, April 15, 1922, letter from Belgian ambassador to Holy See concerning "les Enfants de l'Empreraur Charles de Hasbsburg."

former Emperor Karl may be assured the means necessary for his existence."[58] Soon after, Alfonso sent the ship "Infanta Isabel" to bring the Imperial family and small exile court under the leadership of the "heavily pregnant" Zita from Madeira to Cadiz,[59] and personally greeted the bereaved imperial family at the train station in Madrid.[60] The Spanish court were by no means unified on how best to regard their new guests. With simmering republican sentiment in Spain itself, there were numerous concerns regarding the use of official titles and the expense of lodgings, specifically whether the state treasury or royal purse should incur the cost. It was eventually decided that the grand El Pardo palace —built by 16th Century Spanish Habsburg, Charles V— as a residence would be most befitting the Habsburg family's status. The last of the Karl's children, Elisabeth would be born there 31st May 1922.[61]

Later in the summer, conscious of needing a more unostentatious solution —with the financial support of local nobility and other Austro-Hungarian emigres— the Habsburg moved to the Spanish Basque village of Lequeitio[62] and settled there for what was initially assumed to be on a permanent basis.[63] This location quickly became a site of quasi-pilgrimage, receiving guests who considered themselves loyal subjects of the Habsburg crown and admirers of the family's perceived pious sanctity. Stephan Baier and Eva Demmerle point to the location of Lequeitio, between the Catholic Marian apparition sites of Lourdes and Fatima, as a factor facilitating the frequency of visits, such as from future Hungarian Catholic primate, Cardinal Mindszenty.[64] This connection was apparent to contemporary Legitimists who would attribute to the "revival of the Hertenstein tradition" of hospitality at Lequeitio to the Marian devotion of Central European pilgrims.[65]

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[58] Unknown, "Dopo la morte di Carlo d'Asburgo," *L'Osservatore Romano*. April 5, 1922, p. 1. The *L'Osservatore Romano* here —after Karl's death—now prepared to comfortably use the term "former" Emperor without worry of arousing polemic rage within Political Catholicism.
[59] Stephan Baier and Eva Demmerle, *Otto von Habsburg: die Autorisierte Biografie* (Vienna: Amalthea-Signum-Verl., 2002), p. 67.
[60] Timothy Snyder, *The Red Prince: The Fall of a Dynasty and the Rise of Modern* Europe (London: Vintage, 2009), p. 149.
[61] Baron Zessner von Spitzenberg, *Otto von Österreich: seine Kindheit und Jugend, sein Bildungsgang* (Vienna: Verlag GSUR & Co., 1931), p. 33.
[62] Also known by its Basque name, Lekeitio.
[63] Baier and Demmerle, *Otto von Habsburg*, p. 67.
[64] Ibid., p. 67-68.
[65] Von Spitzenberg, *Otto von Österreich,* 1931, p. 41.

Influential Legitimist close to the Imperial family, Freiherr von Zessner, claims that hundreds of Austrians and Hungarians arrived there every year to "pay homage" to their rightful sovereign.[66]

One man's site of pilgrimage would prove to be another's site of intrigue. Authorities in Vienna and Budapest kept a watchful eye on the North-Atlantic Lequeitio.[67] In June 1926 a pro-Habsburg rally in Székesfehérvár Hungary featuring Legitimist member of the Magyar parliament, Count Josef Kazolyi, gave rise to speculation that the Count was sent by Zita to serve as an ambassador of the exile court to Budapest after his two-year residency at Lequeitio.[68] This development, in the assessment of the Austrian ambassador to Budapest, constituted "a completely new stage in the political attitude of the former ruling house" in expressing a desire to move past the events of October 1921. The new approach would be a diplomatic reset to rehabilitate the Habsburg name by laying the foundation for Otto's candidacy as king to a new generation of Magyar political elites.[69] The 1926 CSP Rudolf Ramek government[70] concluded that "it is particularly important to note that the 'non-aggressive' direction in Hungarian legitimism is also the one that particularly emphasises Hungarian national kingship" in an apparent temporary abandonment of supranational propaganda.[71]

Simultaneously, in response to the various waves of state-led anti-Habsburg appropriations, Zita moved fast to establish control of what few royal assets the family still

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[66] Ibid., p. 42.
[67] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 479-80, September 12, 1924 report ZL: 75/pol entitled: "Verstimmung in legitimistischen Kreisen" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Alfred Grünberger (Ministry for External Affairs, Vienna); AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 488-89, September 1, 1926, report ZL: 69/pol entitled: "König Karl Gedenkfeier in Tihany" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Rudolf Ramek (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).
[68] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 485-486, June 12, 1926, Austrian Foreign Ministry report Zl. 57/pol entitled: "Legitimistische Kundgebung in Stuhlweissenburg" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Rudolf Ramek (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).
[69] Ibid.
[70] Between the two non-consecutive Seipel chancellorships.
[71] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 485-486, June 12, 1926, Austrian Foreign Ministry report Zl. 57/pol entitled: "Legitimistische Kundgebung in Stuhlweissenburg" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Rudolf Ramek (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

had which could be classified as personal property.[72] Surrounding this effort, Legitimist devotional biographies from the late 1920s and early 1930s placed great importance on the poverty of the imperial family. In such works the "fortitude of this truly imperial woman" Zita was exalted for undergoing a poverty born out of principle which could have been alleviated at any point upon forfeiting the claims of the dynasty.[73] Catholic apologists for the Habsburg family sought to compare their flight into exile and forbearance of material hardship with that of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. In this Legitimist narrative, Otto was the pre-ordained saviour raised by his mother before coming of age and entering public life.

With Karl's untimely death, Otto's preparation for holding future office would have to be expedited. Zita was keen to raise her eldest son and other children as Austrians in the old supranational sense of the term. For the "former" Empress, who still held resolutely to her title, it was incumbent on her to ensure that Otto's education and spiritual formation would be ordered towards one end, Habsburg restoration as a vehicle for a supranational Catholic political order centred on a vertical delegation of sovereignty. Only with Otto's coronation first as Archduke of Austria or King of Hungary, and then Emperor, could the dynasty once more fulfil its duty to serve their people as saintly delegates of divine authority. Legitimist Christian Social member of the Hungarian parliament, Alexander Ernst would call for Otto's immediate return to Budapest after his father's death:

> "The crown on his head has been a crown of thorns. It is a terrible case, even from the point of Hungarian integrity, and there is nothing left for every Hungarian to do, but to insist, that Prince Otto be brought to Hungary and be educated here."[74]

In the age of modern national-democracy, a monarch was under more public scrutiny than ever before. Zita therefore understood the necessity of fostering the perceived relatability of the Habsburg family. To this end, she sought "to create a home-like educational

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[72] HNA: OL, P 0004/0632, Ff. 37, June 15, 1923, report 1352/1923 I. Z. 25-18, Record of the presentation of the power of attorney from President of the Hungarian Föudvernagy Court.
[73] Von Spitzenberg, *Otto von Österreich,* 1931, 38-39.
[74] Count Albert Apponyi, "König Karl IV," *Pester Lloyd.* April 2, 1922, p. 2 cited in NARA: 863.001K14/11, April 53, 1922, report no. 126 from *Chargé d'Affaires pro tem* Ulysses Grant-Smith (American Mission, Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

institution with native teachers" to prepare the children for their future responsibilities.[75] Many of the families closest supporters travelled to Spain to help "educate the exiles in the spirit of Emperor Karl for their [Danubian] homelands" through various native languages.[76] Propaganda published by Legitimists in Austria regularly featured pictures of the teenage schoolboy studying the social geography of his peoples. In turn –former K.u.K. officer and proponent of populist Legitimism– colonel Gustav Wolff, in his publication *Schwearz-Gelb* ensured that the slightest of family news was transmitted from Lequeitio to Legitimists in Vienna such as Archduke Felix's appendectomy and the associated hospital visit made by the King and Queen of Spain.[77] However, even mainstream publications likewise habitually ran family news of the Habsburgs in exile through a neutral or sympathetic lens.[78]

Like Karl, Otto received moral and academic instruction from Catholic priests in the Benedictine tradition, with the Hungarian Archabbey of Pannonhalma providing no fewer than five chaplain tutors throughout the years.[79] The uncrowned Emperor-King therefore developed proficiency in German, French, Hungarian, Croatian, English, and Spanish.[80] Freiherr von Zessner wrote with satisfaction to his Legitimist audience that in the family schoolroom there was "a large orographic map of the lands of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy" and "the same crucifix that once hung in Emperor Karl's schoolroom when he was still an archduke attending secondary school."[81] Literature designed for consumption by Legitimists[82] as well as the international press reports were keen to attach images of Otto in Tyrolean and Magyar dress[83] to their speculation of Otto's imminent return to either Vienna or Budapest. Gestures like these served to infuriate

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[75] Von Spitzenberg, *Otto von Österreich,* 1931, p. 34.
[76] Ibid., p. 38.
[77] Unknown, "Hof- und Personal- Nachrichten: Nachtrichten aus Lequeitio," *Schwarz-Gelb*. October 9, 1926, p. 1.
[78] Unknown, "Neuste, in Spanien gemachte Aufnahmen," *Wiener Bilder*. October 28, 1923, p. 4.
[79] Von Spitzenberg, *Otto von Österreich,* 1931, p. 39-40.
[80] Ibid., p. 48 & 53.
[81] Ibid., p. 48-49.
[82] Karl Von Werkmann, *Otto Von Habsburg Ein Ungelöstes Europäisches Problem* (Vienna: Ralph A. Höger-Verlag, 1932), p. 224-25.
[83] Shelton Scholefield, "Hapsburg or Hitler?" *Yorkshire Observer* (Bradford). October 19, 1936; Unknown, "Herstel der monarchie in Oosterrijk?: Otto van Habsburg will naar Weenen vliegen," *Limburger Koerier* (Maastricht). April 24, 1936; Unknown, "Oesterreich am Vorabend der Restauration?" *Die Weltwoche* (Zürich). May 1, 1936.

Social Democrats in Austria, Magyar Nationalists in Hungary, Pan-Slav idealists in Belgrade, and Czech revolutionaries in Bohemia. They gave fuel to anti-Habsburg paranoia and bestowed a degree of self-justification to authors of punitive legislation seeking to thwart the Imperial family's return, even as private citizens.

Otto and Zita were granted an audience with King Alfonso XIII and Queen Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg on 7th May 1923. Members of the small Habsburg court emphasised Otto's precocious temperament and extensive knowledge of the most remote regions of the former Dual-Monarchy and reported Alfonso's parting words to Otto: "We want to make a good imperial and royal officer out of you!" and to "'just study hard!'"[84] Alfonso was painted by the Legitimists as a true ally and even an uncle-like father substitute, playing children's games with the Habsburg heirs and speaking fluent German. His support would go so far as making prominent public appearances with the Habsburg pretender and giving him pride of place at El Prado military parades. This was inevitably interpreted by the exile court as "thereby recognising him [Otto] as a sovereign before the world."[85] Wanting to encourage a similar sense of popular devotion in the Habsburg hereditary lands, Legitimists highlighted how —much to the satisfaction of the small exile court— from the highest of Spanish officials to the average private person, Otto was consistently addressed in Spanish as "Emperador" with whomever he met.[86]

[84] Von Spitzenberg, *Otto von Österreich,* 1931, p. 35-36.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., p. 45.

3.2 Legitimism as out outside force

In the immediate aftermath of Karl's banishment to Madeira, Hungarian domestic politics saw a profound restructuring. Legitimists were no longer content to patiently work within the parameters set forth by a Horthy government which spared no haste in consolidating power. Count Julius Andrássy—of whom the US suspected "has secretly hoped that by hook or crook, the time might come when he himself might sit in the Governor's chair" and was arrested for treason for his part in Karl October return to Budapest— [1] continued his Legitimist lobbying, declaring in his resignation address as leader of the Christian National Union[2] party:

> "One could have no confidence in a Government which declared on Friday, 'We have a crowned King,' but on Saturday or Sunday, fired on this same King."[3]

Meanwhile in Austria, as early as March 1921, with Karl's deportation back to Switzerland after the Easter Crisis, the CSP would see an inducement to radicalisation. The collaboration of the CSP Mayr government in Karl's humiliation was the crossing of a red line for the opposing Vienna faction of the party. Otto Bauer would describe how once this group's "monarchistic traditions and feelings had been sorely wounded," they "commenced to intrigue against the Christian [Social] federal Government" of Mayr.[4] This likewise spelt the end of bipartisanship between the SPÖ and CSP. Mayr would resign and remove himself from politics and be replaced with the much more anti-Socialist —and technically non-partisan— Schober around which CSP and Pan-Germans could rally. New Conservative leadership in the coming years would become increasingly sympathetic to Karl and his legacy.

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[1] NARA: 864.00/493, January 9, 1922, report no. 22 from *Chargé d'Affaires pro tem* Ulysses Grant-Smith (American Mission, Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[2] The second largest party in parliament with 82 of 219 seats.
[3] NARA: 864.00/493, January 9, 1922, report no. 22 from *Chargé d'Affaires pro tem* Ulysses Grant-Smith (American Mission, Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[4] Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, p. 229.

The same constitutional compromise which preserved the autonomy of the crownlands as federal states also granted self-governance to the city of Vienna on a co-equal status. This involved the partition of the old imperial city —now emerging as the aspirational worker's paradise of Red Vienna— from the still conservative historic crownland of Lower-Austria. The supranational-leaning former Imperial elite would now —without the electoral support of the remainder of Lower-Austria— have to forfeit control of city to Austromarxism.[5] Nonetheless, as a minority within the city, Legitimists were keen to have their voices heard.

The Brennan theory of total Legitimist marginalisation and initial defeatist 4th April 1922 appraisal of Nuncio to Vienna Archbishop Francesco Marchetti Selvaggiani[6] soon find their refutation in the events of the following week surrounding a requiem Mass and subsequent pro-Habsburg political demonstration. Grant-Smith's counterpart in Vienna, Robert W. Heingartner, would write in the wake of Karl's death:

> "The wish for a strong government which is understood in Austria as a monarchy is spreading among classes of the population who formally supported the Republic. Just how large this class of disappointed republicans is, cannot be estimated."[7]

Nonetheless, while the unexpected perceived martyrdom of the Habsburg emperor in exile had engendered much sympathy and goodwill for the Legitimist cause in Austria, there was now no successor who could rule in his own right. Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna, Friedrich Gustav Piffl, was designated to officiate over a 6th April requiem Mass at St. Stephen's Cathedral.[8] Two days before the event, Nuncio to Austria, Archbishop

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[5] Marginal voices such as Col. Gustav Wolff as leader of the KtVp would not cease from relentlessly demanding the "nationalisation of the municipality" and for "civil servants to take an oath which excludes any strike action on their part; Gustav Wolff, "Entwurf des neuen Programmes der Kaisertreuen Volkspartei (S.G.L.)," *Schwarz-Gelb*. August 26, 1926, p. 1; Theo Zasche, "Wiens Abschied von Niederösterreich," *Reichspost*. January 9, 1922, p. 1; Karl Paumgartten, "Wiens Abschied von Niederösterreich," *Reichspost*. January 9, 1922, p. 1.

[6] Brennan, "Sinner, Saint—or Cipher?," p. 245; VAA: Fodo Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 53, April 4, 1922, letter entitled "Morte dell'ex-imperatore" from Francesco Marchetti Selvaggiani (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[7] NARA: 863.00/461, April 15, 1922, report "A Habsburg Demonstration in Vienna" from consul Robert W. Heingartner (Vienna) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

[8] VAA: Fodo Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 53, April 4, 1922, letter entitled "Morte dell'ex-imperatore" from Francesco Marchetti Selvaggiani (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

Francesco Marchetti Selvaggiani, painted the foreboding picture of a city characterised by an apathetic middle-ground and racialised partisans:

> "The Viennese monarchist circles try to mobilise, but they are not supported: the population, by nature indifferent and carefree, squeezed as it is by misery, does not react; the socialists let them do as they please, but are ready to take to the streets at the first serious sign."[9]

In response to Karl's death in exile, Legitimists mobilised to achieve the "first monarchist demonstration which Vienna has witnessed wince the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy." US consul Robert W. Heingartner attributed the lack of previous Legitimist gatherings to Bolshevik-style intimidation on the part of the Vienna November 1918 revolutionaries.[10]

This public rally estimated to be approximately ten-thousands persons strong came as an astonishment to the political establishment and resulted in bitter scandal between an increasingly divergent CSP and SPÖ. Indicative of the interconnectivity of Catholic devotional practice and Legitimist political activism, the scale of the public demonstration —originally conceived as an "unpolitical religious ceremony"— was only possible as a result of it organically developing from the 6th April St. Stephan's requiem mass:

> "Almost spontaneously the crowd began to sing the Kaiser hymn. All hats were removed and many in the crowd were moved to tears. The cry of 'long live Kaiser Otto' (the eldest son of ex-Emperor Charles) was answered with long enthusiastic cheers."[11]

Vienna was a divided city of parallel societies. There existed the antagonistically assurgent socialist Red Vienna and then the smaller –more supercilious– Black-Yellow Imperial Vienna. A direct violent confrontation was narrowly avoided when a crowd of the latter marched to parliament and demanded that flags be lowered to half-mast and a police force opposed them. CSP parliamentarian and president of the National Council, Dr. Richard Weiskirchner, offered himself as mediator and informed the crowd that the SPÖ and Pan-

[9] VAA: Fodo Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 53, April 5, 1922, letter entitled "Morte dell'ex-imperatore" from Francesco Marchetti Selvaggiani (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[10] NARA: 863.00/461, April 15, 1922, report "A Habsburg Demonstration in Vienna" from consul Robert W. Heingartner (Vienna) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[11] Ibid.

Germans (together representing the majority of parliamentarians) would not allow state-endorsed mourning for the deceased Emperor. The crowd then scattered, not fearing a response from the sympathetic police, but the fear that SPÖ activists "were preparing to stop work in order to come and break up the demonstration."[12] Heingartner recounts to Washington how Heldenplatz was the site of "a great Habsburg oration, but probably for the last time while the socialists have the upper hand for they will see to it that such an anti-republican spectacle is not repeated."[13] The next day's April 7th 1922 sitting of parliament saw a bitter confrontation between SPÖ ideologues and the government ministers who attended the requiem Mass which served as the prelude to the Legitimist demonstration. Responding to SPÖ allegations that he had participated in the undermining of the Republic, chancellor Schober responded to his detractors declaring from the floor of parliament: "Even before a fallen opponent, one lowers one's sword out of reverence for the majesty of death!"[14]

Particularly disturbing for the SPÖ revolutionary vanguard, was the fact that the cathedral event featured "for the first time since the war, many former military officers in full gala Imperial uniforms and with all their decorations."[15] Historians Alfred Pfoser & Andreas Weigl note of the scandal, that by their "nostalgic loyalty to the emperor," those present at St. Stephen's cathedral representing "the old pillars of the monarchy —the army, bureaucracy and Church— had demonstrated their unreliability" to defend the Austrian First Republic.[16] Thus, the ruling CSP leadership attending the requiem mass as private persons —and not in their public capacity—were accused of being merely prepared to "wear a republican mask" when expedient.[17] The pro-Habsburg *Reichspost* admonished the SPÖ as a cohort which "repeatedly mocks good manners in its behaviour and defiles everything that is sacred to others with its wickedness."[18] While for conservatives the

[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Unknown, "Stimme des Volkes" *Reichspost.* April 7, 1922, p. 1.
[15] NARA: 863.00/461, April 15, 1922, report "A Habsburg Demonstration in Vienna" from consul Robert W. Heingartner (Vienna) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[16] Pfoser and Weigl, *Die Erste Stunde Null. Gründungsjahre der österreichischen Republik*, p. 173.
[17] NARA: 863.00/461, April 15, 1922, report "A Habsburg Demonstration in Vienna" from consul Robert W. Heingartner (Vienna) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[18] Unknown, "Stimme des Volkes," *Reichspost.* April 7, 1922, p. 1.

event was not a political rally "but rather the testimony of an entire nation to Austrian thinking,"[19] the rival SPÖ-affiliated *Arbeiter Zeitung* retorted:

> "Firstly, the ministers can pray for the soul of the deceased in the privacy of their own rooms […] duty to the republic comes before all reverence, a duty that the highest official must not neglect for a moment under any circumstances."[20]

In the eyes of the SPÖ, public displays of Catholic faith —especially surrounding persons of political significance— were thus implicitly imbued with a fascistic character and civic adherence to republic ethics superseded traditional religious conscience. The events of that week were used by the SPÖ —keen to forward the objective of a new Red Vienna— as a pretext to rename a vast array of public institutions traditionally associated with the Imperial family's philanthropic legacy such as Children's hospitals, schools, and infrastructure projects.[21]

Fearing further destabilisation in Vienna, the Pope's personal envoy in Austria, Nuncio Selvaggiani, thought it "best not to give too much significance" to the events of that week, arguing that "the great majority of the country is still for the republic."[22] Presented with both secularist resistance and initial scepticism from high-ranking clergy, the CSP throughout the 1920s would not back down from attributing to their political struggle a supernatural dimension. Nevertheless, Political Catholicism —and with it the Habsburg Legitimist cause— would see an injection of energy with the publication of Pope Pius XI's papal encyclical *Quas Primas* in December 1925 promoting the "Kingship of Christ" as a remedy to the divisions emerging from the recent world war. Legitimists were keen to link this momentum within Catholic Social teaching to their narrative of Karl's recent saintly paternal concern for the material and spiritual welfare of his peoples. This was also be seen in the *Reichspost's* previous highlighting of the parallel between Karl's death and that of Jesus, specifically, choosing to forgive his persecutors and

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[19] Ibid.
[20] Unknown, "Die Regierung bei der monarchistischen Demonstration," *Arbeiter Zeitung*. April 7, p. 1.
[21] Christopher Brennan. "Remembering and Forgetting the Habsburg Monarchy in the First Austrian Republic" in Ulrike Harmat (eds.) *Das Erbe der Habsburgermonarchie in den Nachfolgestaaten Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918 Brüche und Kontinuitäten* (Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 2025), p. 107-8.
[22] VAA: Fodo: Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 54, April 19. 1922, report entitled "della morte dell'ex-Imperatore" from Francesco Marchetti Selvaggiani (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

"offering up his suffering and pain for his people."[23] While obviously primarily a product of genuine religious conviction, establishing Karl as a saint for the universal Church would undoubtedly have the secondary effect of rallying middle-ground Catholic support for the Legitimist cause. With the 1919 anti-Habsburg laws still in effect, Zita immediately made it known publicly that the Imperial family wished to have Karl's heart to be brought to Austria for internment.[24] Such a shrine —wherever it would be located— would soon become a pilgrimage site for Legitimists.[25] These efforts were therefore impeded by organizational and political complications.[26]

Karl's last words were reported to be "Lord, thy will be done! Into your hands I place my life, that of my spouse that of my children. Mine I offer as a sacrifice for my people."[27] While alien to modern-day ears and contemporary sensibilities of opponents to Legitimism, such a pious account, relayed from the witnesses at his deathbed is demonstrative of Karl's worldview and temperament. Upon receiving news of Karl's death, the Vatican reacted with genuine sorrow. Its press arm, the *L'Osservatore Romano*, reported how the emperor had endured a fate of betrayal, defeat and exile, "shipwrecked in a bloody storm in which the life of one of the most powerful Empires was submerged."[28] Karl was likewise absolved as a ruler from any wrong-doing and exalted as a martyr by the Vatican press editorial which declared that:

> "This young Sovereign disappeared from the still shaken scene of the world, a victim indeed […] free from their responsibility […] the history of the war, though unwritten as yet, though for too many parts ignored, will one day tell exactly what his work in favour of peace was."[29]

The official narrative of Karl was of a faithful son of the Church seen as having allowed his Catholic "ancestral faith which He nourished alive and deep, professed without human

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[23] Unknown, "Stimme des Volkes," *Reichspost.* April 7, 1922, p. 1.
[24] Unknown, "Ein Testament des Exkaisers," *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, April 7, 1922, p. 1.
[25] Berthold Dietrich, "Wie Habsburg begraben werden," *Schwarz-Gelb*. October 25, 1926, p. 1.
[26] Karl's heart —along with that of Zita— now rests at the Benedictine monastery, Kloster Muri, Switzerland, since 1971 and 1989 respectively.
[27] Unknown, "Gli ultimi momenti – La morte," *L'Osservatore Romano*. April 3-4, 1922, p. 1.
[28] Unknown, "La morte di Carlo d'Asburgo," *L'Osservatore Romano*. April 3-4, 1922, p. 1.
[29] Ibid.

respect, and in which he always trusted in the gravest of hours" to guide him in all matters, including painful death in exile.[30]

The *Kaiser-Karl-Gebetsliga* had been founded in1925 to promote the emperor's cause for canonisation[31] and played a central role in the developing hagiographical martyrology of the former Emperor. In a spiritual sense, to Karl's supporters, he could do far more to influence the domestic politics of Austria and Hungary after his death than he ever could from his North-Atlantic exile in Madeira. Such efforts were even driven by mainstream political figures such as Wilhelm Miklas, a recent declared opponent to both the republican form of state and Anschluss with Germany. In April 1923, on the one-year anniversary of Karl's death, Miklas, a devote Catholic, petitioned Cardinal Piffl in his capacity of Archbishop of Vienna to open the cause of the former Emperor's canonisation."[32]

However, appeals to supernatural forces were not exclusive to Legitimists. The Magyar Free-Elector camp in Hungary enraged Legitimists with remarks from Protestant congregation leader and politician, Stephan J. Kovacs who wrote of the Habsburg Question in the wake of Karl's death:

> "It is very difficult to give my opinion. As a man and as a Minister (clergyman). I view this tragedy with the utmost sympathy. But one thing is certain, that this way the difficult problem has been solved by God Himself."[33]

The rights of the crown of St. Stephen were inferred by coronation. Observers universally noted that no more could Legitimists point to the oaths taken to a Habsburg king directly. Adopting the Free-Elector logic of men like Stephan J. Kovacs, the 2nd April declaration of Hungarian Legitimists rallying behind Otto calling for the Imperial family's immediate return[34] was rapidly censored by the Horthy regime with "newspaper editors having received official notice not to publish the proclamation itself, under penalty of confiscation

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[30] Ibid.
[31] Pfoser and Weigl, *Die Erste Stunde Null,* p. 173.
[32] Brennan, "Reforming Austria-Hungary," p. 10.
[33] NARA: 863.001K14/11, April 3, 1922, report no. 126 from *Chargé d'Affaires pro tem* Ulysses Grant-Smith (American Mission, Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[34] NARA: 863.001K14/12, April 6, 1922, report no. 130 from *Chargé d'Affaires pro tem* Ulysses Grant-Smith (American Mission, Budapest) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.)

of the newspapers that failed to comply with this prohibition."[35] The State Attorney, on account of the document being deemed contra to the recent 1921 dethronement law, "ordered the police to confiscate the proclamation and stop the distribution" which had been "started by a number of young men, wearing students' caps." Ominous for the future of Legitimism in Hungary, it was warned that "according to paragraph #173 of the Criminal Code, it is sedition to question or to attack a law in force."[36]

While Stephan J. Kovacs could claim the Habsburg Question in Hungary resolved, historian Tadeusz Kopyś notes how the logic of the crown of St. Stephen was the core "justification of territorial revision."[37] It was universally recognised that the "Tragedy of Trianon" necessitated a resolution to the King Question. Nonetheless, once news broke of Karl's death, Austrian embassy officials in Budapest reported back their assessment to Vienna:

> "The Magyars' mystical belief in the sanctity of the Crown of St. Stephen and its radiance on the wearer of the crown, […] [Karl's] death has now unexpectedly solved this legal and psychological problem."[38]

This new paradigm gave Horthy and his supporters an almost constitutional free hand, solidifying his claim to hold the office of Regent. Nonetheless, "new questions arise for which the solution will be more difficult."[39] One such question was Zita's rival claim to regency in the name of Otto as the uncrowned heir-apparent. Another was whether it was even constitutional to deliberately maintain a permanent *sede vacante* office of King.

The western-Hungarian Benedictine monastery of Tihany —which had been a site of initial exile of the Imperial couple before their exile to Madeira after the failed March

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[35] VAA: Fodo Perido IV [Pontificato di Pio XI (1922-1939)], Austria- Ungheria, IV Pos, 837, Ff. 57-60, April 5, 1922, letter entitled "Per la morte di Re Carlo IV" from Archbishop Lorenzo Schioppa (Apostolic Nunciature, Budapest) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[36] NARA: 863.001K14/12, April 6, 1922, report no. 130 from *Chargé d'Affaires pro tem* Ulysses Grant-Smith (American Mission, Budapest) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[37] Tadeusz Kopyś, "The Crown of St. Stephen as a Symbol of Legal Continuity and Hungarian Constitutionalism (Historical Background)," *Cracow Studies of Constitutional & Legal History* 15, no. 3 (July 2022): p. 382.
[38] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 455-458, April 5, 1922, report ZL: 93/pol entitled: "Innere Lage: Tod des Exkönigs und das Bombenattentat gegen die Demokraten" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Leopold Hennet (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).
[39] Ibid.

on Budapest— saw the August 1926 "unveiling of a memorial plaque" commemorating the fate of the deceased King. Despite "elaborate preparations" dedicated towards the event; it was noted that attendance "was rather disappointing." Austrian officials observing carefully the development of Legitimism across the border in Hungary, found such a failure "remarkable" on account of the once recent strength of the movement there.[40] Having shown shrewd judgement in playing the part of loyal regent torn between duty to nation and king, Horthy had won a not to be underestimated political victory. This success had entrenched his person —supplanting Karl— as the father of the nation. Three weeks after Karl's death it was theorised by Austrian officials that those opportunistic supporters of the Legitimist cause in Hungary who had hope to gain advancement when restoration occurred where now disillusioned at Otto having no hope of being crowned in the coming years.[41] Horthy with his allies could now consolidate their position and establish a Free-Elector leaning political establishment under the guise of unifying the nation.

Even with domestic triumph, Horthy would assess the geopolitical situation of Hungary, privately remarking in his notes:

> "It is a mistake to believe that the Little Entente has been formed for defence. No! It has been formed to partition us among themselves."[42]

The Austrian ambassador in Budapest claimed to have personally received information from a confidential informant serving as a cabinet minister that the pro-Habsburg element of Hungarian politics was in crisis. This minister, portrayed himself as genuine Legitimist, informed the Austrians that because "the actual Legitimist opposition is threatening to fall apart," the movement had entered into "negotiations which are naturally being conducted in strict secrecy so as not to arouse the suspicions of the Little and Grand Entente."[43] By 1926 Count Johann Zichy –as leader of pro-government, Legitimist, Christian Social

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[40] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 488-89, September 1, 1926, report ZL: 69/pol entitled: "König Karl Gedenkfeier in Tihany" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Rudolf Ramek (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

[41] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 459-461, April 22, 1922, report ZL: 107/pol entitled: "Königsfrage" from Austrian Embassy in Budapest to Leopold Hennet (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

[42] March 1928 "notes of Miklós Horthy on the strategic situation of the country on the basis of the memorandum by Colonel Károly Mayer-Csejkovits" found in Miklós Horthy. *The Confidential Papers of Admiral Horthy* (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1965), p. 48-49.

[43] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 459-461, April 22, 1922, report ZL: 107/pol entitled: "Königsfrage" from Austrian Embassy in Budapest to Leopold Hennet (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

Economic Party– was even reported as having "had become increasingly close" to Prime Minister Bethlen.[44] Count Albin Schager von Eckartsau would write to Count Otto Welserheimb on March 14th, 1925:

> "My opinion of H.[orthy] is firm; I am perfectly convinced that he is unwaveringly legitimist-minded and in fact endeavours to help the idea of legitimism to victory. Whether or not he employs the proper means, and whether or not he proceeds with adequate resolution, may be questioned."[45]

Furthermore, Legitimist Member of Parliament Count Josef Karolyi —having returned from an almost two-year residence in Lequeitio— spoke to a June 1926 pro-Habsburg rally in Székesfehérvár[46] southwest of Budapest. Viewing him as an emissary of Lequeitio, Austrian embassy officials pointed to "a completely new stage in the political attitude of our former dynasty" demonstrated in Karolyi's remarks.[47] Of particular note for observers was how the high-ranking Legitimist "expressed the wish to spread the veil of forgetting over the events of Budaörs"[48] and to "renounce all aggression" as a means to achieve Otto's coronation.[49]

This was reinforced two months later in a another political speech to an audience of fellow-Legitimists in which Count Apponyi "expressed his confidence in the government's attitude and unequivocally opposed any putschist policy."[50] Working with the parameters set by Horthy-ism, Apponyi emphasised that while his brother-Legitimists could exercise their "individual judgement" to view the Government's postponement of the Habsburg

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[44] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 488-89, September 1, 1926, report ZL: 69/pol entitled: "König Karl Gedenkfeier in Tihany" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Rudolf Ramek (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

[45] March 14, 1925, letter from Count Albin Schager von Eckartsau to Count Otto Welserheimb found in Miklós Horthy, *The Confidential Papers of Admiral Horthy* (Budapest: Corvina Press, 1965), p. 36-39.

[46] Referred to with the German name "Stuhlweissenburg" in Austrian reports.

[47] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 485-486, June 12, 1926, Austrian Foreign Ministry report Zl. 57/pol entitled: "Legitimistische Kundgebung in Stuhlweissenburg" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Rudolf Ramek (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

[48] The site of Magyar Nationalist student attack on Habsburg train convoy to Budapest in October 1921.

[49] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 485-486, June 12, 1926, Austrian Foreign Ministry report Zl. 57/pol entitled: "Legitimistische Kundgebung in Stuhlweissenburg" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Rudolf Ramek (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

[50] AdR: NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, ff. 490-92, Septemeber, 15, 1926, report ZL: 71/pol entitled: "Legitimistische Kubdgebung in Steinamanger" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Rudolf Ramek (Federal Chancellery, Vienna).

Question "with trust or suspicion," nonetheless, for Apponyi the civil liberties afforded Legitimists "was confidence-inspiring."[51] Operating in this Peronist manner, Horthy could hope to pacify public expression of pro-Otto sentiment by suspending definitive judgement on the King Question, and in doing so not provoke the LE until the regional balance of power had shifted in Budapest's favour. By June 1926 Czechoslovak embassy officials in Budapest were in contact with their Austrian counterparts pertaining to concerns that a "special envoy from the Italian government who was in the country for the express purpose of uniting and reconciling the Hungarian legitimists with each other and with the government."[52] This concentrated effort on the part of Italian diplomacy was in no doubt precipitated by Palazzo Venezia's perception of a mutilated victory settlement in the recent World War, now wanting a rejuvenated –and domestically unified– Hungary to challenge her Adriatic rival, Yugoslavia.

Despite a mid-1920s deliberate shift to align Legitimism with a Horthy agenda which stressed "national kingship,"[53] there would, nonetheless, be clear limits on anti-Supranationalist rhetoric within the Legitimists movement. It was orthodox Habsburg doctrine that coronation in Budapest was a stepping-stone to the same in Austria. The heterodox advocacy of an exclusively Magyar kingship as a definitive endpoint was harshly punished with excommunication from the movement. The University of California Press journal, *Current History*, published a 1928 article by Emil Lengyel theorising Count Albin Schager von Eckartsau to be the "spokesman of the liberal faction of Austrian legitimism […] the most trusted adviser of the late Emperor Karl." In their assessment he presented the argument that "Lequeitio has to choose between two alternatives —if they want Austria, they have to renounce their rights to Hungary or vice versa." Advocating for such a strategy to the supranational-minded and constitutionally confident Zita and Otto, Lengyel wrote "for his heresy Herr Schager has incurred the disfavor of Lequeitio and is treated as if he were an out-cast."[54]

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[51] Ibid.
[52] Erdberg AdR NPA 352, Ungarn 2/11, Ff. 486-487, June 23, 1926, report ZL: 58/pol entitled: "Italien und der Legitimismus" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to to Rudolf Ramek (Federal Chancellery, Vienna).
[53] Ibid.
[54] Emil Lengyel, "Ex-Empress Zita's Plans to Restore Habsburg Monarchy," Current History (1916-1940) 28, no. 3 (1928): p. 388.

Going into the mid-1920s, the exile court in Lequeitio —under Zita's regency— had established a tight hold on Austrian and Hungarian Legitimism. Allegations abounded that Seipel was acting as a covert Habsburg agent at the heart of political power, being a de facto regent awaiting Otto's coming of age. Historian McGregor-Bulloch notes how contemporaries like Ernst Karl Winter saw Seipel's attitude towards union with Germany —even before a NS rise to power— as much more half-hearted than his fellow parliamentarians.[55] Furthermore, shying away from the term "Republic," Ignaz Seipel as chancellor would refer to the State —who's government he led— as the Austrian "Fatherland" and would deploy rhetoric which would "reflect a desire for the restoration of a central European empire in which Austrians would play a leading role."[56] Nonetheless, the enigmatic chancellor did not dare openly invoke the name "Habsburg" in this effort.

[55] Jamie Andrew McGregor-Bulloch, "*The Promotion of an Austrian Identity 1918-1938*" (PhD thesis, University College London, United Kingdom, 2002), p. 69.
[56] McGregor-Bulloch, "*The Promotion of an Austrian Identity 1918-1938,*" p. 71.

3.3: Catholic Reconciliation Movement

Pope Benedict XV's December 1918 Papal encyclical *Quod iam diu* calling for public prayer for a negotiated settlement based on a "true peace founded on the Christian principles of justice" and reminded Catholics that "the support of order and civil progress is a duty of conscience."[1] Almost two years later, in May 1920, the Holy Father issued a new encyclical, *Pacem Dei Munus Pulcherrimum*, urging "all mankind, to clear their hearts of bitterness, and give place to mutual love and concord."[2] Pointing to Man's common divine filiation[3] and need to emulate Christ, Benedict XV proscribed a formula for Catholic political action:

> "[A]bstaining not only from false and groundless accusations but also from all intemperance and bitterness of language, all of which is contrary to the law of Christ."[4]

The Pope —still a "prisoner behind the walls" of the Vatican refusing to recognise the legitimacy of the Kingdom of Italy's sovereignty over the Papal States— urged that the "concord between civilised nations" would be forwarded by the extension of hospitality and dialogue between the heads of state and princes of Europe with one another. Nonetheless, holding firmly to principle, Benedict XV clarified that the application of such a policy applied to Rome "must not be interpreted as a tacit renunciation of its sacrosanct rights by the Apostolic See, as it is acquiesced in the unlawful situation in which it is placed."[5]

Ignaz Seipel and Heinrich Lammasch —under Karl's direction— had unsuccessfully attempted to get "Catholics from all over the world, whether friend or foe," to gather in Zurich for a January 1918 conference of the International Union of Catholic Parliamentarians and Politicians to seek an honourable peace to the raging war. This effort

[1] Benedict XV, *Quod iam diu*, December 1, 1918.
[2] Benedict XV, *Pacem Dei munus pulcherrimum*, May 23, 1920.
[3] Otto Schilling, *Das Völkerrecht nach Thomas von Aquin* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1919), p. 38.
[4] Benedict XV, *Pacem Dei munus pulcherrimum*, May 23, 1920.
[5] Ibid.

was limited by a lack of Entente collaboration, confined to participation by Central Powers and neutral states.[6] Now with the tone of post-war peace treaties after having taken shape by 1920, the Pope once more proscribed:

> "It is much to be desired, Venerable Brethren, that all States, putting aside mutual suspicion, should unite in one league, or rather a sort of family of peoples, calculated both to maintain their own independence and safeguard the order of human society."[7]

The supranational-minded on the Political Right of Austria —Legitimists chief amongst them— would respond to this formula of the Holy Father for a restoration of an idealised Christian charity.

Disillusioned with his former superior, Robert Lansing would write in 1921 about his role in the re-sharping of Europe –specifically the treatment of Rump-Austria: "There could hardly be a more open repudiation of the alleged right of 'self-determination'."[8] Lansing additionally published Wilson's original January 10th, 1919, draft for the LON in which the American president expounded:

> "As successor to the Empires, the League of Nations is empowered, directly and without right of delegation, to watch over the relations inter se of all new independent States […] with a view to the maintenance of settled order and the general peace."[9]

While urging international dialogue and a platform for the mediation of geopolitical disputes, Papal teaching in this regard was not a directive requiring endorsement of the LON. In truth, the logic of a "family of peoples" existing with subsidiarity under the umbrella of a unifying political order was certainly not alien to Habsburg ideals. Chancellor Seipel's proposed notion of Austrian-ness as a "sub-national identity" of German-ness is assessed by historian Jamie Andrew McGregor-Bulloch as a "construct

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[6] AOS: Tom. II, Index 694: Karl von Habsburg's undated (post-war) reflections January to April 1918 found in Elisabeth Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?: Band 2: Politische Dokumente zu Kaiser und König Karl I. (IV.) aus internationalen Archiven* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2004), p. 328.
[7] Benedict XV, *Pacem Dei munus pulcherrimum*, May 23, 1920.
[8] Robert Lansing, *The Peace Negotiations: A Personal Narrative* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), p. 99.
[9] Ibid., p. 293.

[which] draws heavily, if not exclusively, on the Habsburg past."[10] Seipel, while opposing the Anschluss, by no means saw an independent Rump-Austria as a preferable alternative. Speaking before the League of Nations in 1922, he lamented to the international community that Austria had been orchestrated to fail[11] and the solution resided in supernational solutions, the ideal being a federation of states along the basin of the Danube River.

From even before Karl's death, regional powers within and adjacent to Central Europe understood the supranational ambition of the Legitimist movement and held little hope for the viability of little Rump-Austria. One Italian newspaper declaring in February 1922:

> "The necessity of this monarchical resurrection in the heart of Europe will be demonstrated more and more by the growing ruin of the two states [centred on Vienna and Budapest] in question and the relative discontent of the tortured peoples."[12]

Nonetheless, supranational collaboration was not the exclusive domain of either Habsburg Legitimist or the broader Monarchist movement. The broader Catholic peace movement was a driving force of interwar reconciliation in which the Legitimists movement found warm reception amongst allies on the anti-Socialist Catholic Right.

The horrors and animosity of the First World War lingered well into the 1920s. This descent into nationalistic grievance culture also, however, ran concurrent to opposite supranational efforts to find pathways of peace and reconciliation to heal the fraternal wounds suffered by the community of nations. The League of Nations (LON) –as the product of Woodrow Wilson's idealistic vision of international politics– gave itself the lofty task of never allowing another total war again to ravage the Old World and now needed a city to host its institutional headquarters. Vienna as a cosmopolitan world city –

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[10] Jamie Andrew McGregor-Bulloch, "*The Promotion of an Austrian Identity 1918-1938*" (PhD thesis, University College London, United Kingdom, 2002), p. 71.
[11] Ibid., p. 57.
[12] AdR: NPA Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 172-73, February 24, 1922, report entitled "Artikel der ‚Sera' über monarchistische Restaurationspläne" from Austrian Consulate (Milan) to Leopold Hennet (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

once at the head of the second largest Empire in Europe– at the heart of the continent, bridging North and South, in addition to East and West, was the epicentre of a series of international summits, conferences and gatherings throughout the 1920s. Due to her size, location and historic reputation, Vienna was considered by "newspapers of the democratic left" as a prime candidate for the headquarters of the LON. The next best candidate, and ultimate location selected, Geneva, was seen in February 1928 by Whyte Williams of the *New York Time*s as a less desirable option "because it is too small, it is not a world centre, it does not have sufficient resources of social, artistic, scientific life to satisfy the bureaucracy that is ever increasing in number and influence."[13]

The journalist went on to speculate that Austria, no longer capable of attaining the status of a great power, would need to adopt a new identity as a small neutral state rather than hitherto Pan-German efforts to seek an *Anschluss* with Germany or Right-wing Catholic efforts to transform Vienna into the capital of a regional federation of states. It was argued that such a move would help her secure her position in Europe and prevent her being the subject to the machinations of larger neighbouring states. However, to be awarded the seat of the LON, it was widely understood "Austria would be compelled first to formally renounce not only the Anschluss but also any dream of a Danubian Federation."[14] This was a price too high for a new Seipel government, especially considering the role the LON model of international order played in Karl's exile and dethronement in Hungary.

The Catholic peace movement seemed a much better avenue to forward Habsburg objectives. Not only had the Church denounced the war form the onset but had been more than happy to paint Karl as an innocent martyr on account of it. From the onset of war Benedict XV in his encyclical *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum* had put forward the question that "[s]urely there are other ways and means whereby violated rights can be rectified. Let them be tried honestly and with good will, and let arms meanwhile be laid aside."[15] Throughout the 1920s, with the parallel secular efforts of the LON conceived by Woodrow

[13] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc.2, 9), Ff. 227-230, February 8, 1928, report Nr. 313/9789 entitled "Circa la Sede della S.d.N. [LON]" from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[14] Ibid.
[15] Benedict XV, *Beatissimi Apostolorum*, November 1, 1914.

Wilson, this perspective of the war as a fratricidal senseless struggle had seemed to be vindicated. While the LON sought to address the bi-lateral procedural interaction between state actors, it did not address the spiritual root causes of war. This baton would be picked up by the Catholic grassroots peace movement. Through this dialogue in pursuit of a harmonious international political order and spiritual unity there was a reappraisal of the Habsburg *Reichsidee*. From Chancellor Wilhelm Marx in Germany[16] to Austrian bishops[17] and lay Catholic Action groups across Europe and beyond, it was now increasingly seen as an archetypal modus vivendi towards what Pope Pius XI referred to as "*Pax Christi in Regno Christi* (the Peace of Christ in the Reign of Christ)."[18]

Contemporary Catholic voices across Europe and even America denounced how the unjust treaty of Saint-Germain had left a "forlorn" Austria "deformed and degenerate" and praised chancellor Seipel as having "a following now among the peace-loving people of the heart of the old empire" on account of his priestly outlook.[19] In a 1926 article entitled *People and Empire*, Seipel addressed the need for the addressing of the spiritual root of the recent war, rejecting the notion that "peace can be maintained by mere moral condemnation of war and by creating legal institutions to settle international conflicts."[20] This challenging of Wilsonian ideas of international justice was also displayed before the League of Nations assembly at Geneva in 1922 when he referred to Austrians being confided to a "prison" by the recent peace treaties. He urged the international community to grant Austrians a pathway to "free themselves from the barriers and chains which restrain and oppress them" but —with the important concession— to do so in a consultative manner, "without spoiling the relationships between Austria's neighbours."[21]

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[16] Unknown "Kanzler Marx gegen die Rechtsradikalen," *Neue Freie Presse*, Novermber 24, 1924, p. 3.
[17] Friedrich Gustav Piffl, "Hirtenbrief," *Wiener Diözesanblatt*, February 4, 1929, p. 1-5.
[18] John J. Campbell, "Fundamental Ideas of Catholic Action. IV: The Objects of Catholic Action," *The Irish Monthly* 63, no. 746 (August 1935): p. 513; Stephen J. Brown, "Catholics and Peace: A Conference in Dublin, August 1937," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 26, no. 103 (September 1937): p. 492; National Catholic Welfare Conference, "Catholics of Germany will meet in August," *The Catholic Telegraph* (Cincinnati), June 14, 1923, p. 2; Unknown, "Peace lies only in united Christendom, warning as nuns in war are honored," *The Catholic Columbian* (Columbus Ohio), September 26, 1924, p. 9; Elisabeth Müller, "Im ewigen Rom," *Elisabeth-Blatt*, March, 1930, p. 40; Franziskus Stratmann O.P., "Pax Christi in regno Christi," *Der Christliche Ständestaat*, December 25, 1936, p. 1213-1215.
[19] Unknown, "Poor Austria," *The Catholic Transcript* (Hartford, Connecticut). July 21, 1927, p. 4.
[20] Ignaz Seipel, *Volk und Reich* 1926, p. 4-9, *Politische Monatshefte für das junge Deutschland* found in Ignaz Seipel, *Österreich wie es Wirklich ist* (Vienna: Verl.-Gemeinschaft "Stifterbibliothek" Braumüller, 1953), p. 41.
[21] Jamie Andrew McGregor-Bulloch, "*The Promotion of an Austrian Identity 1918-1938*" (PhD thesis, University College London, United Kingdom, 2002), p. 64.

One Catholic American newspaper lauded Seipel —in contrast to Mussolini in Italy— as "a pure anti-Machiavellian."[22] With the rejection of national hatred and a return to Christian faith, Seipel ideally foresaw how "a great world empire [*Weltreich*] will be re-established, for which the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation was only a forerunner and pioneer."[23] Nonetheless, the same American voices which would laud the cleric-chancellor would also surmise:

> "The sun of Austria has sunk behind the horizon. The Hapsburgs are gone. Their dynasty is fast becoming a memory and a memory that exhorts hardly an audible benediction."[24]

Seipel's ideal *Weltreich* would be a temporal manifestation of what Pius XI would term as the "empire of Christ over all nations."[25]

R. W. Seton-Watson in his 1919 *Europe in the Melting-Pot* acknowledged the myriad of challenges which the new states —states which he had argued for and in no small way helped to create— faced arising from the ashes of Central European empires but nonetheless argued:

> "[W]ithout this dismemberment [of Austria-Hungary], the complete victory of the Entente was definitely impossible […] the sole road to victory, to the overthrow of the old order and to the establishment of a League of Nations."[26]

Such ideas found resistance in fellow British thinker, John Maynard Keynes, who, in his 1922 *A Revision of the Treaty* denounced the Paris Peace Treaties as having "outraged Justice, Mercy, and Wisdom."[27] Making an economic argument against a vindictive fragmentation of Central Europe, Keynes went so far as to accuse of victorious Entente

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[22] Frederick Funder, "Austria's Moral Rebirth: Work of Msgr. Seipel," *The Catholic Standard and Times* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). December 27, 1924, p. 2.
[23] Ignaz Seipel, *Volk und Reich* 1926, p. 4-9, *Politische Monatshefte für das junge Deutschland* found in Ignaz Seipel, *Österreich wie es Wirklich ist* (Vienna: Verl.-Gemeinschaft "Stifterbibliothek" Braumüller, 1953), p. 41.
[24] Unknown, "Poor Austria," *The Catholic Transcript* (Hartford, Connecticut). July 21, 1927, p. 4.
[25] Pius XI, *Quas Primas,* December 11, 1925. Seipel was not an entirely unique figure in Central European politics throughout the 1920s. To the North in Germany, the Austrian Chancellor had his mirror reflection in Ludwig Kaas, the Catholic prelate and leader of the conservative Centre Party. Kaas like Seipel pursued pan-European reconciliation and referred to Nationalism as "the heresy of the twentieth-century" and denounced re-armament. See Ernst Kämpfer, *Der Politische Katholizismus: Sein Wesen Und Wirken* (Leipzig: T. Fritsch Verlag, 1937), p. 27 & 82.
[26] R. W. Seton-Watson, *Europe in the Melting-Pot* (London: Macmillan, 1919), p. ix & x.
[27] Ibid., p. 168.

powers as playing the part of Shylock of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, quoting: "I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak; I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more."[28] Against these efforts for a more magnanimous settlement to provide the basis for the new international order, Seton-Watson and his allies worked "to insist upon the incompatibility of such doctrines as 'Non-interference' and 'Absolute State Sovereignty' with the idea of a League of Nations." [29]

Seeing such ardent hostility to Germany in the attitude of Paris and London, the German-speaking Catholic Right in sought to disassociate from a Prussian —and Protestant— Germany in which they sought to concentrate moral culpability for the genesis and course of the war. Historian C. M. Peniston-Bird draws attention to Peter Katzenstein's argument on how the selective telling of history could be weaponised to emphasise or deemphasise Austria's "common historical experience" in the German-speaking world.[30] Austrian-ness was not however a universally anti-Prussian —and later anti-National Socialist— phenomenon. Some historians such as Heinrich von Srbik wished to see an Austrian spirit brought into Greater-Germany and rejected the idea of a segregated historiography, minimising Austro-Prussian conflict in past centuries.[31]

Nonetheless, influential figures in the Catholic peace movement such as Habsburg apologists, Dietrich von Hildebrand and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, occupied prominent positions in Franco-Germanic interwar reconciliation efforts. Like Pope Benedict XV and Karl von Habsburg, von Hildebrand emphasised a common "supernational Catholic" outlook, disassociating from Berlin's invasion of Belgium. At a 1921 organised Peace Paris Peace convention organised by Marc Sangnier, remarks calling the violation "an atrocious crime" were met with applause from fellow participants.[32] At home in Germany, von Hildebrand was branded with the mark of treason against the German *Volk* by

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[28] John Maynard Keynes, *A Revision of the Treaty* (London: Macmillan, 1922), p. 167.
[29] R. W. Seton-Watson, *Europe in the Melting-Pot* (London: Macmillan, 1919), p. xi.
[30] Peter J. Katzenstein, *Disjoined Partners: Austria and Germany since 1815* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 10 found in C.M. Peniston-Bird, "The Debate on Austrian National Identity in the First Republic (1918-1938)" (PhD thesis, University of St. Andrews, 1997), p. 137.
[31] Christopher Brennan, "*Reforming Austria-Hungary: Beyond his control or beyond his capacity? The domestic policies of Emperor Karl I November 1916 – May 1917*" (PhD thesis, London School of Economics (Department of International History), United Kingdom, 2012,) p. 222.
[32] Dietrich von Hildebrand, *My Battle Against Hitler: Faith, Truth, and Defiance in the Shadow of the Third Reich,* (New York, NY: Image, 2014), p. 120-21.

Nationalists. Furthermore, these retrospective concessions on the Central Powers' conduct of the recent war were equally contentious in Austria, particularly within the Pan-German *Völkisch* circles. Regarding a re-visiting of the plight of little Catholic Belgium, Alfred Krauss in 1921 saw a post war *Dolchstoss*-like betrayal of the fallen soldiers declaring:

> "Germany had the absolute moral right to march through Belgium, nobody could take this right away from her, only its own political leadership. They took it away."[33]

In contrast, Hildebrand, like Karl, in accepting the injustice of the German violation of Belgian neutrality, participated in a core narrative of the Catholic German world as a morally superior order mislead by the alleged "German militarism" of Prussian cold heartiness. To the Interwar Catholic Right, Belgium was closer united to them —through the supranatural bond of common baptism and the historical bond of Habsburg co-dominion— than Prussia could ever be.

While Austrians on both the Left and Right were deeply invested in divergent reconciliation efforts, elements sympathetic to Hohenzollern leadership of the Second Reich were much more concerned with retrospective apologetics in defence of Prussia. This effort went far beyond the German White Book of 1914 which sought to reject culpability for the outbreak of war and even sought to attribute blame for Germany's defeat to an internal and international conspiracy. Hitler –himself an Austrian subject by birth– argued in a 1921 essay that a Prussian led German Reich "had one single task: incorporating the ten million German-Austrians in the Empire and dethroning the Hapsburgs, that most miserable dynasty ever ruling over German lands."[34] Hitler saw Austrian history detached from a civilising Germanic mission of Christendom and rather proposed a racial lens to understand Central European history. Nonetheless, he appreciated the role of the Austrian capital in bridging Germanic and Slavic Europe, commenting of the Viennese people how: "having a mission to accomplish stimulates them."[35]

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[33] Alfred Krauss, *Die Ursachen unserer Niederlage; Erinnerungen und Urteile aus dem Weltkrieg.* (Munich: J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1921), p. 276.
[34] Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna: A Portrait of the Tyrant as a Young Man* (New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2010), p.107.
[35] Ibid., p.109.

For Hitler in the early days of the development of his political philosophy, Bavarian particularism —specifically Bavarian monarchism— was the greatest insult to his concept of German racial unity. Bavarian paramilitary forces in the midst of Weimar instability were fighting for a conservative Germany, and failing that, contemplated "seceding from Germany to form, together with Austria, a Catholic kingdom under the Wittelsbach dynasty."[36] Such suspicion of plots to achieve a Wittelsbach-Habsburg union were not the exclusive fear of National, but also International spectators. Watching on from the edge of Europe, in 1922 Irish Catholic intellectual circles saw a pious Bavaria, which "despite its Catholic tradition" had been ruled by a Wittelsbach dynasty historically deemed to be "much more interested in art than in religion." Furthermore, her state institutions which were deemed to be "manned to a shameless extent by Protestants and freethinkers."[37] Nonetheless, commenting on the 1922 German Catholic Congress, Irish Jesuit Fr. John Ryan wrote:

> "Bavarian Catholics are monarchists, and even during the Congress took what, considering Germany's international position, can only be termed a childish delight in showing their enthusiasm for the deposed dynasty."[38]

Notwithstanding, for ambitious thinkers, the House of Wittelsbach was a regional power rooted in Bavarian particularism and German Nationalism. It could not provide the Supranational impetus to unify Europe into a new resurrected Christendom as the Habsburg historical mission could.

Around this time, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi in his 1923 Vienna-published work Pan-Europa argued for the mobilisation of a new supranational Europe resist Asiatic Bolshevism.[39] One can see aspects of the age-old Habsburg *Reichsidee* echoed in Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-Europa project. It is therefore of little coincidence that Vienna was chosen for the epicentre of his movement and "the Austrian Chancellor Ignaz Seipel made the Vienna Hofburg palace available as a central office."[40] For contemporary Catholic intellectual Christopher Dawson, the early twentieth-Century rejection of the

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[36] Harold J. Gordon, *The Reichswehr and the German Republic, 1919–1926* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 233.
[37] John Ryan, "II: The German Catholic Congress of 1922," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 11, no. 44 (1922): p. 621.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Pan-Europa* (Vienna: Pan-Europa-Verlag, 1923), p. 54–55.
[40] Ibid., p. 172.

supranational tradition of the Habsburg Monarchy by the Pan-German and later Pan-European movement was "an act of spiritual suicide, since it meant the denial and destruction of all the spiritual values on which Austrian culture had been built."[41] Without the Habsburg Monarchy as a "champion of a universal religious ideal and a patron of international Catholic culture," supranationalism was a non-viable.

Nonetheless, modelling the sentiment of notable Pan-Slavic Czech historian František Palacký —who wrote in an 1848 letter to the Liberal Nationalist Frankfurt Assembly: "If the Austrian State had not existed for ages, it would have been in the interests of Europe and indeed of humanity to endeavour to create it as soon as possible"—[42] a new supernationalism would arise from the ashes of Habsburg Imperialism. This supernationalism, encapsulated in the so-called Pan-Europa movement was an eclectic assembly of a myriad of ideological flavours and political agendas, of which Habsburg legitimism was certainly not absent. Seipel himself served on the first Austrian Pan-Europa committee and both in 1925 and 1929 publicly declared himself in favour of the establishment of a United States of Europe.[43] While officially secular, there existed a significant overlap between Catholic reconciliation movement and the Pan-Europa movement with this European unity serving as a potential stepping-stone to a *Weltreich* which would follow in the spirit of Habsburg-led Holy Roman Empire.[44]

In 1926 Hugo von Hofmannsthal when asked by *Zeitschrift Paneuropa* about the potential need for a United States of Europe commented: "To establish new supranational relationships and to find the political form for them, I consider it a necessity."[45] Such thinking was not completely novel and echoed the spirit of Dante's early 14th century work, *De Monarchia*, in which he concerned himself also with the delineated responsibilities of temporal and spiritual power in his day. Furthermore, the influx of Catholic priests standing for public office, winning elections, leading political parties, and

[41] Christopher Dawson, *Understanding Europe* (New York: Image Books, 1960), p. 77.
[42] František Palacký, "The Idea of the Austrian State," in Modernism: *The Creation of Nation-States*, trans. Derek Paton (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 25.
[43] McGregor-Bulloch, "*The Promotion of an Austrian Identity 1918-1938,*" p. 62.
[44] Ignaz Seipel, "Volk und Reich," in *Österreich wie es wirklich ist* (Vienna: Verlag-Gemeinschaft "Stifterbibliothek" Braumüller, 1953), p. 41, originally published in *Politische Monatshefte für das junge Deutschland, 1926*, p. 4–9.
[45] Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, *Reden und Aufsätze III (1925–1929)* (Fischer Taschenbuch, 1980), p. 213–14, citing *Zeitschrift Paneuropa*, 2. Jahrgang, I–3. Heft, Vienna, Leipzig, Februar 1926.

crafting government policies in line with Catholic morals in Austria, Slovakia, Germany and even Yugoslavia was not unnoticed across the Atlantic in America. Such developments were welcomed by a local Catholic minority who sought to reproduce there a growing "realization of the present generation that the world cannot re-cover without the divine verities of the Catholic Church."[46]

[46] Frederick Funder, "High Civil Positions Held by Clergymen in European States," *The Catholic Telegraph* (Cincinnati, OH), January 17, 1929, p. 1 & 3.

3.4 Secular Republics and the Kingship of Christ

According to Otto Bauer: "In the person of Seipel the middle classes found for the first time an energetic and far-seeing leader."[1] Of Seipel, one Vienna Legitimist-sympathetic correspondent, Frederick Funder, explained to his American readership in 1924:

> "He succeeded also in doing the most difficult thing of all in teaching the Austrians to believe in Austria once more [and] challenged his century which believed only in the reality of material things."[2]

The bishop of St. Pölten, Michael Memelauer, in a report on the state of the Church on diocese in 1928, pointed the figure at the Liberal and Socialist press which "rages with Old Testament hatred for Christ and His Church."[3] Nonetheless, bishop Memelauer acknowledged that the "particularly evil influence" of anti-clerical press was more of a symptom or catalyst of an underlining metaphysical problem, that of naturalism:

> "The inner cause is probably to be found in the character of the epoch itself […] Medieval man was a man of great faith; he walked the earth as a pilgrim and stranger, his thoughts and deeds had heaven, had God, as their goal. The modern man, on the other hand, is, as he walks the earth, fused with it, as if drawn to it by mysterious forces, and can hardly detach himself from it."[4]

In the rejection of philosophical materialism applied to the political sphere –i.e., Organised Naturalism– within Political Catholicism there was substantial appetite for Third-Way solutions fostered by Vatican. This would culminate in the publishing of Pope Pius XI's 1925 Papal Encyclical *Quas Primas*, on the Kingship of Christ. Like his predecessor, Benedict XV, Pius XI saw the First World War as fratricidal self-destruction born out of Mankind's shunning of Christian principles in the temporal sphere.

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[1] Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution* (trans. H. J. Stenning) (London: L. Parsons, 1925), p. 271.
[2] Frederick Funder, "Austria's Moral Rebirth: Work of Msgr. Seipel," *The Catholic Standard and Times* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). December 27, 1924, p. 2.
[3] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, 12), Ff. 321-326, December 6, 1928, report entitled "Circa le apostasie in Austria" from bishop of St. Pölten to Nuncio Sibilia (Vienna).
[4] Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, 12), Ff. 321-326. 6th December 1928 report entitled "Circa le apostasie in Austria" from bishop Bishop Michael Memelauer of St. Pölten to Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna)

In the new Czechoslovakian state, over the 1920s, approximately one-fifth of the nominally Catholic population apostatised into atheism, agnosticism or the schismatic neo-Hussite national church.[5] With the apparent politicisation of the Catholic faith across Central Europe, the Church now responded on the offensive exhorting Catholics that "[Christ's] kingly dignity demands that the State should take account of the commandments of God and of Christian principles, both in making laws and in administering justice."[6] Historians Ernst Hanisch and Johannes Thaler have highlighted the central role that this "Christ the King ideology" played in the transmission of the *Reichsidee* within Seipel's broader Austrian idea project.[7] The *Reichsidee* was therefore expressed by its proponents as a historical mission to defend Christendom[8] and act as a bridge from the Germanic world to that of the Slavic and Magyar. Hanisch points to Political Catholicism —in the words of its contemporary proponents such as Fr. Aemilian Schoepfer— as an effort "to re-Christianise society within the framework of the small Austria, to re-establish the *Reich Christi* and the kingship of Christ."[9] For historians such of Hanisch who point to a pathway from the clericalism of Seipel to the "Austrofascism" of Dollfuss between 1927 and 1933, the Catholic doctrine of the Kingship of Christ served the function of a "ideology of domination" which "negated the concept of a democratic-pluralistic society."[10] As early as 1920, during the initially drafting of the Austrian constitution, the Legitimist Bishop Waitz and others specifically objected to successful SPÖ efforts to codify "Austria is a democratic republic. Its power derives from the people."[11] Hanisch furthermore points to how in an era of intensifying political polarisation Waitz publicly declared: "And if it was permissible to overthrow the

[5] Jitka Jonová, "The Impacts of the Political Coup of 1918 on the Roman Catholic Church during the First Czechoslovak Republic," *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 35, no. 2 (2022): p. 287 & 294.
[6] Pius XI, *Quas Primas*, December 11, 1925.
[7] Johannes Thaler, "Ostmärkische Sturmscharen – Keimzellen eines katholischen Faschismus," in *(K)ein Austrofaschismus? Studien zum Herrschaftssystem 1933–1938*, ed. Carlo Moos (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2021), p. 337.
[8] That where Jesus was proclaimed to be enthroned as King.
[9] Ernst Hanisch, "Der Politische Katholizismus als ideologischer Träger des 'Austrofaschismus,'" in *Austrofaschismus: Politik – Ökonomie – Kultur 1933–1938*, ed. Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2014), p. 71.
[10] Ibid., p. 71.
[11] Alfred-Pfoser and Andreas Weigl, *Die Erste Stunde Null. Gründungsjahre der österreichischen Republik* (Vienna: Residenz Verlag, 2017), p. 255.

monarchy, it is equally permissible to reintroduce another form of government instead of the republic."[12]

Historian Kurt Steiner described the bishop as "one of the most articulate members of the Catholic hierarchy, considered the republic the work of anti-Christ in alliance with freemasonry."[13] Personal testimony complied by the Vatican for Karl's cause for canonisation demonstrate that Bishop Waitz had extensive previous contact with Karl from the emperor's childhood and throughout his Swiss exile advising him on the situation in Alpine Austria.[14] Throughout the Interwar period, as Archbishop of Salzburg, Waitz contributed to Legitimist publications in memory of Karl praising the young rulers understanding of his duty bearing the title "Apostolic Majesty"[15] and was in turn referred to as a "paternal friend of the imperial family."[16]

Legitimist attacks on the SPÖ's secularism came also from the lay Catholic movements. The contemporary Ernst Karl Winter would stress how *Österreichische Aktion* (ÖA) was based on mutual collaboration of laity and ecclesial hierarchy together to forward the Kingship of Christ, unlike similar European Monarchist movements such as Charles Maurras' *Action Française*. In contrast to their French counterparts, ÖA rejected any emphasise of the national over the supranational, and most importantly, perceived value in Catholicism not from its sociological utility but rather proclaimed supernatural merits.[17] In 1927 —with Karl's canonisation process still in its infancy but steadily making progress— Legitimist, Zeßner-Spitzenberg, promoted Karl as "perhaps one day the patron

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[12] Hanisch, "Der Politische Katholizismus als ideologischer Träger des 'Austrofaschismus,'" p. 72.
[13] Kurt Steiner, *Politics in Austria* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), p. 8.
[14] AOS: TOM I, Index 469-70 June 1, 1919, letter from Karl von Habsburg to Eugenio Pacelli (Apostolic Nuncio, Munich) found in Elisabeth Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?: Band 2: Politische Dokumente zu Kaiser und König Karl I. (IV.) aus internationalen Archiven* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2004), p. 503; Congregatio De Causis Sanctorum. *Beatificationis Et Canonizationis Servi Dei Caroli E Domo Austriae Imperatoris Ac Regis (1887-1922): Positio Super Virtutibus Et Fama Sanctitatis Vol.* I.. (Vatican City: Tipografia Guerra s. r. l., 1994), p. 292 & 503-05.
[15] Sigismund Waitz, "Geleitworte zur 10. Jahrbuch-Ausgabe," in *Gedächtnis—Jahrbuch: Dem Andenken an Karl von Oesterreich Kaiser und König* (Vienna: Traditionsreferat der Vaterländischen Front, 1938), p. 2.
[16] Maurus Carnot O.S.B., "Ein Besuch bei den fünf jüngern Kaiserkindern," in *Gedächtnis—Jahrbuch: Dem Andenken an Karl von Oesterreich Kaiser und König* (Vienna: Traditionsreferat der Vaterländischen Front, 1935), p. 99.
[17] Ernst Karl Winter, "Die katholische und die österreichische Aktion," in *Die österreichische Aktion (Action): Programmatische Studien*, eds. August Maria Knoll, Alfred Missong, Wilhelm Schmid, Ernst Karl Winter, and H. K. Zeßner-Spitzenberg (Vienna: Ernst Karl Winter Verlag, 1927), p. 266 & 269.

of Catholic conservative renewal for the Austrian and European family of nations."[18] Zeßner-Spitzenberg further lamented the state of Austrian mid-1920s youth which "knows little of duties and no other authority than that of the unleashed arrogance and the unleashed lust. It knows only people's representatives and people's deputies– but no more kings."[19] Making the Catholic teaching *Quas Primas* their own, Legitimists put forward the proposition;

> "For it is ordained by God that as families are ruled by fathers, so peoples are ruled by sovereigns of some kind."[20]

Karl was exalted as such a father to the family of peoples that constituted the Habsburg Empire. Echoing the old alliance of Throne and Altar, Zeßner-Spitzenberg argues that Kingship "receives its highest dignity when it recognises and professes its divine right, when it is consecrated in an ecclesiastical coronation and acts as the protector of the Church."[21] Such liturgical expression of civic and ecclesial common objective was not possible in a secular republic.

Furthermore, the Kingship of Christ —as expounded by *Quas Primas*— "demands of its subjects a spirit of detachment from riches and earthly things, and a spirit of gentleness […] they must deny themselves and carry the cross."[22] Proponents of Karl's canonisation argued convincingly that such an understanding of submission to the Kingship of Christ was held by the exiled Emperor and applied to his suffering for his peoples in his final days on Madeira. The Holy Father would teach that earthly sovereigns received their authority from the higher Kingship of Christ which in turn "ennobles the citizen's duty of obedience." As a proscription for the ordering of human affairs Pius XI would instruct the Catholic faithful:

> "When once men recognise, both in private and in public life, that Christ is King, society will at last receive the great blessings of real liberty, well-ordered discipline, peace and harmony."[23]

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[18] Hans K. Zeßner-Spitzenberg, "Kaiser Karl," in *Die österreichische Aktion (Action): Programmatische Studien*, eds. August Maria Knoll, Alfred Missong, Wilhelm Schmid, Ernst Karl Winter, and H. K. Zeßner-Spitzenberg (Vienna: Ernst Karl Winter Verlag, 1927), p. 142.
[19] Hans K. Zeßner-Spitzenberg, "Königtum Christi," *Vaterland: Blätter für Katholisches Österreichertum*. July/August 1927, p. 1–2.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Pius XI, *Quas Primas*, December 11, 1925.
[23] Pius XI, *Quas Primas*, December 11, 1925.

It would be in this spirit which served as the foundation of the CSP's official position to work uncompromisingly towards the "preservation and enhancement of the ancient heritage of Austrian spiritual culture."[24] The Habsburg question was therefore for many of Black Vienna more a question of a spiritual un-doing the Protestant reformation than a mere political programme,[25] in essence –to their eyes– the reversal of the post-Christendom dethronement of the Kingship of Christ.

This "enhancement" would not come at a pace rapid enough for some Legitimists. This can be seen in the short-lived enterprise of Austrian Legitimism as an independent political movement under the *Kaisertreue Volkspartei* (KtVp). In the May 1923 Monarchist Congress held in Vienna, Austrian legitimists gathered to debate propaganda strategies in the post-Karl era and consider the merits of seeking a possible "electoral agreement with the Christian Social Party."[26] Not long into the life of the First Republic, Habsburg Legitimists in Austria realised that they could not independently forward their cause while politically isolated within the KtVp. The 21st, October 1923 federal election yielded a poor results for the monarchist party. Even in the rural, more conservative, federal state of Salzburg, the party achieved a mere total of 75 votes. In contrast, the CSP attained 62,029 votes and the SPÖ achieved a distant second place with 30,939 votes.[27] One can conclude that even with a foreseeably secure margin for the CSP, voters did not wish to endorse the single-issue Monarchists.

Throughout the 1920s the KtVp stood almost alone in their grassroots open activism for Habsburg restoration and refusal to recognise the sovereignty of the Austrian republic. Led by former Imperial army officer Gustav Wolff, one of the most vocal and antagonistic populist groups seeking to overturn the November 1918 Republican status-

[24] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, 5), Ff. 142-144, October 13 1927, report No. 301/9501 from Nuncio Sibilia (Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[25] Janek Wasserman, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918–1938* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), p. 147.
[26] AdR: NPA Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 213, October 10, 1923, Polizeidirektion Wien report entitled "Angeblicher Monarchistenkongress in Oesterreich im Mai 1923."
[27] Unknown, "Der Wahltag Am 21. Oktober," *Salzburger Chronik Für Stadt Und Land*. October 23, 1923, p. 1.

quo.[28] Wolff had been subject to a serious of prosecutions for violations of public order and in February 1925 Vienna police claimed to have obtained concrete evidence of a conspiracy to initiate a coup against the First Republic. Colonel Wolff and General Lehar, in collusion with Archduke Max, were alleged to be harbouring idealistic, near utopian, plans to strike "from Hungary with 10,000 armed Legitimists."[29] The Vienna police even claimed in one house search to have intercepted a courier discovering a "list of members of the former high aristocracy, bank directors, industrialists, and so on." [30] However, this plan was theorised to be contingent on "the ex-Queen Zita and the heir to the throne Otto having received permission to settle permanently in Hungary" for some time before the operation would be conducted.[31]

As fanciful as these dreams of overthrowing the CSP government in the mid-1920s were, Viennese counter-intelligence noted with real concern that "the plans of the Legitimists had already been prepared to such an extent that in a short period of time events could have occurred whose consequences were unforeseeable."[32] Otto, just barely a teenager in 1925, in Spanish exile was foreseen to be installed only after being welcomed in Hungary. Such plotting would only serve to feed into LE paranoia that compromises on small matters would be exploited by pro-Habsburg supporters to achieve substantial gains. It is therefore extremely noteworthy that the authorities in Vienna confiscated "a letter allegedly from the Czechoslovakian Foreign Minister Benes assuring the ex-queen Zita of his benevolent support for her plans for restoration."[33] Benes himself had "immediately declared that the letter was a great forgery"[34] and the unconvincing attempt of seeking to give the impression of having secured foreign support only served to ridicule the name of populist Legitimism in the eyes of many neutral obverses.

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[28] Johannes Thaler, "Ally and Opposition: The Legitimist Movement under the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg Dictatorship," *Austrian History Yearbook* 45 (January 1, 2014): p. 181.
[29] AdR: NPA, Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 301-306, February 20, 1925, Polizeidirektion Wien report entitled "Angebliche Abhaltung eines Kurses der Exkaiserin Zita in Wien; Notiz der in Budapest erscheinenden Tageszeitung 'A Mai Nap'."
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

The Habsburg family themselves concentrated their efforts much more on networking with influential persons in power rather than building a grassroots base of supporters using populist tactics. This tactical methodology could well be rooted in their natural distain for a horizontal conceptualisation of political authority, seeing the justification of their cause not in its appeal to the masses but rather its vindication in the acknowledgment of their reign by the current government of what they saw as *their* lands and *their* peoples. However, much more likely to be the case was their disdain for what they saw as Wolff's unilateral campaign —lacking their Imperial and Royal mandate— and his volatile personality which alienated moderate conservatives.

This rift can be seen in the pressure placed upon Seipel by former Imperial elites —including exiled Zita— lobbying the CSP to use what influence and legal measures at their disposal to contain the movement of the self-appointed Wolff lest they harm the carefully cultivated image the dynasty wished to project. This association of Seipel with aristocratic persons of vehement anti-republican sentiment was exploited vigorously in Austromarxist propaganda. One such instance was the publication of the chancellor's correspondence with legation counsel to Belgium, Theobald Graf von Westphalen, which the communist *Rote Fahne* published August 28th, 1925. The Communist newspaper declared that one letter obtained from a house search had proven Seipel to be "exposed as a confidant of the monarchists," his subsequent silence on the charge being seen by Marxists as vindication to their assertations.[35] By his fostering of "secret connections" between the CSP and Lequeitio, Seipel had shown himself, in their eyes, to be an enemy of the people and a viable target for political violence, an idea which in time would become reality.[36] To the KPÖ, the prelate-chancellor was "the personification of the efforts at restoration," alleging "Mr. Seipel is most seriously compromised; the imperial and royal chancellor of the republic remains silent about the Republic" waiting from orders from Zita in exile.[37] While it is certainly true that the words republic were seldom and increasingly infrequently uttered from Seipel's lips and he regarded the Austrians to be an

[35] AdR: NPA, Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 309-323, August 30, 1925, Polizeidirektion Wien report to "Bundeskanzleramt" entitled "Angeblicher Brief des Theobald Grafen Westphalen an den Präsidenten der konservativen Volkspartei; Veröffentlichung in der Roten Fahne."
[36] Unknown, "Seipel, Schager — die Verbündeten der Erwachenden Ungarn. Der Past mit Pronan. — Seipel Schweigt. — Oberst Wolff bestätigt," *Rote Fahne*. August 30, 1925, p. 1.
[37] Ibid.

people with an Imperial Catholic mission, in reality, Seipel —at least after the death of Karl—was no de facto Regent paving the way for the Return of the Emperor.

The same letter —not denied by Seipel— reveals that while he recognised Zita's desire to return and restore the Habsburg dynasty as her "most sacred duty," Wolff was thrown under the bus as an incompetent liability. The alleged correspondence reported Seipel's words as:

> "Her Majesty knows you are to be thanked for leaving no stone unturned to pull the creditably loyal but incompetent Colonel Wolff out of the movement. The man does more harm than he could ever do good in life."[38]

Such a narrative of an unstable KtVp, conspiring widowed Empress, and a duplicitous Catholic cleric as chancellor fell smoothly into the KPÖ perspective of an incomplete and corrupted revolution. The KPÖ were not alone in propagating the idea of needing to cling to a threatened Republic. With the avenue of Anschluss repeatably denied, Austromarxists, no longer in government, sought to make the most of the little Alpine state. The reappraisal of their political circumstances can be seen in the SPÖ's 1926 Linz Programme. Seeing the trend of anti-republican political rhetoric from the ruling government and more radical voices to the right, the party "called on the workers to help defend [the Republic] against the forces of reaction."[39]

On 26th August 1926 Gustav Wolff noted: "Our closest, but also our deadliest opponent, the Social Democratic Party, has recently presented a new programme to the public." In reaction, the KtVp published a new draft political programme inviting contribution from readers. The draft began with the premise "that the current form of government is illegal and demands the immediate implementation of a referendum on the legal choice of form of government (republic or monarchy)."[40] A position held in principle, it is arguable whether this subsequent demand was an exercise in rhetoric or a serious belief that in the 1920s a majority of the Austrian population would indeed vote for

[38] AdR: NPA, Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 309-323, August 30, 1925, Polizeidirektion Wien report to "Bundeskanzleramt" entitled "Angeblicher Brief des Theobald Grafen Westphalen an den Präsidenten der konservativen Volkspartei; Veröffentlichung in der Roten Fahne."
[39] McGregor-Bulloch, "*The Promotion of an Austrian Identity 1918-1938,*" p. 60.
[40] Gustav Wolff, "Entwurf des neuen Programmes der Kaisertreuen Volkspartei (S.G.L.)," *Schwarz-Gelb*. August 26, 1926, p. 1.

Habsburg restoration. Other proposals included the honouring of Dual-Monarchy war bonds and the imposition of a 50% tax on "war profiteers and swindlers who demonstrably only came into possession of their assets during the war or in the post-war period."[41]

Meanwhile, it becomes clear that Seipel's attachment was to the Habsburg historical mission more so than to the dynasty itself. Thus, the alliance of Throne and Altar was not an absolute principle but a union of utility. Nationally the CSP achieved 82 of a possible 165 seats in the October 1923 election under Seipel with the promise of "regeneration."[42] The Pan-German camp lost more than half their seats in parliament squeezed between SPÖ and CSP polarisation. Wolff's movement secured only 1,452 votes of a just over one million cast in the concurrent Vienna municipal election.[43] The anti-establishment satirical press mocked the meagre 50 votes of the KtVp in one district of Vienna with a front-page cartoon of one Legitimist pondering in despair with caption reading: "Forty-nine of them I know. Who's the fiftieth?"[44] The KtVp was not even listed on most election reports the following morning.[45]

With the 1923 decisive failure of the bourgeoise Pan-German party, the National Socialist movement in Austria —still in its infancy— rose to decry the election result as stemming from Seipel's secret conspiracy with "Jewish money" and only the chancellor's allegiance to Legitimists was holding him back from a more complete total victory.[46] This monopoly which the CSP enjoyed over the conversative Catholic electorate under Seipel, was identified before the election and reinforced the perceived need for monarchists to gravitate towards a methodology of co-opting the established CSP by means of infiltration. The main obstacle in this endeavour was the wariness of Austrian moderate conservatives. Just shy of an overall parliamentary majority and ruling in collation governments with smaller parties, e.g., the Pan-German *Großdeutsche Volkspartei* (GDVP), any endorsement of pro-Habsburg sentiment would bring upon them the scrutiny of the republican-minded radical press. Such a overture could poison their image in the eyes of the political middle-

[41] Ibid.
[42] Unknown, "Der Kleine Gerngroß," *Kikeriki*. October 28, 1923, p. 1.
[43] Unknown, "Sozialdemokratischer Sieg im Gemeinderat," *Der Morgen*: *Wiener Montagblatt*. October 22, 1923, p. 3.
[44] Carl Josef, "Die 50 Stimmen der Monarchisten," *Der Götz von Berlichingen*. October 26, 1923, p. 1.
[45] Unknown, "Aus dem Bunde. Die Wahlen," *Wiener Zeitung*. October 22. 1923, p. 1.
[46] Unknown, "Die Sprache der Wahlen," *Deutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Vienna). October 27, 1923, p. 1.

ground, many of whom saw Anschluss, not restoration, as the ideal solution to Austria's woes.

While hesitant to collaborate outwardly in an official capacity, many CSP members of parliament did harbour sympathy for the Habsburgs, and most bore no love for the republican form of state. Nuncio Sibilia reported to the Vatican in September 1924 how while the Pan-Germans and Socialists engaged in "serious agitation" for revolution during early November 1918, the CSP "were divided among themselves about the republican form."[47] Meanwhile, there existed a great deal of trepidation within the US legation in Vienna that a strongly pro-Monarchist influenced CSP could drive secular moderates into the arms of the SPÖ.[48] The KtVp had entered into election pacts with the CSP to prevent a SPÖ victory in the October 1923 election and was disillusioned with the CSP's failure to deliver on their commitment to abolish the property clauses of the 1919 anti-Habsburg laws, choosing rather in July 1924 to allow Habsburg assets to be sold by the state.

US Minister Plenipotentiary to Austria, Albert H. Washburn, summarised that while no meaningful conclusions could be extrapolated until the new group's baptism of fire in the next election years down the road, nonetheless:

> "It is taken for granted, however, that if a good campaign is made and a wise program adopted, this party can draw enormously from the Christian Socialists."[49]

Nonetheless, throughout the 1920s there remained significant tension between CSP and KtVp. This would come to a head at a February 3rd, 1926 meeting in Meidling, Vienna in which Altgraf Erich Salm, a prominent populist Legitimist activist "made sharp attacks on the ambiguous attitude of several Christian Socialist leaders."[50] In the course of the lecture, it was reported by *Die Stunde* that the allegation was made that CSP behaviour was "causing the best conservative elements to turn away from this party," going so far as to polemically declare:

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[47] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, Ff. 105, September,18, 1924, report "N. 115/2744" entitled "Cattolici e socialisti in Austria" from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[48] NARA: 863.00/499, August 17, 1924, report from Albert H. Washburn (US Legation, Vienna) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[49] NARA: 863.00/523, November 11, 1924, report from Albert H. Washburn (US Legation, Vienna) to to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[50] Unknown, "Kaisertreue Volkspartei und Christlichsoziale: Eine stürmische Versammlung," *Die Stunde*. February 3, 1926, p. 2.

> "Every good Austrian would have to prefer the murderer Adler [SPÖ] to the prelate Hauser [of the CSP], because the former had only murdered the body, but the latter the soul."[51]

Prelate Johann Nepomuk Hauser as Catholic priest and president of the Provisional National Assembly from 1918 to 1919 was an obvious target for the ire of Legitimists throughout the 1920s. His willingness to bridge the gap between SPÖ and CSP on every occasion, including on the form of state, made him the archetype of a Trojan horse within the Ring-wing faction of the Conservative camp. Playing a leading role in the transition between monarchy and republic, his marginalised role in Austrian politics as a member of the *Nationalrat* from 1920-1927 overlaps with trends towards an increasingly polemic tone in public life leading up to the paramilitary violence of the end of the decade. With local CSP politicians attending the February 1926 Meidling event, it is little surprise that such statements resulted in "stormy exchanges between the two parties" and the meeting concluded with a thinly veiled threat presented as an ultimatum by the KtVp that should the CSP not repeal the anti-Habsburg laws, they "would disrupt all meetings of the Christian Socials by all means possible until new elections were held."[52] Those who remained within the KtVp after the poor 1923 performance thus increasingly shifted away from cross-party collaboration and adopted a vehemently hostile attitude to the mainline successful conservative party. Thenceforth, they ceased to play any impactful role in Austrian political life, save for constituting a nuisance in the day-to-day activity of the CSP.

A cornerstone of Legitimist propaganda —within both populist and establishment-elite wings— was an effort to associate their cause with that of the wider Church. To them, "the Pope's special attention and gracious fatherliness" was demonstrated in accepting the role of Otto's confirmation sponsor, represented in August 1923 by Archbishop of Toledo, Reig y Casanova, and administered by Auxiliary Bishop of Vienna and member of the Imperial court, Bishop Ernst Karl Jakob Seydl.[53] The English officer Strutt —four years previously on 28th February 1919— noted Bishop Seydl's anti-Semitism favourably in his

[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Baron Zessner von Spitzenberg, *Otto von Österreich: seine Kindheit und Jugend, sein Bildungsgang* (Vienna: Verlag GSUR & Co., 1931), p. 46.

diary account of living with the Imperial family. Therein, Seydl as court chaplain was described as "a real good fellow and most humorous raconteur, with a thoroughly Christian hatred of all Jews."[54] Florian Wenninger's research into the nature of normative Anti-Semitic attitudes within the Austrian episcopacy notes that another staunch supporter of the Habsburg cause, Archbishop Sigismund Waitz, would —writing in weekly-published Legitimist *Das Neue Reich* in 1920— juxtapose "the Church of Christ and the Synagogue of Satan."[55] This rejection of notions of Liberal neutrality in matters of morals in the public sphere would be echoed later in *Quas Primas* with Pius XI expounding: "This kingdom [of God] is opposed to none other than to that of Satan and to the power of darkness."[56] Legitimists ran to this banner. Within their propaganda they included the publishing of Catholic liturgical calendars and devotional artwork which highlighted the newly introduced feast of Christ the King; complete with silhouette prints of the historic kings of Austria, Hungary and Bohemia[57] and separately of Otto kneeling and laying their thrones at the feet of a crowned Christ in an act of pious "homage to the King of kings."[58]

A successor to Karl von Vogelsang and precursor to Dietrich von Hildebrand,[59] Joseph Eberle moved from Germany to Vienna just before the First World War and in 1925 founded the *Schönere Zukunft*, a Catholic conservative —if not reactionary and pro-Habsburg— publication. Eberle was one of the first and most ardent defenders of the *Reichsidee* thesis, seeing it as compatible with Danubian multinational Empire.[60] Ernst

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[54] Herbert Vivian, *The Life of the Emperor Charles of Austria* (London: Grayson & Grayson, 1932), p. 179.
[55] Sigismund Waitz, *Die Kirche Christi und die Synagoge des Satans*, in: *Das Neue Reich*, June, 13, 1920, p. 599–600 cited in Florian Wenninger. „Eine krankhafte Erscheinung […] im Programm der sonst so tüchtigen und vortrefflichen Christlichsozialen Partei."Antisemitismus im Politischen Katholizismus vom Fin de Siècle bis zum Austrofaschismus, in Linda Erker, Michael Rosecker (Hrsg.), *Antisemitische und rechte Netzwerke in der Zwischenkriegszeit. Zur Bedeutung informeller Machtstrukturen für die politische Radikalisierung in Österreich* (Vienna, Verlag Karl-Renner-Institut, 2023), p. 87.
[56] Pius XI, *Quas Primas*, December 11, 1925; This distinction between a society ordered towards heaven and a contrasting sinful inward-looking society in opposition to God was well-established in the Christian tradition since the 5th century juxtaposition between the City of God and the City of Man by St. Augustine of Hippo.
[57] St. Leopold, St. Stephen, and St. Wenceslas respectively.
[58] Josefine Allmayer, "Tu Rex Gloriae Christe, Du König der Herrlichkeit: St. Leopold, St. Stephan und St. Wenzel huldigen dem König der Könige," *Vaterland: Blätter für Katholisches Österreichertum*, May/June 1927, 1. Kunstbeilage; Gebetsliga, "Zum zehnten Mal: 'Unser Kalendarium!'" in *Gedächtnis—Jahrbuch: Dem Andenken an Karl von Oesterreich Kaiser und König* (Vienna: Traditionsreferat der Vaterländischen Front, 1938), p. 111.
[59] Both German Catholic political thinkers who found refuge in Austria.
[60] Christopher Brennan, "*Reforming Austria-Hungary: Beyond his control or beyond his capacity? The domestic policies of Emperor Karl I November 1916 – May 1917*" (PhD thesis, London School of Economics (Department of International History), United Kingdom, 2012,) p. 229.

Karl Winter and Hans Zeßner-Spitzenberg were regular contributors to the publication. Together, in their work —seeking to align the Church's teaching with the Legitimist movement— we see a shift away from the rhetoric of Liberal Democratic rights and towards a Reactionary Conservative emphasise on duty and authority. The Church —both locally in Austria and in her leadership from the Vatican— would not work to oppose such a synchronisation. The nuncio writing in March 1929 exclaimed just how "Vienna and Christendom in the West were saved from invasion and extermination by the Turks" in 1683, she must rally once more "against the new Turks, who with even worse intentions and violence, in the pay of Russian Bolshevism, are tending to reduce Vienna and Austria to the yoke of Bolshevism."[61] At a minimum, shifting from the late 1920s to early 1930s, the Habsburg legacy —with or without the dynasty itself— was thus seen as needing reviving and being put in service of the interests of the Church.

The renewed emphasis on obligations of the temporal order to the divine —and within that the *Reichsidee*— was not a novelty but the re-presentation for the current epoch of discombobulation brought on by the triumph of Wilsonian notions of popular (national) sovereignty from below. Indeed, a younger Seipel himself reminded his readers in 1916:

> "Austria's task seems to be to preserve, in the midst of them [nation's composing the Habsburg Empire], the older and higher concept of the state that inspired the medieval Christian Empire as well as the Roman Empire before it."[62]

Concurrent to these post-war efforts to restore a supernatural outlook to the public life of the state —upon the direction of the Vatican Secretary of State— the Vienna Nuncio compiled a joint report with all the bishops of Austria on the question of "Apostasy in Austria" which concluded:

> "After the collapse of the Monarchy, the most corrupt people of the various nationalities that composed it found it easy to take refuge in the new Austria and especially in Vienna, and who settled and still remain there to the very serious detriment of morals and religion."[63]

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[61] Vatican Apostolic Archive: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 1, Ff. 378-379, March 1929, report no. 78458 "Critica situazione religiosa a Vienna – i pericoli del Bolscevismo - rimedi" from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[62] Ignaz Seipel, *Nation und Staat* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1916), p. 9-10 & 17.
[63] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, 10), Ff. 297-308, December 15, 1928, report no. 10547/365 entitled "Circa le apostasie in Austria" from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

Besides the influx of Jews from across the former empire fleeing war and nationalist revolutions, the Nuncio pointed blame at an "increased agitation and propaganda by freethinkers; by Freemasons, and by several non-Catholic sects […]."[64] Michael Carter-Sinclair argues that for the new "unloved republic" of interwar Austria, "Jews were a symbol of fear on the right" [65] He notes that Seipel's "True Democracy" was one of Christian social values, of which, the concepts of tolerance and pluralism were not ideal virtues but passing circumstances.[66]

Florian Wenninger points to the distinction within the traditional historiography between an apparent opposing —but as he argues inter-connected— CSP populist Anti-Semitism, Catholic theological Anti-Semitism, and subsequent NS scientific-racial Anti-Semitism.[67] Austria's clerical Chancellor, Seipel, argued for a state which was anti-Semitic in sense of extoling the Kingship of Christ in opposition to the theorised collective organised naturalism of Jews. This was to be –as Michael Carter-Sinclair notes from Seipel's 1927 intervention in the press– a state which "needed to be antisemitic, not in the sense that it 'fought against Jews,' but against the 'corroding influence' of Jewish 'excesses.'"[68] This obfuscation centred on a distinction between a supposed morally licit cultural, political and philosophical Antisemitism from an objectionable racial Antisemitism. Therefore, for Seipel, this "subversive Jewish influence" was "grounded in the history of the Jews" and their "very radical materialistic historical interpretation" which provided the intellectual vanguard of Soviet Russia and domestic Socialism in Germany and Austria.[69] In this sentiment the Austrian prelate was in line with broader advocates of the Kingship of Christ such his brother-priest, the Irish Fr. Denis Fahey.[70]

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[64] Ibid.
[65] Michael Carter-Sinclair, *Vienna's 'Respectable' Antisemites: A Study of the Christian Social Movement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), p. 158 & 160.
[66] Ibid., p. 164.
[67] Wenninger, "Eine krankhafte Erscheinung," p. 82.
[68] Unknown, "Dr. Seipel über die antisemitische Wendung im christlichsozialen Parteiprogramm," *Neue Freie Presse*, January 14, 1927, evening edition, p. 2, cited in Michael Carter-Sinclair, Vienna's 'Respectable' Antisemites: A Study of the Christian Social Movement (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), p. 164.
[69] Unknown, "Dr. Seipel über die antisemitische Wendung im christlichsozialen Parteiprogramm," *Neue Freie Presse*, January 14, 1927, evening edition, p. 2.
[70] Denis Fahey, *The Kingship of Christ: According to the Principles of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, Ltd., 1931); Denis Fahey, *The Social Rights of Our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ, the King* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, Ltd., 1932); Denis Fahey, *The Rulers of Russia: New and Enlarged Edition October 1938* (Dublin: Dublin Printing Services, 1938); Denis Fahey, *The Mystical Body of Christ in the Modern World,* 2nd ed. (Waterford: Browne and Nolan, 1938).

Political Catholicism identified and mobilised against a perception of a disproportionate involvement of secularised ethnic Jews within Socialism in the West and especially revolutionary bolshevism in the East.[71] Hilaire Belloc typified the Antisemitic mood entrenched within Political Catholicism of this period writing of the so-called "Jewish Question":

> "They were continually to be found in the highest places of Government and in the chanceries of Christendom they had acquired a dominant power which none could question."[72]

Noting the prominent position of secularised Jews amongst the November revolutionaries, Seipel himself would refer to the coat of arms of new Austrian Republic as a "Bolshevik symbol" which should be done away with so as not to mislead international community as to the nature of the Austrian state.[73] Nonetheless, the chancellor did not hold universal rigid animosity against Jews as individuals, some of whom were promoted by him to important government offices such as representing Austria at their Moscow embassy.[74]

Even before Pius XI lamented in *Quas Primas* how "nations insult the beloved name of our Redeemer by suppressing all mention of it in their conferences and parliaments,"[75] Seipel was busy at undoing the recent secularist campaign of the SPÖ. From 1922 to 1924 he oversaw the replacement of the republican single-headed eagle carrying hammer and sickle with the crusader-era *Kruckenkreuz* on the medals of state orders and the Austrian republic's currency. However, due to SPÖ opposition, by the end of his second term as chancellor was unable to include a revision of the state coat of arms by constitutional reform.[76] The *Kruckenkreuz* was a specifically German-Catholic symbol, but one which differentiated Austria from the new Germany. Even as early as 1916 Seipel

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[71] Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, p. 199.
[72] Hilaire Belloc, *The Jews* (London: Constable & Co., 1922), p. 53.
[73] Peter Diem, *Die Symbole Österreichs: Zeit und Geschichte in Zeichen* (Vienna: Verlag Kremayr & Scheriau, 1995), p. 121–22.
[74] Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, 3), Ff. 109, April 12, 1927, report entitled "Conversazione con Mgr: Seipel. Russia. Salisburgo-Graz, Elezioni polit. E amminister., Centenario Beethoven" from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[75] Pius XI, *Quas Primas*, December 11, 1925.
[76] Ignaz Seipel, *Nation und Staat* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1916), p. 13; Michael Göbl, *Das Staatswappen Österreichs 1934-1938* in: *Österreichischen Zeitschrift für Genealogie und Heraldik*. Adler, Band 24, vol. 6, p. 293; Emmerich Talos, *Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem. Österreich 1933–1938* (Vienna: Lit Verlag, 2013), p. 292-93.

saw the German *Kaiserriech* as a Prussian protestant entity rooted in the logic of the French Revolution. Seipel's Austria therefore made a claim to be the true torch-bearer of German culture in service of a European mission to enthrone the Kingship of Christ.

These polemics were by no means confined to Austria. French Monarchist, Charles Maurras, in his 12th October 1926 letter to Pius XI wrote:

> "*L'Action française* was founded […] by a group of men whose only moral bond was their horror at the evil that Freemasonry, Judaism and the Protestant sects were threatening to do to their French homeland."[77]

Highlighting the support his cause had previously attained from Pius X —and how monarchist reactionaries sought to navigate the interwar period and pontificate of Pius XI— the influential French political leader lamented the new spirit of rapprochement which permeated Vatican policy vis-à-vis avowedly secularist states. The bitter animosity between secular republic and Catholic monarchy was the longstanding mainstay of political life in France. Nevertheless, his movement would be officially condemned in 1927 by a pontificate which wished to push Political Catholicism out of anti-Republican opposition and into mainstream political life and saw *L'Action française* as a cynical instrumentalization of religion. Writing to Pius XI, Maurras describes his movement as "tempered and regulated by the whole history of France: trending and concluding in Monarchy, that is to say towards more reason, conscience, morality and humanity in the State" and loyalty to the Catholic Church which he terms "the only International that holds sway."[78] It was the view of *L'Action française* that modern republican democracy was inherently anti-Catholic. In contrast to the situation in France, anti-republicanism in Austria was less openly antagonistic towards existing state authority and was on much better terms with the Vatican. Seipel thus saw in a state model inspired by the Kingship of Christ a means to ameliorate the republic. Such views of Political Catholicism within the German-speaking world were the source of much derision by ethnic nationalists who viewed with suspicion the ultramontanist remarks made by Catholics such as; "Our

[77] Charles Maurras, *L'Action française et le Vatican* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1927), p. 226.
[78] Ibid., p. 231.

fatherland is the Catholic Church and our only leader is the representative of Christ the King in this world, the Holy Father in Rome."[79]

[79] Ernst Kämpfer, *Der Politische Katholizismus: Sein Wesen und Wirken* (Leipzig: T. Fritsch Verlag, 1937), p. 27.

Chapter 4 Supernatural Supranationalism and the Reichsidee (1927-1933)

In late 1926 the US legation in Austria noted the withdrawal of English special staff correspondents assigned to Vienna, seeing in it:

> "An indication of the lessened importance to Great Britain of Austria, resulting from the progressive settlement of special problems deriving from the war and from the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire."[1]

It was generally imagined that Austria had been economically and politically stabilised. It would continue to work diplomatically towards achieving Anschluss, but nonetheless, the worst of Austria's trials were behind her and she was almost already a provisional regional entity of Germany. The July Revolt of 1927, Great Depression of 1929, subsequent May 1931 collapse of the Viennese *Creditanstalt*, and the ascent of National Socialism in Germany would necessitate a re-evaluation of that assessment.

It is in this context which chapter four argues that within the battle to shape new Austrian identity, a Conservative, Habsburg-sympathetic, Seipel faction of the CSP sought to utilise the Habsburg legacy to undermine the "revolutionary republican" character of First Republic parliamentarianism. This was undertaken by appealing to an imagined "True Democracy" in which an Austrian Catholic fatherland destined to act as a bridge at the heart of Europe between East and West. As Seipel made way for his protégé successors –Dollfuß and Schuschnigg– and the exiled Otto came of age; the Hungarian Horthy and Count Bethlen would, in contrast, assert national sovereignty by working to entrench parliamentary supremacy over the King Question.

[1] NARA: 863.00/570, November 11, 1926, report no. 1209, from William Whiting Andrews (Chargé d'affaires ad interim, US Legation, Vienna) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

4.1: Pan-Europeanism and Danube Federation

Vienna was a contested city throughout the 1920s. The aspirational socialist paradise of Austromarxist Red Vienna co-existed with —or was superimposed upon— the grand legacy of the former imperial capital at the heart of Europe. Seipel's efforts at reviving the supranational spirit which had previously served as the animating principle of the imperial metropole for centuries was welcomed by Legitimists as a first step towards restoration.

Under Seipel the CSP became increasingly assertive in its supranational vision for Austria. This vision was inspired by the legacy of a great Habsburg mission, not the apparent defeatism of the SPÖ and Pan-Germans which favoured Anschluss over a Danube-facing supranational —if not outright Imperial— Austria. Before taking up the role as chancellor for a second time, Seipel declared on 11th February 1926:

> "We do not believe that the state is the only form of life for the nation because we have gone through a different history than others."[2]

Despite the constant speculation surrounding a probable impending Anschluss and further Pan-German ambitions aimed at South Tyrol and the Sudetenland, Seipel countered that it was his "unshakable opinion" that Supernationalism would render the National Question obsolete.[3] In the first weeks of his second term as Chancellor, he was successful in securing the transfer of the International Danube Commission from Pressburg (Bratislava) to Vienna from 1927 to 1932 and from there embarked upon an ambitious supranational diplomatic offensive which caught the attention of international observers.[4]

Nonetheless, it remained unclear in the mid-1920s what path the League of Nations would take. Would it be a conference of victors —similar to the Holy Alliance born of the 1815 Congress of Vienna— or would it be something new, an objective principled

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[2] Ignaz Seipel, *Österreich wie es wirklich ist* (Vienna: Verlag-Gemeinschaft "Stifterbibliothek" Braumüller, 1953), p. 9.
[3] Ibid., p. 11.
[4] NARA: 863.00/570, November 11, 1926, report no. 1209, from William Whiting Andrews (Chargé d'affaires ad interim, US Legation, Vienna) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

association which stood for the elevation of moral principle above the neo-realist consequentialism which perpetually favoured the strong over the weak. While withholding final judgment on the LON, Seipel invested increasing effort into regional Danubian and European supranationalism. On the eve of his second term as chancellor, Seipel gave the opening address at the 1926 Pan-European congress held in Vienna.[5] In tempered enthusiasm he declared: "Our desire for peace completely excludes the possibility of our rejecting any institution or movement aimed at securing peace."[6] As with the LON, a secularity which prevented a true integration of an Austrian *Reichsidee* was a restraint on Seipel's endeavours. Catholic newspapers openly pondered whether "the fundamental idea of the Pan-European movement, to bring the peoples of Europe so close together spiritually and economically" could be achieved without a common worldview.[7]

Vienna undercover police compiled a detailed report on the content of the congress, noting that Coudenhove-Kalergi declared that the "Pan-European idea had already found its way into the hearts and minds of millions of people and would soon also exist on the map."[8] Critiquing this "claim that a world-historical act took place" with the inaugural congress of the Pan-European movement, the *Reichspost* urged caution, noting: "lectures never make history."[9] Furthermore, defending a conceptualisation of a Christendom model of Europe, the conservative paper openly admonished Coudenhove-Kalergi's manifesto claim that: "He who is not a pan-European is anti-European," advising that "such sentences do not win people over, they repel them." [10] Indicative of the heterogenous nature of the undertaking, the background in the Vienna concert hall was decorated with the eclectic portraits of historical supporters of European unity: Charles-Irénée Castel, Napoleon, Immanuel Kant, Victor Hugo and Nietzsche.[11]

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[5] Unknown, "Paneuropa-Kongress in Wien," *Das interessante Blatt*. October 7, 1926, P. 1 & 5.
[6] Unknown, "Zuerst das Fundament! Bemerkungen zum Abschluß des 1. Paneuropakongresses," *Reichspost*. October 7, 1926, p. 1.
[7] Unknown, "Zuerst das Fundament! Bemerkungen zum Abschluß des 1. Paneuropakongresses." *Reichspost*. October 7, 1926, p. 1.
[8] AdR: NPA Karton 186, Ff. 280-284, October 11, 1926 report no. Pr. ZL.IV-2181/26 entitled: "Erster Paneuropäischer Kongress in Wien" from Police Headquarters (Vienna) to Rudolf Ramek (Austrian Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).
[9] Unknown, "Zuerst das Fundament! Bemerkungen zum Abschluß des 1. Paneuropakongresses," *Reichspost*. October 7, 1926, p. 1.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Unknown, "Paneuropa-Kongress in Wien." *Das interessante Blatt*. October 7, 1926, p. 1 & 5.

Dina Gusejnova notes of post-Habsburg Pan-Europeanism that for Coudenhove-Kalergi monarchy was not a prerequisite for Austrian-led supranational political union. For his movement constitutional forms were deemed secondary to overall unity, welcoming "monarchies and republics, democracies and dictatorships" equally with only racial nationalists and communists being deemed the "natural and irreconcilable enemies of the Paneuropa movement."[12] Trying to promote the Pan-European ideal would be met with many obstacles. Existing in a continuingly squeezed ideological middle, Coudenhove-Kalergi was met with ridicule and denunciations by Reactionaries, Nationalists and Socialist alike.[13] Further complicating matters, the Austrian ambassador in Belgrade reported directly to Seipel in October 1926 that across the LE, the Pan-Europa movement was suspected of plotting "to circumvent and undermine the peace treaty, and even to pave the way for German hegemony over Europe."[14] For Belgrade, any supranational institution —especially one centred on Vienna— could not be detached from the Habsburg question. Maximilian von Hoffinger reported from Belgrade:

> "At heart, every Serb would wish he could build a Great Wall of China around the country […] a purely political way of thinking does not allow them to see an economic union other than the restoration of the old Austria-Hungary."[15]

Seipel's willingness to court favour with the LON and his promotion of the Pan-European movement would nonetheless not appease the demands of populist Legitimists such as Col. Gustav Wolff who pointed to the movements' deficiencies not just in lacking a Catholic foundation but lacking a principle of temporal and spiritual unity which only the Habsburg dynasty could provide. The implacable former K.u.K. colonel would publish a front-page October 1926 article entitled: "Pan-Europa und Habsburg" in which he set out "to prove that a practical implementation of the pan-European idea is rather futile without first creating a confederation under the Habsburg sceptre."[16]

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[12] Dina Gusejnova, *European Elites and Ideas of Empire, 1917–1957* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 71-73.
[13] Unknown, "Der blamierte Paneuropäer." *Kikeriki*, October 17. 1926, p. 1; Unknown, "Der Paneuropakongreß," *Arbeiter Zeitung*. October 7, 1926, p. 3.
[14] AdR: NPA Karton 186, ff. 302-304, October 26, 1926, report no. ZL. 83/Pol entitled: "Jugoslawische Einstellung zur Paneuropa-Idee u.s.w." from Maximilian von Hoffinger (Austrian Embassy, Belgrade) to Ignaz Seipel (Austrian Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).
[15] Ibid.
[16] Gustav Wolff, "Pan-Europa und Habsburg," *Schwarz-Gelb*. October 25, 1926, p. 1.

In this effort, Wolff emphasised the common ownership of Vienna, asserting that the Imperial City "belongs, so to speak, to the nations that have contributed to its fame and greatness for four centuries."[17] While certainly idealistic to expect such goals of the Pan-Europe movement, this perception of Vienna was indictive of what one can refer to as the "Black-Vienna" to which Seipel himself was unashamedly a product. While for Legitimists the metropole was a testament to supranational effort to forward the cause of Christendom under the unifying Habsburg mantel, for pan-Germans it was a symbol cosmopolitan excess, and for Marxists it was an oasis of Socialism in a desert of bourgeois reactionism. Nonetheless, a month before Seipel returned to the chancellery, all three camps of Austrian politics gathered in harmony to express their devotion to a former turn-of-the-century mayor of the Imperial capital, Karl Lueger. The local press described the September 1926 unveiling of a monument to Lueger on the eastern Ringstrasse as "one of the most magnificent rallies that Vienna has ever seen." The three-and-a-half-hour procession of 150,000 people —with more than half a million people spectating— featured speeches from Seipel and the current socialist mayor Karl Seitz exalting Lueger as an archetype worthy of emulation.[18]

Furthermore, *Österreichische Aktion* (ÖA), a pro-Habsburg Legitimist and Catholic movement founded in 1926 would express a supranationalism which distinguished itself from other contemporary European integralist movements such as *Action Française*. In a 1927 *Österreichische Aktion* essay entitled: *Reflections on Empire, the Empire of Peoples, the League of Nations and Paneurope*, Alfred Missong opened his thoughts with a quote in Italian from the Carmelite chaplain at the 1683 battle of Vienna, Fr. Marco d'Aviano, in which he proclaimed: "The House of Austria is the foundation of Christendom."[19] For Missong "Supranational-European solidarity" was the "modern school of thought that is closest to the Austrian idea."[20] Nonetheless, the secularist centrism of Coudenhove-Kalergi

[17] Ibid.
[18] Unknown, "Enthüllung des Lueger-Denkmals," *Das interessante Blatt*. September 23, 1926, p. 1 & 4.
[19] Alfred Missong, "Europa: Betrachtung über Kaisertum, Völkerreich, Völkerbund und Paneuropa," in *Die österreichische Aktion (Action): Programmatische Studien*, eds. August Maria Knoll, Alfred Missong, Wilhelm Schmid, Ernst Karl Winter, and H. K. Zeßner-Spitzenberg (Vienna: Ernst Karl Winter Verlag, 1927), p. 37.
[20] Ibid., p. 39.

couldn't provide "the patriarchal idea that sees the ruler as the spiritual and political father of the peoples ruled by him."[21] For ÖA, the Habsburg Empire was comprised of "a complex of countries that belonged together organically."[22] In line with Seipel's desired *Weltreich*, Legitimists declared:

> "The idea of the Imperial universal Empire was the most ingenious expression of the sense of solidarity of European Christendom."[23]

This supranationalism was presented in opposition to what they derogatorily referred to as the "bi-national empire," born of the 1867 Austro-Hungarian constitutional compromise. Furthermore, the supranational *Weltreich* of Christendom was equally juxtaposed to the "World Republic" of the LON which at best only offered the cold soul-less temporary peace of bureaucratic institutionalism and at worst was merely "an instrument of the victorious powers to secure their spoils of victory […] in which Jews and Freemasons hold the reins."[24] Catholic unity was hoped to provide the cure to this concern with emphasis on the common divine filiation as the "article of faith which is the mystical foundation of all international ethics and sociology" and the spiritual unity of baptism healing the sinful artificial divides of man.[25] Thus for Legitimists, their current predicament was of spiritual as well as political origination and therefore needed spiritual —in addition to political— solutions.

ÖA was a much more academic movement than the more populist proponents of Legitimism such as the *Wolff-Verband*.[26] While Legitimists saw the goal of ending the scourge of war as "a profession of the spirit of peace which was a profession of Christ, the King of Nations,"[27] ÖA nevertheless, had a realist or pessimistic awareness of operating into an international environment shaped by hostile forces:

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[21] Ibid., p. 45.
[22] Ibid., p. 49.
[23] Ibid., p. 45.
[24] Ibid., p. 52; Such a view was not exclusive to Political Catholicism in Austria. A mere week before the Anschluss in March 1938, Fr. Denis Fahy would lament how "the Vicar of Christ was excluded from the Masonic League of Nations," denouncing the Anglo-Atlantic press declaring: "It is the duty of a New York journalist to lie, to distort, to revile, to toady at the feet of Mammon, and to sell his country and his race for his daily bread." See Denis Fahey, *The Mystical Body of Christ in the Modern World* (2nd ed.) (Waterford: Browne and Nolan, 1938), p. xxvii & xiv.
[25] Missong, "Europa: Betrachtung über Kaisertum, Völkerreich, Völkerbund und Paneuropa," p. 40.
[26] Gustav Wolff however did have a PhD in History from the University of Vienna.
[27] Missong, "Europa: Betrachtung über Kaisertum, Völkerreich, Völkerbund und Paneuropa," p. 54.

> "Our hostility towards the Jewish-Masonic-led League of Nations can logically be no different from that which we feel towards every modern state, including our own."[28]

Unlike Wolff, both Seipel and Missong were willing to operate within perceived broken political structures so as not to concede a monopoly to their opponents. To them, the LON was "just as tolerable as a necessary evil as, for instance, the democratic Republic of Austria is tolerable."[29]

Pan-Europeanism was far from a homogenous monolith. While the Austromarxist press decried the Pan-European movement as capitalist deception and many cautious supporters of the movement were monarchists, nonetheless, the Republican-Socialist Party leader and Freemason, French Prime Minster Aristide Briand, would defend his efforts to promote the idea of Pan-Europeanism amongst his European counter-parts in a 12th July, 1929 parliamentary speech.[30] The Pan-European movement was therefore a contested ground which provided a common platform for both Renner and Seipel simultaneously representing Austria.[31] Within these efforts to secure lasting peace in Europe, Legitimist Hugo Diwald in 1933 would denounce those "who would once again desire to appoint the pagan god of war as ruler of Europe" and juxtaposes an increasingly bellicose Berlin with an Austria which inherited a "historical destiny as the guardian of supranational peace in the Danube region."[32] Legitimism within the CSP would find its expression in attempting to fulfil the Habsburg mission under the name of the Austrian fatherland via Supranational Danubianism. While this effort emphasised the natural complementarity of peoples of the former Habsburg Empire's peoples, the extrapolation of that principle and its application to a wider Pan-European scale remained a dubious jump of logic. Furthermore, while the work of Diwald and his fellow Legitimists to undermine German nationalism would align with French geopolitical interests, the LE were an ever-present obstacle to surmount.

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[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., p. 55.
[30] AdR: NPA 186, Ff. 425-432, August 14, 1929, report no. 5192 entitled: "Europäische Staatenkonferenz" from Austrian embassy (Paris) to Ernst Streeruwitz (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).
[31] Ibid.
[32] Hugo Diwald, "Österreichs europäische Friedenmission," *Der Christliche Ständestaat*, December 17, 1933, p. 13–15, cited in Alfred Missong, Christentum und Politik in Österreich: Ausgewählte Schriften 1924–1950 (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2006), p. 443–48.

4.2: True Democracy and Paramilitary Mobilisation

As tension between Austromarxism and Political Catholicism worsened, it increasingly became a point of speculation as to whether Seipel's alleged covert-regency would ever evolve into a Hungarian style authoritarian open-regency or Italian-style Fascist autocracy. In particular, Seipel's repeated use of the term "true democracy"[1] throughout the 1920s drove some to ponder if the Catholic prelate had political aspirations beyond mere Chancellor. After speaking with SPÖ mayor of Vienna, Seitz, US ambassador Albert H. Washburn relayed in a 11th Vienna, 1928 report to Washington DC that having "talked very freely" with the Austromarxist over a "Thanksgiving day dinner," he had learnt that the Austrian Left objected to proposed constitutional amendments that would see "an increase of executive prerogatives" fearing a "plot" afoot by then recently former-chancellor Seipel, "who had aspirations to be a 'dictator.'"[2] The SPÖ saw in the 1929 constitutional reform to concentrated political power in the executive branch of government nothing more than a Legitimist plot. After the successful constitutional amendment, the president could now call elections, appoint or dismiss ministers, or even unilaterally dissolve the National Council. It was considered a logical conclusion that if Seipel made a return to political life in becoming head of state, he would transition his office to that of regent-dictator, like that of Horthy in neighbouring Hungary.

In 1931 the former chancellor gave a lecture on the recently published papal encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*. Therein he made clear that the Church's teaching pertained to principles applicable in addressing social questions and –even if requiring well-intentioned application and resulting concrete policy– were not a proscriptive political programme to be rigidly adhered to.[3] Seipel entreated his audience to shun any

[1] Unknown, "Die österreichische Idee: Ein Vortrag des Altbundeskanzlers Dr. Seipel," *Reichspost*. July 9, 1929, p. 2–3.
[2] NARA: 863.001MiklasWillhelm/2, December 11, 1928, report no. 2047 from Albert H. Washburn (US Legation, Vienna) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[3] Sigismund Waitz, Johannes Messner, Richard Schmitz, Johannes Dobretsberger, Wilhelm Kolb, Ignaz Seipel, Friedrich Piffl, et al., *Die soziale Botschaft des* Papstes: Vorträge über "Quadragesimo anno (Vienna: Volksbundverlag, 1931), p. 81.

form of utopianism rooted in the belief once the ideal social or political structure is adopted, then peace and harmony will follow. Rather, in his view, a significant improvement in moral virtue was a prerequisite to the success of any society and this would pave the way for a political order based on justice and reason. In this way he hoped to achieve the undoing of a perceived recent "social atomisation" in favour of a cooperative subsidiarity. But of note for the Legitimists amongst his most ardent supporters, Seipel points out:

> "The socially destructive individualism is not from yesterday: it does not come from the upheaval after the world war; it is not related to the form of government. It may be that the atomisation of society is less pronounced in a monarchy than in a republic; that it is more pronounced in a presidential republic than in a parliamentary republic."[4]

While in his eyes monarchy was a preferential political ordering, Seipel makes clear that the process of social disintegration takes root in man's heart regardless of his status as either citizen, comrade or subject. Buried within this 1931 quote is also a slight against what Seipel terms a "presidential republic," a concept in the Austrian mind tightly associated with American Wilsonianism.

The distinction thus emerges between the Habsburg mission and the Habsburg dynasty. While Austrian-ness was a sub-construct of German-ness, the issue of in-group and out-group identification was not racial –as was increasingly the case in neighbouring Germany– but rather cultural –specifically religious and ideological. While a small republic or a Pan-German unity under Prussian leadership were rejected by the CSP, the question of statehood was still unresolved. Seipel gave a speech back in 1922 to a Vienna CSP meeting arguing that the term *Vaterland* had a strategic value in post-1918 political discourse as it imbued an implied organic sense of continuity with generations past.[5] It was therefore implied that Austrians of the interwar period had an obligation to their ancestors to carry in the torch of the Habsburg mission.

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Josef Geßl, ed., *Seipels Reden in Österreich und anderwärts* (Vienna: Verlag Heros, 1926), p. 43; This linguistic appeal was no doubt rooted in Burkean social contract theory which conceived of a civilisational or political community comprising of generations past, present and yet unborn was popular amongst counter-revolutionary conservative movements from the late 1700s onwards.

This openness to the historical Habsburg mission on the part of Seipel was warmly received by Legitimist and close confidant of the deceased emperor Karl, Count Polzer-Hoditz. In his 1929 biography of Karl the count would juxtapose "the supranational *Reichsidee* of the Habsburgs" with the "*Nationalstaatsidee* of the Hohenzollern."[6] Seipel too situated himself in opposition to a Prussian, Protestant and Nationalist Germany to the North. In his view Berlin was seeking to rule over a centralised nation state like that of France, thus adopting "the idea of an omnipotent territorial state" at the expense of supranational Austria with her Habsburg heritage of composite monarchy with respect for subsidiarity.[7] For Seipel, Austria was "predestined" by geography to lead, and this had resulted in a "teacher" to "pupil" relationship between the Germans of Austria and the various other minorities of the Empire. Thus, Seipel wrote:

> "Austria has been the ancestral home of the Roman emperors of the German nation […] this part of our history has brought us closer to democracy."[8]

For the interwar former chancellor, Austrian culture within the Holy Roman Empire preceded the rise of the Habsburg dynasty and did not rely upon their agency. This plays into an understanding of the Habsburgs as a passive force, one transitional step in a pre-charted path of history through the storms and tumults of the recent past towards an inevitable progress of democracy. Such a narrative would be fundamentally at odds with the views of Legitimists.

On the Catholic Right, the contested meaning of the term "Democracy," was often juxtaposed with a substantially distinct "Parliamentarism." Despite a recent centuries' long tradition of Habsburg preference for absolutist tendency —making liberal democratic concessions only to ward off internal rebellion when weakened by military defeat (e.g., 1867 *Ausgleich* with Hungary and Reichsrat in Vienna)— Seipel felt that Austrians were naturally inclined towards democracy. In 1929 he wrote:

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[6] Arthur Polzer-Hoditz, *Kaiser Karl: Aus der Geheimmappe seines Kabinetts-Chefs* (Vienna: Amalthea-Verlag, 1929), p. 19.
[7] Unknown, "Die österreichische Idee: Ein Vortrag des Altbundeskanzlers Dr. Seipel," *Reichspost*. July 9, 1929, p. 2–3.
[8] Ibid.

> "We love true democracy and will not give it up. We should learn to understand the Austrian idea. The best source for this is history. Austrian history has not ended, not even with the year 1918, so we must not be frightened by the fact that we find certain fractures in this history."[9]

Austrians had suffered through the 1806 abolishing of the H.R.E. and then in 1866 with the isolation from the rest of the German world in the wake of the fratricidal Austro-Prussian War, and finally in 1918 with the isolation of Austrian-Germans from their fellow Germans and other non-German fellow Imperial subjects. All three are described by Seipel as being interconnected, one following the other. If the H.R.E. had survived, 1866 and 1918 would not have been possible. Such a view of a modern history as consistent decline —or "long defeat"— from the Golden Age of Christendom finds its echo in other Catholic thinkers such as J.R.R. Tolkien, Cardinal John Henry Newman, G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Bolloc, Cardinal Joseph Hergenröther, and even St. Augustine.[10]

Contemporary American journalists in part agreed that Austria had no parliamentary tradition as understood in the Anglosphere. R. K. Sheridon argued that there was no concept of a loyal opposition, i.e., two parties with the same teleological end and different perspectives on how to achieve such an end.[11] In part this narrative was used by international commentators sympathetic to the Catholic Right to argue that the CSP could not be accused of destroying something which never truly existed, or which was implicitly considered as incompatible with Austrian history. The fall of the monarchy left in its wake a power vacuum and there was still bitterness over the provisional declaration of a republic and post-war power struggles. Sheridon further saw a direct contrast in the "temperament" of the "flamboyant and decorative" paramilitary Heimwehr leader Prince Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg with that of the more reserved Seipel, Dollfuss and Schuschnigg. While

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[9] Ibid.

[10] J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, ed. Humphrey Carpenter & Christopher Tolkien (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), p. 255; John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: B.M. Pickering, 1878), p. 40; G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1909), p. 157; Hilaire Belloc, *The Great Heresies* (Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 1991), p. 110; Joseph Hergenröther, *The Catholic Church and Christian State*, trans. J. D. Haas (London: Burns and Oates, 1876), p. 250; Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Random House, 1950), Book I, Chapter 15, p. 41.

[11] R.K. Sheridon, *Kurt von Schuschnigg: A Tribute* (London: English Universities Press, 1942), p. 51.

deriving a degree of charismatic gravitas in the form of his illustrious aristocratic lineage,[12] Sheridon asserts that "the great Catholic tradition was not continued in [Starhemberg, who] was not addicted to the inside of a churches: he preferred the society of the Vienna blondes at the Cobenzal Bar."[13] Respectability would be the currency which would propel the new CSP political order, one in which Catholicism was the cornerstone.

During a 14th December 1928 debate on the topic of constitutional reform, CSP proponent of "Social Monarchy," Richard Schmitz, urged moderation and reason:

> "In a parliament, only the arguments of the mind can prevail, but not the arguments of threat or of physical number." [14]

Several years later while on a Swiss speaking tour, Schmitz spoke on "the reorganisation of society" as a solution to the problem of Socialist "class warfare."[15] It was promise that the solutions of the 1931 papal encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* proposed to address the problems of the Working Class —as applied by the VF— would "liberate them from the mistakes of liberal-individualist thinking and successfully transcend revolutionary socialism."[16] This solution would result in a "transition period from a class society to a corporate society."[17] Yet at this time, in their own November 1926 Party programme, the CSP –in response to their SPÖ rival's Linz programme– declared their "commitment to the democratic state and therefore demanded full equality of all federal citizens in the exercise of political rights, freedom of opinion and freedom of organisation."[18] Nonetheless, not even ten years into the new republican order, they simultaneously claimed:

> "Until the end of the war, the Christian Social Party had always stood up for the monarchy and was still trying to implement the idea of a democratic monarchy during the revolution."[19]

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[12] His ancestors in the 17th Century along with the Polish king having had as Sheridon writes: "saved Western Civilization."
[13] Sheridon, *Kurt von Schuschnigg*, p. 54.
[14] Richard Schmitz and Rudolf Till, *Reden und Aufsätze des Bürgermeisters Richard Schmitz* (Vienna: Deutscher Verlag für Jugend und Volk, 1936), p. 78–79.
[15] Ibid., p. 30-32.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] "Das Programm der Christlichsozialen Partei: Parteirats-Beschluß vom 29. November 1926," in Generalsekretariat der Christlichsozialen Bundesparteileitung, *Das Christlich-soziale Programm: Mit Erläuterungen von Richard Schmitz* (Vienna: Volksbundverlag, 1932), p. 14.
[19] *Das Christlich-soziale Programm*, p. 31.

With the fall of Red Vienna –brought about by escalating waves of political violence culminating in a brief civil war– Schmitz would go on as appointed Mayor of the once Imperial city and would use that platform to further his advocacy for a Social Monarchy on the principles of "Social Justice" proscribed in *Quadragesimo Anno*.[20]

In contrast to the modest momentum within Austria, for exiled Habsburgs, the Horthy regime throughout the late 1920s was –to their detriment– consolidating power by de-actualising the King Question. While this fortified power was, in their view, based on betrayal with sectarian undertones, it was acknowledged as not explicitly anti-Civilisational in nature. Meanwhile in Austria, for Seipel and Habsburgs alike, the Republic was a regrettable Judo-Bolshevistic construct that —in the short term— had to be recognised, controlled and cleansed of its anti-Catholic elements. Historians Gerwarth and Üngör call attention to how, in both Austria and Hungary, the "search for a post-war project to justify their war-time sacrifices found its expression in the attempted «cleansing of the nation» of social and ethnic elements perceived to be obstacles to a «national rebirth»."[21] Many anti-revolutionaries or synthesis-reactionaries saw the root of societal woes in the influence of Jews in both liberal financial circles and radical Marxist movements.

There existed a large appetite for anti-modern reaction to undo the recent disenchantment of public life that resulted in the wake of the war that brought about the downfall of Europe's continental Empires. John Haag argues that German intellectualism would praise "the life-giving forces of the romanticist tradition as an antidote to western liberal and rationalistic values."[22] Brigitte Behal further notes that with the politicisation of the average citizen, Church teaching "became part of the political landscape" and many, most notably on the political Left which disagreed with Church social doctrine formally

[20] Richard Schmitz, *Der Weg zur berufsständischen Ordnung in Österreich* (Vienna: Manzsche Verlag, 1934), p. 28.
[21] Robert Gerwarth and Ugur Ümit Üngör, "The Collapse of the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires and the Brutalisation of the Successor States," *Journal of Modern European History*, no. 13 (2) (2015): p. 230.
[22] John Haag, "Othmar Spann and the Quest for a 'True State,'" Austrian History Yearbook 12, no. 1 (1976): p. 228.

disassociated with their nominal faith.[23] From the perspective of the Catholic Church in Austria, secular materialism was the congenital disease of the First Republic, and Marxism a mere symptom.

Of particular concern was the persuasive far-reaching influence of the SPÖ on the urban working class and penetration of the bourgeois middle-class by the religiously indifferent or Protestant Pan-German parties. These forces together were seen to have conspired to forward the "naturalist and materialist education" of the youth.[24] In December 1926 the Legitimist press denounced the influence the modern education system and press had over the next generation of Austrian youth who had no experience of the previous Habsburg empire with which they could compare the current republic.[25] In a 14th December 1928 open session of the National Council, Monarchist-minded CSP minister of education, Richard Schmitz, declared of the heroes of the First World War:

> "Such heroism is also needed in civil life, in the life of the state and of the nation […] It is my conviction that no culture can fall from the sky, but rather must be organically developed. Every culture must honour the past in order to be able to develop and flourish in the future."[26]

Furthermore, commenting two months prior on the downfall of the alliance between Throne and Altar, one Austrian bishop, Bishop of Seckau, Ferdinand Pawlikowski, on 4th October 1928 theorised privately to his brother-bishops how the "political reorganisation of Austria, now as a republic, lacks the authority of the old Austria which was able to set limits to a misunderstood freedom" such as suppressing "the atheist press and the unrestricted freedom of the press."[27]

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[23] Brigitte Behal, "Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten deutsch-nationaler katholischer Eliten im Zeitraum 1930–1965: Ihr Weg und Wandel in diesen Jahren am Beispiel Dr. Anton Böhms, Dr. Theodor Veiters und ihrer katholischen und politischen Netzwerke" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 2009), p. 37.

[24] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, 10), Ff. 297-308, December 15, 1928, report no. 10547/365 entitled "Circa le apostasie in Austria" from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[25] Unknown, "Der Weg zur Monarchie," *Schwarz-Gelb*. December 6, 1926, p. 1.

[26] Schmitz and Till, *Reden und Aufsätze,* p. 77-8.

[27] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 1, Ff. 334-335, October 4, 1928, report on rate and reasons for current decline of the Church in Austria from bishop of Graz ("Fürstbischof von Seckau") to Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna).

Such words find their inspiration no doubt in the recent events of the Austromarxist riot which reduced the Viennese Justice Palace to a smouldering ruin, in what historian Thomas Winkelbauer calls the "turning point year" of 1927.[28] A 30th January demonstration by the socialist paramilitary *Republikanischer Schutzbund*[29] ended in violence at Schattendorf, near the Hungarian border region, east of Vienna when interrupted by rival ring-wing militia.[30] A suspected nullification self-defence verdict in favour of the Right-wing *Heimwehr* militia incited the Austromarxist crowd gathered outside to riot and burning of the Vienna supreme court building, the *Justizpalast* on Ringstrasse.[31] The press in the course of reporting these events were not neutral spectators documenting historical happenings but active partisan protagonists shaping their unfolding. Front page headlines in bold red ink the press openly pondered if Austria was "on the path to Civil War?"[32] Segments of the Centre-Left press disassociated from the events which left 82 dead —referred to as "The darkest days of the Republic"— and attributed the violence to "Russian communist instigators."[33] While denouncing the arsonists, former-chancellor Schober —who directed the suppression of the riot as the Vienna police chief— was portrayed as a modern Austrian Admiral Horthy.[34]

Austromarxists openly declared "Civil War!" with provocative drawings of industrialists hiding behind Right-wing and pro-Habsburg aristocratic-led *Heimwehr* militia, in turn hiding behind a large crucifix with bullets flying towards the working class.[35] The headquarters of the *Reichspost* was also targeted by the Left-wing mob with the self-described "Viennese newspaper fortress of the Austrian Christian people" reduced to a "half-destroyed" ruins.[36] Frederick Funder used the opportunity to write in the

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[28] Oliver Rathkolb, „Erste Republik, Austrofaschismus, Nationalsozialismus (1918-1945)," in *Geschichte Österreichs*, ed. Thomas Winkelbauer and Christian Lackner (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2015), p. 491.
[29] Founded in 1923 once the Federal Army and Police were reclaimed from SPÖ control and having over 80,000 members.
[30] Rathklob, "Erste Republik," p. 491; John W. Boyer, *Austria 1867–1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), p. 697.
[31] Unknown, "Ein Schreckenstag in der Geschischte Wiens" *Das interessante Blatt*. July 21, 1927, p. 1; Unknown, "Wiens Bluttage," *Österreichische Illustrierte Zeitung.* July 24, 1927, p. 1.
[32] Unknown, "Auf dem Weg zum Bürgerkrieg?" *Österreichische Illustrierte Zeitung*. August 7, 1927, p. 1.
[33] Unknown, "Die düstersten Tage der Republik," *Die Stunde*. July 19, 1927, p. 1.
[34] Unknown, "Weg mit den Brandstiftern! 1919 Horthy. 1927 Schober," *Der Abend*. July 18, 1927, p. 1.
[35] Unknown, "Bürgerkrieg!" *Der Kuckuck*. September 15, 1929, p. 1.
[36] Frederick Funder, "Wir bleiben fest!" *Reichspost*. July 18, 1927, p. 1.

following morning's editorial to launch renewed calls the elimination of Socialist paramilitaries:

> "We do not want to lose any time considering whether our fatherland and the city of Vienna would have been spared these bloody days if our almost uninterrupted warnings for internal disarmament had been heard more."[37]

Schober would take up the chancellorship once more in 1929 after Seipel's retirement and pursue this goal relentlessly, confiscating the hidden arms caches of paramilitary formations on the Left and Right alike,[38] despite the latter's support for the law and order chancellor.[39] While the *Heimwehr* paramilitary force on Right chose a name which invoked a patriotism based on regional particularism and was led by aristocratic Legitimists such as Prince Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, its opposing Socialist counterpart chose the name *Republikanischer Schutzbund* (Republican Defence League/RSB). Warning of impending Civil War, the *Republikanischer Schutzbund* decried the *Heimwehr* as "a private army of capitalistic servants for sale, for the purpose of suppressing the workers."[40] *Der Kuckuck* presented Seipel as a "Spanish Grand Inquisitor" supporting Habsburg restoration to achieve an Italian fascist style state through civil war.[41] The CSP in turn labelled the RSB as Judo-Bolsheviks.[42]

Key to the effort of securing an anti-revolutionary political order would be securing the loyalty of the police, army and paramilitary groups. According to the Church's own estimation, the Austrian *Bundesheer* was in 1928 once more 93.5% Catholic and had escaped the secularisation which had impacted other institutions of the Austrian First Republic.[43] This new army was in no way disposed to the revolutionary rhetoric which found warm reception in its revolutionary precursor, the *Volksamree*. Within a rise of

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Boyer, Austria 1867-*1955*, p. 688.
[39] NARA: 863.00/709, May 13, 1931, report no. 289 from Legation of the United States of America (Vienna) to Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[40] Parteiarchive CSP: Parlamentsklub 1900-1934, 67 Flugschriften 1927-1933: "Gegen den Bürgerkrieg! - Männer und Frauen der arbeitenden Volkes!"
[41] Unknown, "Was Seipel will?" *Der Kuckuck*. September 22, 1929, p. 2.
[42] Georg Mautner Markhof, *Major Emil Fey: Heimwehrführer zwischen Bürgerkrueg, Dollfuß-Mord und Anschluss* (Graz: Stocker Verlag, 2004), p. 56-58 & 88.
[43] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 1, Ff. 334-335, October 4, 1928, report on rate and reasons for current decline of the Church in Austria from bishop of Graz ("Fürstbischof von Seckau") to Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna).

paramilitary tension one can see an increasing interconnectivity between *Heimwehr* and CSP with a former imperial army officer Major Emil Fey joining the CSP in 1927 and founding the Vienna branch of the *Heimwehr*. Fey was ennobled for his service in the First World War and later awarded the status of Baron by Otto von Habsburg in 1934.[44] In the wake of the Justice Palace fire, we see an intensification of an exclusive state —and even a nation building project— which was a unilateral effort on the part of the Austrian right, and more specifically, aspirational lower-aristocracy.

A year before the catalyst of July 1927, William Whiting Andrews,[45] would argue that even if most of the RSB members had prior military experience in the recent World War, nevertheless, they "would only resort to fighting if an attempt were made to restore the Monarchy or to so change the Constitution as to deprive the proletarian working classes of their control over Vienna."[46] Furthermore, such developments were not envisaged without collaboration from Hungary or Bavaria in which case the SPÖ's paramilitary wing "would be of no military value."[47] While such an attitude was viable in 1926, three years later paramilitary tension had become seemingly insurmountable and faith in a common democratic solution within the parameters of the Austrian republic increasingly weak. One letter to Wilhelm Schmid —as editor of the Catholic Legitimist *Vaterland* periodical— in the Summer of 1929, from "a secondary school teacher in Vienna" pondered:

> "And is it not even more conspicuous that the church-hostile Freemasons are so fervently campaigning for this republic and against the restoration of the Habsburgs? Does it not speak volumes that the apostates are unveiling monuments to the republic?"[48]

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[44] Lothar Höbelt, "Nostalgic Agnostics: Austrian Aristocrats and Politics, 1918-1938," in *European Aristocracies and the Radical Right 1918-1939*, ed. Katrin Urbach (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 173.
[45] US Charge d'Affaires ad interim in Vienna.
[46] NARA: 863.00/563, August 21, 1926, letter no. 1143 from William Whiting Andrews (Legation of the United States of America Vienna) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[47] Ibid.
[48] Unknown, "War der Umsturz von 1918 der katholsichen Kirche in Oesterreich zum Heile?" *Vaterland: Blätter für katholishes Österreich*, May/June 1927, p. 39-41.

Yet not all Legitimists on the Catholic Right would even make a pretence to uphold the label democracy, seeing in it a plot to undermine Christian values. Another —this time named— contributor to the *Vaterland* periodical, Robert Mäder, would write:

> "Modern democracy, with its ultimate goal of a *Weltrepublik* is an ideal of the currently prevailing international Freemasonry. It is a work of hatred of God and anti-Christendom. The ever-naïve Catholics have no idea of this. The worse for them. The prophecy of Donoso Cortes[49] in his letter to Cardinal Fornari will come true: The great anti-Christian empire of the last times, which will be a colossal, demagogic world empire, ruled by a people's man of satanic greatness."[50]

These views were not only finding once more a receptive ear in Austria but also in Germany –albeit of a less supernatural tone– where they paved the way for political theories on autocratic sovereignty from more modern counter-enlightenment thinkers such as Carl Schmitt.[51]

US State Department officials in Vienna noted in May 1931, that, unlike the SPÖ affiliated RSB, the *Heimwehr* was claimed to be apolitical, lacked a centralized structure of its smaller urban socialist counter-part and had furthermore, "been handicapped by the lack of intelligent and efficient leadership."[52] Impatient at the apparently lukewarm mainstream Conservative resistance to Socialism, the more fascistic wing of the *Heimwehr*, led by Walter Pfrimer, would attempt a failed Putsch in 1931. The subject of ridicule due to how quickly his would-be coup d'etat —localised to Styria— was supressed by the CSP government on account of wider-*Heimwehr* disassociation. Pfrimer fled into exile in Yugoslavia but returned for his trial the following year.[53] Nonetheless, in

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[49] Juan Donoso Cortés was a nineteenth-century counter-revolutionary Spanish political theologian, who argued for a primacy of theological understanding in political theory and need for an empowered Catholic ruler to battle the forces of secular modernity.

[50] Unknown, "War der Umsturz von 1918 der katholischen Kirche in Oesterreich zum Heile?" *Vaterland: Blätter für katholisches Österreich*, May/June 1927, p. 39-41.
30th August 2022 17:20

[51] Steilen, Felix. "Juan Donoso Cortés and Political Theology," *The Review of Politics* 86, no. 1 (2024): p. 25.

[52] NARA: 863.00/709, May 13, 1931, report no. 289 from Legation of the United States of America (Vienna) to Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

[53] NARA: 863.00/729, January 5, 1932, letter no. 463 from G.B. Stockton (Legation of the United States of America, Vienna) to Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

his trial, Pfrimer was successfully acquitted on the grounds of making the argument that what he had done could not be considered treason as, in his words:

> "High-treason can only be committed against a state if that state has a legal constitution […] the people have never been asked whether they desired a republic."[54]

Pfrimer while belonging to the anti-establishment Pan-German wing of the *Heimwehr*, could —despite making an appeal to popular sovereignty— successfully hide behind Legitimism. However, noteworthy in the Pfrimer-affair, one sees a clear lack of will by the CSP to defend the principle of the republic, rather acting merely in the interest of stability and order.

[54] Ibid.

4.3: Catholic Heimat and Jewish Republic.

Not long after the echoes of artillery and rifle fire fell silent over the trenches of Europe, Josef Eberle would condemn the new political order of Rump-Austria as a "Jewish republic."[1] Eberle and his collaborators such as Richard von Kralik saw their Monarchism as a struggle against what they termed "the rule of money."[2] Nevertheless, of Nazism, Eberle would write in 1931:

> "The stronger the movement becomes, the more it is necessary to point out its danger, the immaturity, the corrupting influence of its programs."[3]

National Socialism was for the Catholic Austrian Eberle an erroneous synthesis of Machiavellian, Nietzschean and Norse Pagan philosophy just as dangerous as "the so-called Reformation and the French Revolution."[4] Echoing *Quas Primas*, Eberle asserts:

> "History shows a thousand things, but one thing it never shows: the real building of a state, the real recovery of a people without God —under the banner of liberal-chaotic ideas."[5]

Eberle promoted his Anti-Semitism as Catholic in nature, writing:

> "The way in which National Socialism dealt with this [Jewish] question is, as a rule, not only un-Christian but positively barbaric."[6]

A post-*Anschluss* 15th August 1938 SS report recommended the prohibition of Eberle's *Schönerer Zukunft* publication on the grounds of his political activism being ordered to "a world renewed and reorganised under the sign of the cross." Eberle himself therein identified as "a Catholic in the comprehensive sense of the medieval church."[7]

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[1] Josef Eberle, "Wie sollen wir Stellung nehmen?" *Die Monarchie*. November 14, 1918, p. 7.
[2] Richard von Kralik, " Politische Tagesfragen: Monarchie und Dynastie," *Die Monarchie*, November 14, 1918, p. 1.
[3] Josef Eberle, *Zum Kampf um Hitler: Ein Reformprogramm für Staats-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturpolitik zur Überwindung des Radikalismus* (Vienna: Verlag Schönere Zukunft, 1931), p. 5.
[4] Ibid., p. 6-7.
[5] Ibid., p. 48; In this understanding of history, National Socialism was the culmination of Protestant schism and the French Revolution. It was a revolutionary, —and importantly, as seen from the seating arrangement of the late 18th-Century Ancien Régime National Assembly — a Leftist movement.
[6] Ibid., p. 49.
[7] AdR: NPA Liasse Deutschland I/ 12, Karton 164, Zeitschrift "Schönere Zukunft" in Wien, 2440/4, August 15 report from Reichsführer SS to the Reich Commissioner for the Reunification of Austria with the German Reich, Gauleiter Bürckel found in Barbara Maria Hofer, "Joseph Eberle: Katholischer

Wilhelm Miklas and Seipel, as demonstrated in their November 1928 speeches before parliament on the occasion for the 10th anniversary of the young state instead chose to deploy patriotic rhetoric preferring to speak of Austria, not as "the republic" or embracing "republican values" but rather spoke of "reconstruction of our homeland" and "our fatherland."[8] In a subsequent July 1929 lecture, entitled *The Austrian Idea*, Seipel expounded how the existence of the Austrians, as a people, was actively willed by God.[9] The Austrians of the new state, at the heart of Europe, were the active component, the driving force, of the former Empire, and now once more he argued were called to embark on a divine mission as torch bearers of Catholic Germanic civilisation on the continent. Seipel under the logic of divine providence displays a significant degree of environmental determination in his logic of Austrian destiny. In his article he declares:

> "The waters and the streams, the rivers and the mountain passes have led the Austrian to look out into the world, to have an open eye, an open mind, an open heart for the rest of the world. This Austrian land has no natural borders."[10]

Rather than seeing the mountains and rivers of Austria as defensive fortifications to retreat behind, he seeks to re-focus the meaning of nation from an ethnic concept to that of shared historical identity and mission. What is not mentioned in the article is the specific role the Habsburg dynasty played in this effort. Furthermore, Seipel sought to monopolise the idea of (true) democracy, tearing away at the rhetoric of the SPÖ and stressing a continuity of culture in which the new small state's existence was merely one more chapter in a centuries-old Austrian history. Eventual success in this endeavour would greatly aid the Habsburg cause, nonetheless, the pertinent question for openly-declared Legitimists was whether or not this chapter would have the Habsburgs serve as a protagonist or a mere contextual footnote.

Publizist zwischen 'Monarchie' und 'schönerer Zukunft'; Ein Beitrag zur katholischen Publizistik der Ersten Republik" (PhD diss., University of Salzburg, 1995), p. 397-408.

[8] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 849, Fasc. 1, Ff. 99, Novemebr 12, 1928, report: "Riassunto del discorso di Mgr. Seipel" from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[9] Unknown, "Die österreichische Idee: Ein Vortrag des Altbundeskanzlers Dr. Seipel," *Reichspost*. July 9, 1929, p. 2–3 cited in McGregor-Bulloch, "*The Promotion of an Austrian Identity 1918-1938,*" p. 68.

[10] Unknown, "Die österreichische Idee: Ein Vortrag des Altbundeskanzlers Dr. Seipel," *Reichspost*. July 9, 1929, p. 2–3.

Foreshadowing the spirit of *Quas Primas* a year later, in 1924 Frederick Funder would write in the US press:

> "He [Seipel] realized that anarchy in the soul leads to anarchy in the State. Seipel gave a soul to Austria and the miraculous revival of this State became a reality."[11]

This "miraculous revival" would be based on a pious fidelity to the Kingship of Christ as a supernatural endeavour rather than a secular project rooted in the logic of Liberal Democracy. Of the Austrian bourgeoisie Otto Bauer would assert:

> "Unlike the Czech and Polish bourgeoisie, these classes have no democratic and revolutionary traditions. Until 1918 they were in the camp of the Hapsburgs, and their hearts are there still." [12]

For the SPÖ, the subversion of revolutionary republic by Seipel and his faction of the CSP was either a substitute —or prelude— to Habsburg restoration in the minds of the Catholic Right. While Legitimists would not be content merely to "transform the People's Republic into a bourgeois Republic" [13] and sought out a monarchy, they nonetheless recognised that the interim solution offered by Political Catholicism could serve as a secret regency in praxis.

Seipel was completely aware of the position he occupied in the Austromarxist mind and sought to dispel any apprehensions which the public might share. Contrary to common assertations of historians such as Ernst Hanisch, who claim that Seipel "had never used the words 'Austrian Republic,' but only spoke of the Austrian state,"[14] one such case does certainly exist, his 1922 inaugural address to parliament as chancellor. According to international observers his oration began with disapproving "cries on the part of Social Democrats" and ended with universal approval. This applause was only achievable by means of rare, bipartisan, positive use of republican rhetoric in the form of an apologia for his role in the last days of the Dual-Monarchy:

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[11] Frederick Funder, "Austria's Moral Rebirth: Work of Msgr. Seipel" *The Catholic Standard and Times* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). December 27, 1924, p. 2.
[12] Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution* (trans. H. J. Stenning) (London: L. Parsons, 1925), p. 279.
[13] Ibid., p. 278.
[14] Ernst Hanisch, "Der Politische Katholizismus als ideologischer Träger des 'Austrofaschismus,'" in *Austrofaschismus: Politik – Ökonomie – Kultur 1933–1938*, ed. Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2014), p. 71.

> "But above all I learned that our people whose habit it is to lament and to expect all help from outside, must need to concentrate all its powers for its own salvation, rather than to expect aid from a purely exterior event such as return to the Monarchy. My allegiance to the Republic is therefore an allegiance to work, of work for the people of the Republic. (Great applause)."[15]

Despite this initial display of moderation, Seipel did not hesitate in ascribing his elevation to high public office a supernatural significance and pursued a rigid anti-Socialist political agenda. Vatican communication concluded positively that while "the excellent Mgr. Seipel" was leading the CSP, no common ground would be entertained between the Austrian Conservatives and Socialists.[16]

Socialism and Catholicism were deemed incompatible, the former being regarded by top Church officials in Austria as the exclusive domain of Jews, secularised Protestants and apostate Catholics who had turned to Freemasonry.[17] Whether willing to publicly declare it or not, for Seipel and Legitimists, to be genuinely Austrian meant to be Catholic. While Austrian-ness had historically implied a qualified degree of flexible tolerance to non-Catholics, the Habsburg mission was intrinsically ordered towards preserving a self-confident Christendom. In this effort to mobilise a somewhat largely lukewarm lay-faithful from political indifferentism towards actively participating in this nation-building project, the exiled Habsburgs were genuinely appreciative of Seipel's logic that spiritual restoration would need to coincide —or even precede— political and constitutional restoration. Indicative of further societal polarisation, one finds a self-correction within the Church in Austria. In 1927, within the Archdiocese of Vienna alone, there were 28,837 formal apostasies whereas previously in 1918 and 1919 there had only been 1,681 and

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[15] NARA: 863.00/472, June 3, 1922, "Austrian News Summary" from R. W. Heingartner (Vienna) to Charles Evans Hughes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[16] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, 3), Ff. 105, September 18, 1924, report entitled "Cattolici e socialisti in Austria" from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[17] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, 3), Ff. 104, September 12, 1924, report "informazioni sull'asserita collaborazione dei cattolici coi socialisti in Austria" from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

7,472 respectively.[18] This sudden rise in disaffiliations from the Catholic Church was attributed to the events of the "nefarious 15th of July" 1927.

In 1929 the spectre of Bolshevism persisted to loom large in the minds of the Austrian episcopate. After diagnosing their current predicament in the mid-1920s, the local Catholic hierarchy aligned themselves strongly with Seipel's narrative of civilisational continuity, describing how an Austrian nation state could once more become an *Antemurale Christianitis*, reclaiming its historical mission. Foreshowing rhetoric utilised four years later in reference to National Socialism, in the late 1920s the USSR was portrayed as the new Ottoman Empire threatening the heart of Europe. While for the SPÖ revolutionaries of 1918 the concept of Austrian-ness "had disappeared with the Empire,"[19] the Austrian-ness of Seipel was in no way dependent on past or present political realities but rather something immutable that transcended and animated the national life and specific constitutional structures. For the new chancellor, an Austrian nation-state ought to draw inspiration from a hybrid Austrian-German identity, one which lay within a broader German-ness but was, however, conceived to be fundamentally at odds with protestant Prussian-ness, and secular international Bolshevism. This narrative, in its most basic sense, was perfectly compatible and even complementary to Legitimist narratives of Habsburg historical mission.

Furthermore, in 1929, the Haydn melody —first used by Austria and then later also adopted by Germany— would be restored as the musical score of the new Austrian anthem *Be Blessed Without End* as part of this CSP shift away from Republican motifs. Activists like Wolff had long advocated for reclaiming the Haydn-Hymn from Pan-Germans.[20] However, Legitimists were not merely content with the restoration of the Imperial tune over Karl Renner's German-Austrian, *You Glorious Land*[21] which contained the revolutionary words: "Finally, thou hast broken thy chains in two. Serve thyself! Be thine

[18] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, 10), Ff. 297-308, December 15, 1928, report no. 10547/365 entitled "Circa le apostasie in Austria" from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[19] McGregor-Bulloch, "*The Promotion of an Austrian Identity 1918-1938,*" p. 59.
[20] Gustav Wolff, " Deutschland, Deutschland über alles' oder 'Gott erhalte,'" *Schwarz-Gelb*. December 6, 1926, p. 2
[21] With score composed by Pan-German —and later supporter of National Socialism— Wilhelm Kienzl.

own! Be free!"[22] Monarchists did not rally to the new words adapted to the Imperial score. Rather Legitimist groups such as the *Reichsbund der Österreicher* and the *Gebetsliga* – with the blessing of Otto and Zita in exile– popularised a new verse to add to the old Imperial *God preserve, God protect* which had originally been written in the wake of Karl's banishment on Madeira. This addition would seek to resolve the apparent contradiction between the Imperial splendour of generations past and the recent misfortune which exile had brought upon the dynasty. The supplemental verse ran:

> "In exile, far from the land,
> You are, O Austria, our hope.
> Otto, we, true to our bonds,
> Stand by you as firm as rock.
> To you, my Emperor, be granted
> Age-old fame and new-found fortunes!
> Bring peace at last to the nations,
> Return to your homeland soon!"[23]

In this contested spatial realm of "Homeland," the CSP declared to be only willing to accept Anschluss with Germany if it were "an agreement between the two states as equal partners."[24] Günter Bischof argues:

> "Psychologically, most Austrians refused to abandon age-old mentalities of ruling the edifice of an Empire; the new hut of a small state was definitely measly and hard to accept as a home."[25]

Furthermore, Seipel was cautious when speaking to a European audience how his emphasis of hybrid German and Austrian identity might lead to unconscious or prejudicial associations with Western caricatures of a Teutonic enemy. In such environments his cause was best served by highlighting the supranational mission of Austria, the Austrians themselves as a peace-loving, nostalgic, and civilised people. In this effort, the logic of

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[22] Karl Renner, "Die neue deutsch-österreichische Hymne," *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*. June 28, 1920, p. 2.
[23] AdR: BKA/Inneres, 22/Gen, Karton 4945, Reichsbund der Österreicher (Ortsgruppe Steyr) Programm zu der Feiertag, den 27. November 1936 stattfindenden Kaiser Otto Geburtstagfeier; Wilhelm Krippner, "Die Kaiserin-Mutter," *Festschrift zum achtzehnten Geburtstagekaiser Otto's*, November 1931 p. 8-14.
[24] *Das Programm der Christlichsozialen Partei*, p. 64.
[25] Günter Bischof, *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55* (London: MacMillan Press, 1999), p. 7-8.

Hofmannsthal would be once more revived to differentiate a proposed barbaric Prussia to an inclusive civilised Austria.[26]

Meanwhile, at home –partly as a tactical move to mitigate the rise of the Austrian NSDAP– the CSP's own form of anti-Semitism intensified in the wake of the 1932 election.[27] Apologists on the Right such as the Legitimist editor of the *Reichspost*, Friedrich Funder, would minimise the role of CSP and later VF hostility towards alleged Jewish influence in Vienna, arguing its moderation in praxis when compared to neighbouring NS Germany.[28] Nonetheless, Jewish-ness was seen as an obstacle to the creation of an organic Catholic, German, and Corporate Heimat on corresponding religious, cultural and economic grounds. Florian Wenninger convincingly argues that Jewish-ness was for Political Catholicism:

> "[An] enemy stereotype which was everything that called into question the supposedly natural, pre-industrial order […] everything associated with the Enlightenment, Secularisation, Rationalism and, ultimately, Liberalism."[29]

Therefore, efforts to re-establish Vienna as a world city were not always a welcome development on the Right. This can be seen in initial positive and subsequent divisive scandal —and riots— surrounding the hosting of the August 1925 Zionist World Congress.[30]

However, Zionists were not the only group that saw Vienna as a cosmopolitan former-Imperial city at the heart of Europe with potential to forward their political

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[26] Bauer, *Die österreichische Revolution,* p. 49-50 cited in McGregor-Bulloch, "*The Promotion of an Austrian Identity 1918-1938,*" p. 59; McGregor-Bulloch notes how this dichotomy predates the interwar period, with even Otto Bauer observing the divide within Austrian Imperial politics along the lines of Karl Lueger and Georg von Schönerer, identifying an "Old Austrian tradition" alive in the hearts of "Viennese patricians and petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry of the Alps" which was at odds with the Pan-Germanism of "the intelligentsia, as well as the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry of the border areas."

[27] Florian Wenninger, "Eine krankhafte Erscheinung […] im Programm der sonst so tüchtigen und vortrefflichen Christlichsozialen Partei: Antisemitismus im Politischen Katholizismus vom Fin de Siècle bis zum Austrofaschismus," in *Antisemitische und rechte Netzwerke in der Zwischenkriegszeit: Zur Bedeutung informeller Machtstrukturen für die politische Radikalisierung in Österreich*, eds. Linda Erker and Michael Rosecker (Vienna: ÖAW Verlag, 2023), p. 76–77.

[28] Friedrich Funder, *Vom Gestern ins Heute. Aus dem Kaiserreich in die Republik*, Vienna 1952, p. 127 cited in Wenninger, "Eine krankhafte Erscheinung," p. 98.

[29] Wenninger, "Eine krankhafte Erscheinung," p. 102.

[30] Ibid., p. 99.

activism. The SPÖ welcomed the February 1921, June 1926 and, August 1931 International meeting of Socialist parties. The lattermost meeting featuring a preceding Workers Summer Olympiad with local Austromarxist press re-printing the 1871 words of Eugène Pottier: "No higher being, no God, no emperor nor tribune, will save us from our misery. We alone must liberate ourselves!"[31] Challenging the Imperial legacy of Vienna, Der *Kuckuck* ran a triumphant feature piece on 1931 congress of the International reading:

> "Thus, we have turned the Imperial city of idle comfort into a proud bulwark of socialism." [32]

Instead of giving attention to the locally hosted socialist Internationale, the Vienna *Reichspost* chose to highlight the concurrent seventh International Congress of Christian People's Parties in Luxembourg. They therefore juxtaposed in their words; "The international of Christian democracy" to the rival supranationalism of the "political powers of Freemasonry, Judaism and so on."[33]

[31] Unknown, "Die Internationale," *Der Kuckuck*. July 26, 1931, p. 2.
[32] Unknown, "Das rote Wien Grüsst die Internationale," *Der Kuckuck*. July 26, 1931, p. 3.
[33] Richard Schmitz, "Die internationale der christlichen Demokratie," *Reichspost*. July 29, 1931, p.1-2.

4.4 Aristocratic Prerogative and Revision

At the September 1925 funeral of K.u.K. Field-Marshall Count Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, CSP Defence Minister, Carl Vaugoin, declared his 'indelible gratitude' for his heroic service in the recent world war, with a *Dolchstoss*-like collapse of an exasperated Homefront undermining his work towards victory.[1] In contrast to Left-wing denunciations of "ghosts" gathering for to pay homage to the death of one of their own, the conservative *Reichspost* opened their comments boldly declaring:

> "The old Austria is dead. This has been triumphantly proclaimed to the world a thousand times by her enemies at home and abroad. But she is not yet entirely entombed, her spirit still walks lamenting and accusing through world history. Her heart's blood still pulsates in the men who were once the champions of the Austrian idea and the bearers of Austrian greatness."[2]

The death of K.u.K. Chief of the General Staff stood as a reminder to the mortality of those that played key roles in the final days of the Empire. Pan-German leaning press praised the CSP leadership's role in fostering a "conciliatory significance of this funeral, organised by the Republic for the imperial marshal" highlighting how "one can also serve the present and the future in this country without thereby denying the past."[3] Even if the KPÖ would consider the event a product of a "Habsburg-Republic" —animated by "the reawakened power of reactionaries […] people whom one no longer thought to exist,"—[4] this civic acknowledgement of Imperial heritage was however no Legitimist convention. Karl had dismissed Conrad in 1917 and it was attitudes like his which had left the exiled

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[1] Unknown, "Das Leichenbegängnis Conrad-Hötzendorfs. Ein Begräbnis des alten Oesterreich." *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, September 03, 1925, p. 6. Cited in Werner Suppanz, "»Gespenster des alten Österreich«: Der Kampf um die Deutungsmacht über die habsburgische Vergangenheit in der Ersten Republik," in *Das integrative Empire: Wissensproduktion und kulturelle Praktiken in Habsburg-Zentraleuropa*, eds. Johannes Feichtinger and Heidemarie Uhl (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2023), p. 296.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Unknown, "Des Feldherrn Heimgang," *Österreichische Wehrzeitung*. September 11, 1925, p. 1.
[4] Unknown, "Habsburgerrepublik," *Die Rote Fahne*. September 3, 1915, p. 5.

emperor to think that a Central Powers' victory would spell the ruin of the *Reichsidee* and permanently place Vienna at the mercy of Berlin.[5]

A counter example can be seen in that of another K.u.K. Field Marshall, the Croatian-born Svetozar Boroević von Bojna. The former Field Marshall was a wartime rival to Conrad[6] and personal friend of Karl from whom he received financial support in an Austrian exile of destitution, unwelcome in his native homeland now assumed into the new Yugoslavia.[7] In Autumn 1918, Boroević had offered support to crush the nascent Austrian revolution and safeguard the Imperial court.[8] Karl respecting such loyalty commissioned a memorial for the Field Marshal in the Vienna *Zentralfriedhof* after his death in 1920.[9] The SPÖ narrative was one in which the "distinguishing feature of Field Marshal Boroevic's character was always his harshness, which bordered on cruelty" and any attempt to petition sympathy by the CSP for the impoverished circumstance of this Radetzky-figure were mere "inflammatory words [which were] more or less veiled attacks on the Republic of Austria."[10] Similar to the role occupied by Conrad in the German press, Slovenian newspapers proclaimed him as "the immortal vanquisher of Italy" who had "saved all of Carniola and Ljubljana from war atrocities, Italian invasion and exploitation."[11] As a form of counter-Conrad, the Field Marshall would be integrated into Legitimist hagiography in the Interwar period.[12] Furthermore, Kevin Hoeper points to a peculiar opposite Interwar legacy in anti-Habsburg Czechoslovakia where —within "a state-centric, teleological understanding of history"— the minority Czech Legionnaires and historic Hussites were

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[5] AOS: Tom. I, Index 53: Karl von Hahsburg. *Verfassungsentwurf, Streng Geheim*. December 1921 to March 1922 found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 816-833.
[6] Boyer, *Austria 1867-1955*, p. 564.
[7] Richard Bassett, *For God and Kaiser: The Imperial Austrian Army From 1619 to 1918* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 536.
[8] An offer which was allegedly never to have made its way to the emperor's hand, but most historians conclude had even such a telegram been received by Karl, the initiation of political violence was not the modus operandi.
[9] Bassett, *For God and Kaiser*), p. 536.
[10] Unknown, "Das Ende des Boroevic," *Arbeiter Zeitung*. June, 6, 1920, p. 2.
[11] Unknown, "Marshall Boroević," *Marburger Zeitung*. May 27, 1920, p. 1.
[12] Gebetsliga, "Zum zehnten Mal: „Unser Kalendarium!"" *Gedächtnis—Jahrbuch: Dem Andenken an Karl von Oesterreich Kaiser und König* (Vienna: Traditionsreferat der Vaterländischen Front, 1938), p. 101.

drawn upon for inspiration for the military esprit de corps. Meanwhile, Habsburg service constituted at best "a historical black hole" or at worse, a potential security risk.[13]

Historians write history but are not alien to the making of history itself. From the mid-1920s to mid-1930s a blossoming nascent historiography would arise from the plethora of works of those who could count themselves protagonists to the events of 1914-1918 and beyond. Hungarian historian, Oscar Jászi, in his 1930 assessment *Some Recent Publications Concerning the Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* bemoans what he sees as "a curious reversal toward the antiquated method of a purely diplomatic history" which does not seek "any serious analysis of the underlying social, political, and economical currents."[14] Any recounting of Habsburg demise was inherently politicised in Interwar Austria. Legitimist Berthold Dietrich writing in the openly pro-Monarchist *Schwarz-Gelb* took aim at G. Pollatschek who in the July 1926 issue of *Sozialdemokrat* disparaged the Habsburgs as a "cowardly race" for which murder of the common man was their "supreme governing principle." Dietrich asserted that "such language can only be allowed when addressing a readership as historically illiterate as our poor, misguided working class."[15] Keenly interested in the state of the contemporary historiography, Dietrich claimed to his fellow-Legitimists:

> "But even the serious and honest historians of our enemies, English, French, Polish, and even Prussian, admit that world history knows no more moral, more law-abiding, and nobler dynasty than the Habsburgs […] Karl is venerated as a saint by the inhabitants of distant Madeira."[16]

Such a claim, while containing a degree of propagandistic hyperbole, was not entirely unfounded. Notable historical actors decisive in the last days of the Habsburg Dual-Monarchy would over the 1920s record their role and perception of events in the form of published works. Notable examples include but are not limited to: Gyula Andrássy (1921), Otto Bauer, (1923), Artur Arz von Straussenburg (1924), Count Burián (1925), Joseph

[13] Kevin J. Hoeper, "Nationalizing Habsburg Regimental Tradition in Interwar Czechoslovakia," *The Hungarian Historical Review* 11, no. 1 (2022): p.180–81 & 190–91.
[14] Jászi, "Some Recent Publications," p. 96–110.
[15] Berthold Dietrich, "Wie Habsburg begraben werden," *Schwarz-Gelb*. October 25, 1926, p. 1.
[16] Ibid.

Baernreither (1928), Oscar Jászi (1929), Baron Leopold von Chlumecky (1929), Count Polzer-Hoditz (1929), Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau (1930).[17]

Count Polzer-Hoditz's 1929 book on Kaiser Karl was regarded by fellow contemporary historians as "one of the most serious contributions to the history of the collapse" of the Monarchy even if it was evaluated that the authors "chief consideration is an apology for the Habsburg monarchy and the desire for its reconstruction."[18] Oscar Jászi praised the work stating that the Legitimist Count's close lifelong relationship with the former emperor did "not obscure the clearness of his vision and the fairness of his [Polzer-Hoditz's] judgment." He further concurred with the assessment of Karl as "a young man of intelligence and good intentions" who had over the course of his brief reign "finally became a prisoner of the German and Magyar oligarchies."[19] Some works went beyond revisionism and constituted open hagiography. One such German-speaking exampled indictive of the former Imperial elite was produced by Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau[20] in his capacity as director of the Austrian War Archives. His work —as a form of *Dolchstoss* legend— was described by contemporaries as an effort to demonstrate:

> "How from the very beginning of the war, widely spread strata of the Czech and Yugoslav intelligentsia began their co-operation with the enemy […] blindness of the Magyar leading men, especially, was without example."[21]

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[17] Gyula Andrássy, *Diplomacy and the War*, trans. J. Holroyd Reece (London: Bale, 1921); Otto Bauer. *Die Österreichische Revolution* (Vienna: Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1923); Artur Arz von Straussenburg, *Zur Geschichte des Grossen Krieges, 1914-1918* (Vienna: Rikola, 1924); Stephan Burián, *Austria in Dissolution: Being the Personal Recollections of Stephan, Count Burián*, trans. Brian Lunn (London: Ernst Benn Ltd., 1925); Joseph Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches* (Berlin: Verlag für Kulturpolitik, 1928); Oscar Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929); Leopold von Chlumecky, *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinands Wirken und Wollen* (Berlin: Verlag für Kulturpolitik, 1929); Arthur Polzer-Hoditz, *Kaiser Karl: Aus der Geheimmappe seines Kabinetts-Chefs* (Vienna: Amalthea-Verlag, 1929); Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau, *The Collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire*, trans. Ian F.D. Morrow (London: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1930).

[18] Jászi, "Some Recent Publications," p. 105.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau's Monarchism would however give way to Nationalism, and he would later serve as bridging point to National Socialism, therefore being integrated into the VF regime structure on the basis of appeasing Hitler.

[21] Jászi, "Some Recent Publications," p. 106.

Natural parallels presented themselves between the historical circumstance of England and Hungary. Two years prior, in 1928, Oskar Freiherr von Mitis had written of Hungary as "Eastern England," a Liberal state similarly steeped in a rich constitutional history with a delicate pragmatic equilibrium of royal prerogative, aristocratic privilege and parliamentary sovereignty.[22] For Legitimists the obvious implication drawn from such a comparison was that Hungary —like England in the seventeenth century— was suffering an interregnum period awaiting restoration and revival. The similarly named King Charles –of the English House of Stuart– was executed in 1649 by a rogue parliament after a period of war and political upheaval. The Catholic-sympathetic Charles and his post-restoration successors who converted to Catholicism were viewed by English Jacobite Catholics as the legitimate Monarchs of the crowns of England, Scotland, and Ireland. The intersectional common interest of the enduring —but small number of— British Jacobite Legitimists and their Austrian Habsburg Legitimist counterparts would produce a revisionist perspective from outside the immediate personal circle of Karl in the form of Herbert Vivian's finely-bound 1932 *The Life of the Emperor Charles of Austria*.[23] Vivian was a UK Jacobite and an advocate of Catholic Monarchist movements across Europe, founding the "Royalist International" (RI).[24] Objecting to the perceived hypocrisy of the liberal international order and a need to return to the geopolitical stability of the nineteenth century, Vienna police noted how "The R.I. was founded on 1st May 1929 to fight Bolshevism and restore the rightful monarchies everywhere" and how its "Royalist International Herald" publication prominently featured articles supporting Otto's claims in Central Europe.[25]

While sympathetic historians a generation later —such as Gordon Brook-Shepherd— in their multivolume biographies of the Karl and Zita would deviate greatly from the previous generation of anti-Habsburg writers, British Slavophiles such as R. W.

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[22] Oskar Freiherr von Mitis, Das Leben des Kronprinzen Rudolf (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1928), p. 467, cited in Jászi, "Some Recent Publications," p. 99.
[23] Herbert Vivian, *The Life of the Emperor Charles of Austria* (London: Grayson & Grayson, 1932).
[24] AdR: NPA, Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919 – 1933, Ff. 362-364, July 2, 1930, report Pr. Zl. IV-3191/30 entitled: "Gründung einer monarchistischen International (Royalist International, abgekürst R.I.) in London" from Bundespolizeidirektion (Vienna) to Johannes Schober (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).
[25] Ibid.

Seton-Watson and Henry Wickham Steed, still largely dominated the Interwar narrative within the Anglosphere. Steed, a journalist and Seton-Watson a historian were no less activists for Czech nationalism as Vivian and Brook-Shepherd were for Habsburg supranationalism, displaying the same close contacts and collaboration with Benes and Masaryk as the latter group had with the exiled Imperial family. László Péter notes how Seton-Watson's views on the Habsburg dynasty were not static but rather evolved over time.[26] While an obvious Slavophil—having founded the School of Slavonic and East European Studies in London— and regarded as having "the spirit of a Gladstonian liberal intellectual," he was also a Presbyterian Scotsman[27] and therefore contained an implicit natural affinity to nation and egalitarianism over the hierarchy and universalism of Catholicism.

Seton-Watson consistently saw Austro-Hungarian internal politics through a thoroughly British lens writing of the 1905 Hungarian constitutional crisis how Budapest was "under an absolutist regime." László Péter notes how his rhetoric compared the exercise of royal prerogative as resulting in the Hungarian legislature being "subjected to an indignity comparable only to what happened under Charles I in England."[28] In this divide between R. W. Seton-Watson and Herbert Vivian we can see the international dimension of the Habsburg Question and its position in broader polemics concerning the source of political authority and the social confines of the political community. These 20th Century cavaliers were as keen to rush to the defence of the Habsburg cause as the modern roundheads were to undermine it. Seton-Watson explicitly argued for a "New Europe" of sovereign states "on the principle of national self-determination as a new source of legitimacy."[29] In László Péter's mind it seemed as though "at every turn, Seton-Watson's adjustments in opinion were dependent upon his changing perception of what was required to maintain the European order."[30] This appeal to utilitarian realism stands in great contrast to the rigid appeal to principle on the part of Legitimism.

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[26] László Péter, "R.W. Seton-Watson's Changing Views on the National Question of the Habsburg Monarchy and the European Balance of Power," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 82, no. 3 (2004): p. 655–79.
[27] Ibid., p. 655.
[28] Ibid., p. 667.
[29] Ibid., p. 676.
[30] Ibid., p. 677.

The historical memory of the Austrian Right shifted throughout the interwar period. Werner Suppanz points to how for the Austrian Catholic Right —first as CSP and then as VF— the leaning into a "Habsburg myth" was a core component of efforts to foster an "official historical narrative" of Austria as a "better German state."[31] Early republic 1924 school textbooks in Austria emphasised the old Monarchy's role as a historical bulwark against Ottoman invasion but nonetheless negatively contrasted the autocratic multi-ethnic Habsburg empire with the nationally homogenous but likewise autocratic Germany and the contrastingly liberal but multi-ethnic USA.[32] The state-approved narrative transmitted to school pupils went:

> "In an age of progressive democratic ideas, against which no state can seal itself off by artificial means, every state requires a moral and political foundation that is comprehensible to the people. The most natural and therefore most popular is today incontestably national self-determination."[33]

The value of the empire was assessed by its utility in serving the German nation. The *Reichsidee* was deemed impotent in the face of Wilsonian modernity of unfulfilled promises and anti-German international conspiracy.[34] Suppanz argues that textbooks in the wake of Karl's death —and before Otto's coming of age— implicitly presented Habsburg rule as phenomenon of the past, but, nonetheless, part of Austrian and therefore German history.[35]

However, by the mid-1930s their writing of history attributed the monarchy's downfall to the entry of USA in the war and "the hostile attitude of the Freemason Wilson towards the papacy in general" and specifically any peace plan proposed by the Vatican which retained the Old-World order.[36] A source of continuing contradiction to the new discreet and incremental shift of the Austrian Right over the early 1930s would be the

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[31] Suppanz, "»Gespenster des alten Österreich«," p. 282.
[32] Richard Marek, Max Kulisch, and Heinrich Montzka, *Lehrbuch der Geographie, Bürgerkunde und Geschichte für die oberste Klasse der Mittelschulen* (Vienna: n.p., 1924), p. 118 cited in Suppanz, "»Gespenster des alten Österreich«," p. 298.
[33] Ibid., p. 299.
[34] Ibid., p. 299.
[35] Suppanz, "»Gespenster des alten Österreich«," p. 301.
[36] Leopold Kunschak, *Österreich 1918–1934,* 2nd ed. (Vienna: Typographische Anstalt, 1935), p. 15.

uncensored press. *Neue Freie Presse* journalists —described by Papal Nunio Sibilia as "Jewish-Freemasonic"—[37] would "to the obvious annoyance of Dr Benes" put pressure on Minister of Foreign Affairs in an April 1930 Prague press conference for information on how a hypothetical expected Czechoslovak response to Habsburg restoration would take shape.[38] Moving into the 1930s the position of Benes was that while the Habsburg Question was not relevant to current political discourse and "the question of the constitutional structure of government of a foreign state was of no general interest."[39] Nonetheless, in Benes' view, neighbouring states, including Czechoslovakia, had a right to consider Habsburg supranational rhetoric as contrary to international law in so far as it undermined Prague's sovereignty and that this matter had been "regulated by international treaties."[40] Ota Konrád goes so far as to argue that, for Benes, any Central European customs union –especially one between Berlin and Vienna– without Czechoslovakian consent would only constitute "a return to old [Imperial] foreign policy" which would "set Europe back in international relations to a pre-1914 state."[41]

Seipel was in no mood to be bound to the political revolution and international order that gave birth to the Austrian Republic. As political tension intensified in the late 1920s and early 1930s — leading to Seipel's assassination— many on the Catholic Right would pro-actively reject the founding of the republic and would proclaim the fall of the Empire as a moral calamity worthy of overturning. Whereas Political Catholicism in Austria was attempting to advance the historical supranational mission of the Habsburg empire from little truncated Austria, László Péter notes an opposite impulse in neighbouring Czechoslovakia. In Prague, the neo-Hussite revolutionary order —with a mandate from the Paris Peace Conference— was working to "change the 'nationality' of

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[37] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, 12), Ff. 385-387, May 15, 1919, report no. 10547/365 entitled "Circa le apostasie in Austria" from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[38] AdR: NPA Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 357-359, April 5, 1930, report "Journalistenempfang bei Dr. Benes" from General Secretary Franz Peter (Austrian Embassy, Prague) report to Johannes Schober (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ota Konrád, "Der Verratene Liebling.: Tschechoslowakische Aussenpolitik 1918–1938 Zwischen Realität Und Illusion," in *Nationsbildung Und Außenpolitik Im Osten Europas: Nationsbildungsprozesse, Konstruktionen Nationaler Identität und Außenpolitische Positionierungen Im 20. Und 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Bianka Pietrow-Ennker, 1st ed., vol. 41 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot GmbH, 2022), p. 180-81.

its population by coalescing diverse cultural groups into a single community" in an effort positively termed "nation-building."[42]

Relevant for the Austrian state-building project, speaker of the National Council, Wihelm Miklas, was elected president in December 1928 by the Austrian parliament on the third ballot.[43] In the SPÖ's view, he was preferable to "an enemy so full of hate as" the anti-Socialist clericalism of their arch-nemesis Seipel or the former-Vienna Police Chief Schober, "the man guilty of July 16th."[44] The SPÖ therefore withdrew founder of the Republic, Karl Renner, as their candidate and tolerated the apparent lesser evil of the candidacy of Wihelm Miklas, the nonetheless anti-Republican president of a republic that no one wanted.[45] By 1928, after successive CSP governments, it became possible for Austrian state officials to participate in a public culture of pro-Habsburg memorialisation. Secure from the threat of SPÖ rule since the 1920 election and three federal electoral victories later, the time was deemed ripe for the highest representatives of Church and State in Austria to participate in the "consecration of the Kaiser Karl memorial plaque in St Michael's Church" on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of Karl's death, 1st April 1928.[46] With the Chancellorship of Msgr. Seipel and the public backing of Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Piffl, the Habsburg Question saw a qualified but not insignificant turning point. Nonetheless, in this event, like others, so-called "respectable" persons harbouring public or private Legitimist opinions wanted to distance themselves from Wolff and his allies. However, now, two years into Seipel's second term, the state security forces shifted

[42] Péter, "R. W. Seton-Watson's Changing Views," p. 678.
[43] NARA: 863.001MiklasWillhelm/2, December 11, 1928, report no. 2047 from Albert H. Washburn (US Legation, Vienna) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.); AAEESS: Fodo Perido III [Pontificati Pio X (1903-1914) e Benedetto XV (1914-1922)], Austria- Ungheria, III Pos, 1326, fasc., 525, Ff. 44r-51r, March 16, 1919, letter entitled: "Notizie politiche sull'Austria" from Teodoro Valfre di Bonzo (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican); The SPÖ, fearing that a further impasse would see Pan-Germans and CSP unite behind Seipel —seeking to "again play the role of 'rescuer of his country'" and break the stalemate— rather preferred the soft pro-Habsburgism of the "devout" and "outstanding" Catholic" Miklas
[44] The violent police suppression of Austro-Marxist mob violence at the Justice Palace.
[45] NARA: 863.001MiklasWillhelm/1, December 6, 1928, telegram from Albert H. Washburn (US Legation, Vienna) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[46] AdR: Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 339-340, March 28, 1927 Polizeidirektion Wien report entitled "Einweihung der Kaiser Karl Gedenktafel am 1. April 1928 in der Michaelerkirche" to Ignaz Seipel (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).

from seeing Legitimists as an existential threat, prioritising the suppression of radical Austromarxism instead.

Indicative of the limits of unauthorised non-aristocratic pro-Habsburg activism, Wolff was a marginalised force on the Austrian Right. A 1928 trial of Gustav Wolff was a source scandal and ridicule for the Habsburg cause.[47] Populist Monarchist voices like that of the *Schwarz-Gelb* movement retained the disfavour of the political establishment but were demoted to the status of public nuisance.[48] In March 1928 Wolff denounced Seipel as a traitor to his oath as an Imperial-Minister.[49] In reference to the 1st of April 1928 memorial unveiling, Seipel promised to tackle Wolff and "take the necessary precautions to prevent disturbances of public peace and order."[50]

The egalitarian-minded SPÖ were not merely opposed to the legacy of aristocratic privilege in Austrian domestic politics, but also in its more autocratic manifestations across the border in Hungary. In the context of outrage at a 1928 Burgenland border incursion by Hungarian police, SPÖ Otto Bauer espoused his own *Antemurale* narrative

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[47] Unknown, "Schwarzgelb bis in die Knochen: Der Monarchistenoberst vor dem Schwurgericht," *Das Kleine Blatt.* July 18, 1928, p. 5.

[48] Wolff in 1934 would seek to have his KtVp recategorised as a civic association to continue their activism in the VF era and nonetheless be under covert police surveillance as late as 1938; AdR: NPA, BKA/Inneres, 22/Gen, Karton 4945, July 16, 1936, internal report no. 344692 entitled "Kaisertreuer Volksverband Ersuchschreiben Information" (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna); AdR: Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 350-355, April 5, 1930, report entitled "Österreichische legitimistische Arbeitsgemeinschaft und kaisertreue Volkspartei; Versammlungen" from Polizeidirektion Wien to Johannes Schober (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna); AdR: Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 405-405, September 2, 1931, entitled "Versammlung der Kaisertreuen Volkspartei am 25. August 1931" from Polizeidirektion Wien to Johannes Schober (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna); AdR: Karton 186 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich März 1936–1938, Ff. 628 -632, January 27, 1938, report on Assembly of Kaisertreuevolkspartei organised by Wolff from Polizeidirektion Wien to Kurt von Schuschnigg (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).

[49] Carlo Moos, *Habsburg Post Mortem: Betrachtungen zum Weiterleben der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2016), p. 218.

[50] AdR: Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 339-340, March 28, 1927 Polizeidirektion Wien report entitled "Einweihung der Kaiser Karl Gedenktafel am 1. April 1928 in der Michaelerkirche" to Ignaz Seipel (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).

declaring: "beyond the Austrian frontier all civilization ceases, and Asia begins."[51] The SPÖ had concluded in 1926 that Hungary had a mere illusory democratic façade as "since the victory of the counter-revolution, Hungarian voters have been called upon for the third time to legalise the dictatorship."[52] Before Seipel's rise to power, under successive SPÖ and moderate centre-right governments, allegations of Legitimist treason abounded, pro-Habsburg advocates were seen as a potential firth column within Austria's border and were closely monitored by authorities for "suspicion of counter-revolutionary activities."[53] It did little to elevate suspicion that Austrian Legitimists for their part retained a preference for the traditional Cis- and Transleithanian distinction between Austrian and Hungarian territory rather than the modern-day ethnically defined borders. In seeking to uphold old Dual-Monarchy era territorial conceptualisations some even equated Hungary's loss of Burgenland with Austria's loss of South Tyrol or the disputed Franco-German Alsace Lorraine.[54] Even if it meant alienating Austrians across the political spectrum, Legitimists in Hungary needed to reassure the moderates within the Horthy regime of their sympathies vis-à-vis revision of the so-called "tragedy of Trianon."

A German-language newspaper based in recently renamed Czechoslovakian "Bratislava,"[55] the *Preßburger Zeitung,* would write in October 1928 on the topic of "The fight for the crown of Saint Stephen" posing the question: "Who will be King of Hungary?"[56] The author noting the recent momentum of victories for the monarchical principle in Albania and Abyssinian, points out the unique situation of Hungary as "the only country in the world that calls itself a kingdom but has no king."[57] In the eyes of regional press, this was to be soon rectified with Count Bethlen speech pledging "that the

[51] NARA: 864.00 P.R./3, March 5, 1928, memorandum from J. Butler Wright (US Legation, Budapest) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[52] Unknown, "Der Sinn der ungarischen Wahlen," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. December 10, 1926, p. 1.
[53] AdR: Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 105-111, July 9, 1920 "Österreichisches Staatsamt für Äußeres" report entitled "Kandutsch Hermann und Gen. Verdacht gegenrevolutionärer Umtriebe."
[54] NARA: 864.00 P.R./10, September 8, 1928, report no. 259 from (US Legation, Budapest) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[55] Historical capital and coronation site of Transleithania.
[56] Unknown, "Wer wird König Von Ungarn?: Der Kampf um die Krone des Heiligen Stephan," *Preßburger Zeitung*. October 20, 1928, p. 1.
[57] Ibid.

time to resolve the royal question was approaching."[58] The *Preßburger Zeitung* observed that no constitutional obstacle existed to the return of a King, but that the question "lies in the matter of personnel" as "the House of Habsburg is unacceptable to the Entente, at least for the time being."[59] Archbishop Jusztinián Serédi, head of the Catholic Church of Hungary from 1927 onwards, was portrayed by the French press [*La Lumiere*] to be a covert-Legitimist working with members of the Habsburg-Bourbon-Parma family in Italy in organising a papal audience for Empress Zita and making representation on her behalf in Paris.[60] Furthermore, the Papal Nuncio in Belgium, Mgr. Micara, came under particular attack from French republican-minded journalists who saw him as an ardent Habsburg Legitimist, a protector and benefactor of Otto in exile.[61] Exemplar of the clerical versus anti-clerical nature of contemporaneous polemics, the Vatican noted how the Jewish socialist deputy for Haut-Rhin, Salomon Grumbach —relaying his experience from the French Foreign Affairs Committee debate— declared "the unanimous hostility of his colleagues to the restoration of the Habsburgs."[62]

The late-1920's hopes of Legitimists placed in Count Betlen would be ultimately unfounded. Bethlen, in an August 26th, 1928, public statement reiterated his ruling party's position that the so-called "the King Question" was not to the subject to political debate and furthermore, "the party will not attempt to solve this question within 'a calculable space of time'."[63] Three months later —in the wake of celebrations of Otto's birthday two days prior— Bethlen once more declared before parliament on November 22:

> "It would be disastrous if the King Question were treated as an existing problem […] The Government has no plans whatever in this respect and will not carry out any, either covertly or openly."[64]

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[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Parigi 460, Fasc. 624, Affari Politiche Esteri, varie Restaurazione degli Asburgo, archivo Mgr. Maglione, Ff. 1.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] NARA: 864.00 P.R./10, September 8, 1928, report no. 259 from (US Legation, Budapest) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[64] NARA: 864.00 P.R./10, December 6, 1928, report from (US Legation, Budapest) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

Bethlen conceded that Legitimism while no longer openly tolerated within his Smallholders Unity Party, would not be criminalised, so long as those Legitimists outwardly recognised the validity of the 1921 dethronement law. For Legitimists of the strictest usage of the term, this presented a challenge. Any right of Otto —soon to come of age— were predicated upon his status as Karl's heir. If Karl had been validly deposed, contrary to his declaration, Otto would have to appeal to the benevolence of the Hungarian parliament in principle and in practice. Leaving no ambiguity as to the further entrenching of the new Magyar narrative into public life, Bethlen warned his party colleagues in 1928 that there existed "no doubt that statements which proclaimed Prince Otto King of Hungary are contrary to the constitutional conception and therefore should not be tolerated."[65]

Notions of aristocratic privilege and wider class consciousness guided the Austrian Left's worldview domestically, regionally, and internationally. In the view of the SPÖ mouthpiece, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Count Bethlan had committed an offense against his social class and only by forwarding Habsburg restoration could he rehabilitate his own image:

> "Cunning, intrigue, violence, foreign policy machinations, all this serves to pave the way for the coming of the day when Bethlen will place the St. Stephen's Crown on the head of the king from the House of Habsburg. That is what is at stake in Hungary now."[66]

Such a simplistic narrative on the part of the Austrian Left placing a diabolic causality of Habsburg scheming in any aristocratic politician completed the press loop initiated by populist-Legitimists such as Wolff who played into Austromarxist concerns and attempted to use them to entrench his logic in the mainstream Austrian Catholic Right.

By May 1930 Archduke Albrecht declared his loyalty to Otto. This news was seen by the international diplomatic community in Budapest as "sensational" and described as

[65] Ibid.
[66] Unknown, "Der Sinn der ungarischen Wahlen," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. December 10, 1926, p. 1.

"coming as a complete surprise to the government."[67] Albrecht's decision was theorised to be influenced by social pressure from his relatives compounded by his desire to marry his mistress who was reported to be in the process of imminently seeking a divorce with her own husband. One German Catholic publication attributed Albrecht's renunciation of claims to the intervention of "Seipel, the clever politician."[68] The *Sonntagsblatt* further concluded that Otto would make a move for the throne soon but that the "main obstacle will be the Hungarian regent, Horthy, a Calvinist who is not particularly well disposed towards the Catholic Habsburgs."[69] Horthy at this time didn't hesitate to defend the grandeur and gravitas of his office as regent. In a 1928 diplomatic circular from the Budapest government, Horthy clarified the desire to insist on the correct use of his official title as "His Serene Highness the Regent of the Kingdom of Hungary."[70] Such moves were seen by US officials in Vienna November 1928 as the thinly veiled attempts of the Free-Elector faction of Hungarian politics to consolidate authority in Horthy to dilute the domestic influence of Legitimists. This machination was seen by their targets as the mere manifestation of their traditional enemy, Magyar Calvinism, which now rallied to Horthy due to having no realistic prospect of uniting behind one candidate for the crown of St. Stephen.[71]

Meanwhile in Austria, by August 1929 the US observed how it was "now quite usual for two or three thousand people to attend a *Heimwehr* meeting in Vienna," in what was referred to as a "a great awakening" and transformation in to a popular movement from the point from only months before where the audience would be "50 per cent being women and then largely of the old aristocracy."[72] With the 1930 Korneuburg oath came an increased politization and radicalisation of the *Heimwehr*, first running candidates under

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[67] AdR: NPA, Karton 731, Liasse Österrich 2/11, Ff. 511-512, May 28, 1930 report entitled "Loyalitätserklärung des Erzh. Albrecht" from (US Legation, Budapest) to Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[68] Unknown, "Um den künftigen König," *Sonntagsblatt*. June 29, 1930, p.14.
[69] Ibid.
[70] NARA: 864.001/4, May 17, 1928, report from J. Butler Wright (US Legation, Budapest) to Secretary of State (Washington D.C.)
[71] Unknown, "Die ungarische Königsfrage," *Reichspost*. November 10, 1928, cited in NARA: 864.001/5, November 20, 1928, report from Albert H. Washburn (US Legation, Vienna) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[72] NARA: 863.00/665, August 12, 1929, report no. 2261 Legation of the United States of America (Vienna) to Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

its own name and later co-opted into the Authoritarian Austrian state's security apparatus and receiving prominent ministerial appointments. Nonetheless, even if attempting to attain a broad popular appeal, by May 1931 the US ambassador G. B. Stockton charitably concluded:

> "I believe Starhemberg's motives are patriotic, although undoubtedly he is intensely ambitious. He is eager to serve his country and especially his class. By serving the latter he believes that he can best serve Austria." [73]

In this attempt to revive a Black Imperial Vienna, Starhemberg encountered intense hostility from the municipal authorities of Red Vienna. This included allegedly subjecting his public events to burdensome bureaucratic fees and sabotaging of audio amplification equipment. Even then, by 1929 the *Heimwehr* were able to assemble crowds in excess of eighteen thousand at locations such as Heldenplatz, directly in front of the Imperial Winter Hofburg palace.[74]

[73] NARA: 863.00/709, May 13, 1931, report no. 289 from Legation of the United States of America (Vienna) to Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[74] NARA: 863.00/665, August 12, 1929, report no 2261from Legation of the United States of America (Vienna) to Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

4.5: Otto's Coming of Age

The Habsburg family having first found refuge in Spain, with Otto age of majority soon approaching, decided in 1929 to re-position to a new site of exile at Steenokkerzeel, near Brussels, Belgium. There, aristocratic solidarity and Catholic charity afforded the surviving members of the Imperial household a more comfortable existence. Almost immediately at Steenokkerzeel the Imperial exile court played host to aristocratic guests such as their relatives the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg and Prince Felix of Bourbon travelling incognito.[1] Such a move further took place in the context of increasing political violence in Spain culminating with the overthrow of the Bourbons themselves and the establishment of a second Spanish Republic in April 1931.

By September 15th, 1929, Zita and the first wave comprising four of her eight children arrived at Brussels as Otto was to study at Louvain university and all-the-time have supplemental lessons from pro-Habsburg dedicated professors who travelled to Belgium to give "lectures on political history, and constitutional law" of Austrian and Hungary.[2] US officials note that while the press at large "adopted either a friendly or a tolerant attitude," the local Socialist press was unified in its transnational vitriolic reaction with one publication, *Peuple*, declaring that "Belgium will not tolerate Hungarian monarchist intrigues in the city of Brussels" and that "[t]hese people [Habsburgs] ought to allow themselves to be forgotten."[3]

At this same time with the close of 1929, under the Schober government, Richard Schmitz made moves to reconsider the previously state confiscated Habsburg property and revaluate whether Otto should be constitutionally expelled from Austria. Schuschnigg himself would recount meeting Schober one night in his office to petition the outright repeal of the Anti-Habsburg laws. In response to Schuschnigg's argument, the technically

[1] Unknown, "Die Großherzogin von Luxemburg bei Kaiserin Zita," *Neues Wiener Journal*. December 21, 1929, p. 12.
[2] Unknown, "Maturitätsprüfung des Kaisersohnes," *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*. September 24, 1929, p. 5.
[3] NARA: 863.0011/25, September 18, 1929, report no. 487 from Hugh Gibson (US Legation, Brussels) to Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

non-affiliated Chancellor led him to a room adjoining his office where he was shown a signed portrait of the Imperial family. Schuschnigg reported Schober remarking: "Her Majesty sent me this photograph as a token of remembrance when I was appointed Chancellor."[4] While ultimately unsuccessful, the attempt to re-address the Habsburg question was reacted to with immediate Communist cries that the CSP were "heading directly for the re-establishment of the monarchy!"[5] Schmitz presented this proposal of allowing the Imperial family to return and live in their private property as private citizens "as a matter of honour for the Republic." Austromarxism saw nothing more than "a fascist thrust for the murder house Habsburg."[6] Nonetheless, we see how Schober was willing to discreetly present himself to political allies as "an old official of the Dual Monarchy […] and what his general attitude to the monarchist question was." When politically convenient, he felt emboldened to divulge his being in communication with the Habsburg court in exile and had proven himself reliable at suppressing republican revolutionary activity at home.[7]

The German Socialist press for their part covered in detail how in preparation for Otto's coming of age on 20th November 1930, Zita went about securing oaths of fidelity to her son as "Emperor and King Otto" from all Habsburg family members.[8] To deny assent meant running the risk of being declared anathema. Once Archduke Albrecht was brought into line and Otto had come of age, there was even speculation that the Kingdom of Italy could be won over to the idea of restoration by means of a strategic marriage with Princess Maria of Savoy.[9] Such an Italian Savoy and Austrian Habsburg alliance would no doubt coincide with an entrenchment of Italian Fascist influence in Central Europe and solidify Italy's guarantorship over a vassal Austria. Alessandra Tarquini in her assessment of Mussolini's fascism highlights how Monarchists in Italy saw potential for the totalitarian rejection of liberal individualism to usher in "a new Counter-Reformation, [which] would

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[4] Kurt von Schuschnigg, *Farewell Austria* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1938), p. 110-1.
[5] Unknown, "Ein faschistischer Vorstoß für das Mörderhaus Habsburg," *Die Rote Fahne.* November 9, 1929, p. 2.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Schuschnigg, *Farewell Austria*, p. 110-11.
[8] Unknown, "Die Umtriebe der Habsburger." *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, July 17, 1930, p. 2.
[9] Stephan Baier and Eva Demmerle, *Otto von Habsburg: die Autorisierte Biografie* (Vienna: Amalthea-Signum-Verl., 2002), p. 78.

restore the principles of the Catholic tradition—which remained uncorrupted by modernity—and bring about a return to a premodern world […]." [10] Yet European Monarchism broadly understood was no homogeneous movement. While likewise shunning materialism and professing the Catholic faith, the Italian experience of monarchy much more closely follows the *Staatsidee* of the Hohenzollern than the *Reichsidee* of Habsburg Legitimists. Contra to the prevalent view of many in the historiography, Tarquini puts forward the argument that the Fascist movement —despite courting the nationalism of "conservative monarchists" to bolster state authority— "had no wish to return to the past" and while leaning on the legacy of Ancient Rome, rather contended with "building a new civilisation."[11] Mussolini in this respect was a much better bedfellow of Hitler than either Otto or Schuschnigg.

November 1930 saw the emergence of Otto von Habsburg as a political agent in his own right, reaching the age of legal majority upon his 18th birthday. One month later would see the definitive end of the Seipel era of politics, having bestowed upon Austria a new schema to navigate the Interwar period. Soon after coming of age, Otto embarked on tour throughout Scandinavia during which he spent time in the company of King Gustav of Sweden.[12] Rumours followed Otto's shadow. The phantom spectre of Habsburg restoration led to insistent speculation and even mania. One such instance were November 1930 reports in the Berlin press of preparations between Swiss authorities and Otto to travel to the Austrian border based on fabricated misinformation which bewildered Bern where the rumours were regarded as "completely incomprehensible" and "nonsensical."[13] Furthermore, the Austrian embassy in Prague reported back to Vienna that according to their sources it "was revealed that the enthronement of King Otto would to be proclaimed in Budapest on 18 July [1931]" less than a week from the date of the report with an "enthronement document" already allegedly prepared for the ceremony. Speculation on a

[10] Alessandra Tarquini, *A History of Italian Fascist Culture, 1922–1943* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2022), p. 63.
[11] Ibid., p. 38.
[12] Baier and Demmerle, *Otto von Habsburg*, p. 78.
[13] AdR: NPA, Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919 – 1933, Ff. 367, November 18, 1930, report "Unsinnige Gerüchte über Erzherzog Otto" from Maximilian von Hoffinger (Austrian embassy, Bern) to Ignaz Seipel (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).

possible unilateral about-face by Horthy's government nonetheless remained consistently sceptical, presuming that such rumours could be deliberately cultivated to merely sound out potential international response.[14]

Not all visits to the exiled Habsburg were social and aristocratic in nature. Dietrich von Hildebrand —describing himself as "an ardent admirer of Emperor Charles"— went to visit Otto in Steenokkerzeel while on an official international tour, only being able to do so as a private citizen but not in his role as a VF Austrian propagandist.[15] The same line would be held by the aristocratic Starhemberg regarding his own visit to Otto in Belgium which was characterised as an apparent "act of courtesy" and not "a political act."[16] Otto —while in Berlin under the auspices of carrying out doctoral research— sought to sound out German political leaders on Habsburg Restoration. In this actively he caught the attention of Adolf Hitler. The future *Reichskanzler* had long harboured animosity towards the Habsburg dynasty, nonetheless, he showed interest in the potentially utilising Otto to hand Austria over to Berlin, an interest which would be rapidly and definitively rebuffed by the now Habsburg head of House.[17] Otto would recount in a 1990 interview being "approached the various Hohenzollerns" and envoys of Hitler, twice refusing their advances.[18]

The KtVP in August 1931 would hold political rallies under the watchful eye of the security services which documented their demands that Otto return immediately not as an adventurer but as a triumphant ruler with an official welcome rather than smuggling

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[14] AdR: NPA, Karton 731, Liasse Ungarn 2/11 Monarchistische Bewegung 1920–1937, Ff. 511-12, July 13, 1931, report Zl. 147/Pol entitled "Zur Frage der Restaurierungshestrebungen in Ungarn" from Austrian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary Ferdinand Marek (Austrian embassy, Prague) to Johannes Schober (Federal Vice-Chancellor's Office, Vienna).
[15] Dietrich von Hildebrand, *My Battle Against Hitler: Faith, Truth, and Defiance in the Shadow of the Third Reich,* 1.ed. (New York, NY: Image, 2014), p. 120-21.
[16] AdR: NPA, Karton 185, Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1934–Februar 1936, Ff. 563-569, January 31, 1936, memorandum entitled "Unsinnige Gerüchte im Zusammenhang mit der Reise Vizekanzlers Starhemberg nach London" from Federal Chancellor's Office (Vienna) to "all European ambassadors and the consul general in Munich."
[17] Timothy Snyder, *The Red Prince: The Fall of a Dynasty and the Rise of Modern* Europe (London: Vintage, 2009), p. 162.
[18] Interview: "Gespräch mit Dr. Otto Habsburg am 13.1.1995 in Pöcking" Schagerl, "Friedrich Ritter von Wiesner: Diplomat, Legitimist und NS-Verfolgter", p. 194.

himself across the border.[19] By 1933 reports of Otto's movements went beyond allegations in hostile press of impending travels to speculations in foreign chancellors from Mexico to Czechoslovakia that Otto had not merely already been in Vienna but had even successfully negotiated a programme of restoration with the new Dollfuss government. These allegations which were discreetly presented to Austrian diplomatic officials as "unquestionable and certified information" that Otto had been the guest of Secretary of State for the Army, Prince Schönburg-Hartenstein, and had been hunting in Styria with Hungarian Prime Minister Gömbös. Such inquiries left foreign Austrian ministers stationed abroad scrambling to seek direction on how to respond.[20]

As the 1920s gave way to the 1930s it became increasingly apparent that the fortunes of Habsburg Legitimism were shifting away from Budapest and towards Vienna. Regardless of the validity of legal sanction against his father, Otto, unlike Karl, had never had the crown upon his head. Laying hands on the physical crown would be key to any claim to legitimacy to ever rule in Budapest on Otto's behalf. Horthy and his supporters were keen to ensure that the physical crown would not fall into Habsburg hands. To this end a new May 1928 Hungarian law was proposed via-a-vis the "custody of the Holy Crown" of St. Stephan and associated "Coronation Insignia."[21]

A new Magyar logic guided this law and was precipitated by what the bill's authors refer to as "the changes which have occurred in our national life" having taken place "during this period of transition."[22] This idea of the crown as being subject to the changeable circumstances of geopolitical pragmatism directly conflicted with the supernatural logic of Karl, deeming his title irrevocable and himself dutybound to defend from usurpation. This Habsburg logic was passed directly to Zita and then Otto, arguing

[19] AdR: Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 405, September 2, 1931, entitled "Versammlung der Kaisertreuen Volkspartei am 25. August 1931" from Polizeidirektion Wien to Johannes Schober (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).
[20] AdR: NPA, Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919 – 1933, Ff. 490-496, December 10, 1933, report Zl.277/Pol. entitled: "Nachrichten über eine angebliche Anwesenheit Otto von Habsburgs in Oesterreich" from Austrian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary Ferdinand Marek (Austrian Embassy, Prague) to Federal Chancellor Dollfuss (Vienna).
[21] NARA: 864.412/1, May 24, 1928, report no. 179 from Joshua Butler Wright (US Legation, Budapest) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[22] Ibid.

that the 1921 dethronement law and abrogation of the 1723 Pragmatic Sanction on succession were null and void. Regardless of the negative assessment of the notion of popular sovereignty on the Catholic Right, seven years after the dethronement laws, the popular Catholic Conservative *Reichspost* newspaper boldly asserted: "There is no doubt that this did not express the free will of the Hungarians."[23] The Austrian pro-Monarchy Catholic Right summarised and concurred with the argument of the Hungarian Legitimists that the Budapest parliament had no right to depose the rightful King, much less on account of enacting the will of hostile foreign powers.[24] Observed from upstream on the Danube, the *Reichspost* juxtaposed a patient and well-discipled —but increasingly marginalised— Hungarian pro-Habsburg aristocracy with a effectively organised "calvinistic clique" dominating "various grades of public office."[25]

The Hungarian judicial system at this time continued to issue rulings "in the name of the Crown of St. Stephen."[26] The new law reiterated the role of Holy Crown as "the source, the symbol and the instrument of all public power, thus also of the power of the ruler."[27] Of note to Legitimists, the law further declared:

> "Royal power, therefore, can be acquired only through the act of being crowned with the Holy Crown, the coronation being approved by Parliament and carried out according to the usual ecclesiastical rite."[28]

This ideal of parliamentary consent was to serve as a safeguard against the prospect of unilateral action on the part of Otto's supporters. Even if the appointed custodians failed in their allocated duty and delivered the crown over to Otto —and the archbishop of Esztergom collaborated— parliamentary supremacy would claim to invalidate any rogue coronation.

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[23] Unknown, "Die ungarische Königsfrage," *Reichspost*. November 10, 1928, cited in NARA: 864.001/5, November 20, 1928, report from Albert H. Washburn (US Legation, Vienna) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Tadeusz Kopyś, "The Crown of St. Stephen as a Symbol of Legal Continuity and Hungarian Constitutionalism (Historical Background)," *Cracow Studies of Constitutional & Legal History* 15, no. 3 (July 2022): p. 382.
[27] NARA: 864.412/1, May 24, 1928, report no. 179 from Joshua Butler Wright (US Legation, Budapest) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[28] Ibid.

Months prior to the 1928 law, in October 1927, Horthy's government had erected a prominent monument to Hungarian republican revolutionary Lajos Kossuth in central Budapest.[29] Politicians and press alike exalted Kossuth as a "champion of liberty, democracy and independence at home and abroad — as well as the great antagonist of the Hapsburg dynasty and Austria."[30] The image of Kossuth held a pivotal place in US-Hungarian relations and the cultural imagination of both peoples. Emphasising the intellectually continuity between American and Hungarian revolutions, the US ambassador was invited to be the very first international diplomat to lay a wreath at the memorial, addressing the crowd gathered declaring: "I salute the memory of a great patriot and an immortal champion of the cause of liberty."[31] While Italy also featured prominently in the 1927 commemorations —due to the alignment of her 19th Century struggle for national unity at the expense of the Habsburg dynasty— no representatives were sent from Romania, Yugoslavia, nor Czechoslovakia. The singing of a patriotic anthem entitled "Hungarian creed" containing the line "I believe in the resurrection of Hungary!" was deemed objectionable to her neighbour states. Interestingly, the United Kingdom was officially unrepresented on account to not wanting to be seen to give support a British Magyar-ophile, Lord Rothermere's advocacy for territorial revision of Hungary's Trianon borders and his candidacy for election as King of Hungary.

Kossuth in 1849 had hidden the crown in Orsova "in order that no Hapsburg should be crowned with it." For this reason, most recently, the preservation of the crown from Bolshevik acquisition was a top priority of the White forces in the post-1918 civil war. Had they obtained the crown, it would be highly probable that it would be melted down and disappeared, sparking a constitutional crisis for monarchists of all stripes. In a similar vein, anti-Habsburg forces could subvert any legitimist intrigue by the physically putting the crown out of reach of Otto's hands as he came of age to press his claim as his father's successor. As the bill's sponsor noted, "legal possession of it [the crown of St. Stephan]

[29] NARA: 864.413K84/- October 18, 1927, telegram no. 3050/ from US Chargé d'Affaires ad interim from (US Legation, Budapest) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[30] NARA: 864.413/413K84/1, November 8, 1927, report no. 75 from Joshua Butler Wright (US Legation, Budapest) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[31] Ibid.

was and is equivalent to the acquisition of sovereign powers."[32] Therefore, the law was so strict that Prime Minister Count István Bethlen would have to even grant permission in writing for any person to be in the room upon the opening of the crown container.

The fact that Otto was soon coming of age did not escape the Hungarian diaspora in America. In a prelude to the heightened diaspora activism of the Second World War period, the Hungarian Legation in Washington met in-person with the US assistant Secretary of State to discuss a May 12th, 1929, article from *The World* entitled "Hungarians in U.S. oppose Monarchy." Top of the agenda was the planned assembly of more than 500 American-Hungarians in Buffalo, New York, for "the launching of the first Nation-wide protest on the part of Hungarians in America against the attempted return of the Hapsburg dynasty to the throne."[33] These diaspora activists —inspired by the historical Kossuth and contemporary Lord Rothermere— sought to attain a revision of the treaty of Trianon through appealing to western ideals by means of internal democratic reforms such as an end to Horthy style autocracy, a return of trial by jury, and an end of anti-Semitic discrimination.[34] The US, with more than forty-three Hungarian language newspapers, thus became an open platform for anti-Horthy pro-republican and pro-Liberal dissent in favour of a nominal constitutional monarchy.

Over a 9th November 1921, UK House of Lords debate, Thomas Legh, Baron Newton, asserted Horthy to be "a Legitimist and in favour of the restoration of the Monarchy" and "far from being the ogre he is sometimes described in the Press of this country."[35] Nearly ten years later, after the death of Karl, much had changed. While Otto's coming of age and the sudden rise of National Socialism in Germany had precipitated a re-newed energy in Hungarian and Austrian Legitimists, Horthy would now nail his colours to the mast of the Free-Elector faction of the King Question. In an October 8th, 1933, speech he declared: "The present legal position of Hungary is perfectly clear. It has no

[32] NARA: 864.412/1, May 24, 1928, report no. 179 from Joshua Butler Wright (US Legation, Budapest) to Frank B. Kellogg (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[33] US NARA: 711.64119/61 May 15, 1929, letter from Royal Hungarian legation (Washington D.C.) to William R. Castle (US assistant Secretary of State).
[34] Ibid.
[35] House of Lords: The Hapsburg Dynasty, December 9, 1921, column 229-45. Accessed February 11, 2023: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1921/nov/09/the-hapsburg-dynasty.

king, and this fact is unshakable."[36] Seeing the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713 as null on account of both the death of the Habsburg Empire and the 1921 dethronement law, the Regent asserted "the nation has a right to elect its king."[37] Horthy maintained that that he had always been loyal to Karl, blaming his exile on external factors beyond Hungary's borders. Of particular concern to Otto, the self-professed Regent further reiterated: "Everybody knows that in Hungary all power is held by the Holy Crown and is passed over to the king only by the act of coronation."[38] Despite being portrayed by his international supporters in 1921 as having "no taste for public life," it was now this very appeal to "a strong sense of duty" that Horthy clung to his identity as Regent, choosing to re-interpret his allegiance to the best interest of the Hungarian nation, which he — as a "high-minded" aristocrat— appointed himself as arbiter and guardian.[39]

[36] Miklós Horthy, "October 8, 1933, Speech of Miklós Horthy at the Inauguration at Mezőtúr of the Memorial of War Heroes on the Succession to the Throne," in *The Confidential Papers of Admiral Horthy*, eds. Miklós Szinai and László Szűcs (Budapest: Corvina, 1967), p. 68–71.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] House of Lords: The Hapsburg Dynasty, December 9, 1921, column 229-45. Accessed February 11, 2023: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1921/nov/09/the-hapsburg-dynasty.

Chapter 5 Resurgent Habsburg Monarchism amidst Radicalised Reactionism and Central European Realpolitik (1933-1938).

Chapter five will examine the fall of the Austrian First Republic, arguing that the new state narrative of Austrian identity was orchestrated for and by a clique of pro-Habsburg sympathisers and Legitimists which sought to juxtapose a supernatural Catholic and supranational —but equally German— Austria with a pagan nationalist Germany and naturalist international socialism. Furthermore, the vexation this development induced in the neighbouring Little Entente states of Yugoslavia, Romanian, and Czechoslovakia will be addressed to demonstrate the disparate priorities of Central European actors in their perceptions of threat from either Hitlerite or Habsburg rule.

The chapter argues for the importance of Austria's dynamic international contextual situation throughout the 1930s from Ignaz Seipel's formal departure from politics to just before the annexation of Austria in March 1938. It further concerns itself with how these set of circumstances shape and are shaped by the seemingly omnipresent Habsburg question. The thesis operates on the understanding that the Austrian conservative camp never fully identified with the First Republic and that the supposably "fascistic" undertones of the VF *Ständestaat* (Austria between the years 1934 and 1938) can be better described as "overtones," being superficial and not substantial in nature. Furthermore, unlike Hungary of the same period, Austrian constitutional reform of the time envisioned and pro-actively sought to accomplish not just a cultural rehabilitation of the perennially Habsburg name, but to harmonise once more the concepts of Habsburg and Austria such that they would be inseparably bound together. Finally, while the rise of NS rule in Germany gave power to Legitimists within Austria, this would only be the case so long as the *Wehrmacht* remained on the German side of the boarder.

5.1: Katholikentag and Ständestaat

In early 1933, the public-facing conspiracy-prone attitude of the Austria bishops was summarised in the anti-Semitic remarks of Bishop Johannes Maria Gföllner of Linz:

> "Degenerate Judaism, in alliance with world Freemasonry, is also primarily the bearer of mammonistic capitalism and predominantly the founder and apostle of socialism and communism, the harbingers and pacesetters of Bolshevism. Resisting and breaking this harmful influence of Judaism is not only a good right, but a strict duty of conscience of every convinced Christian […]."[1]

This need to find a "third way" between this above mentioned "mammonistic capitalism" and communism opened up political discourse to the development of alternative political arrangements one of which was reactionary corporate authoritarianism inspired by the 1931 papal encyclical of Pope Pius Xi, *Quadragesimo anno*.

The Austrian Right would seek to monopolise Catholicism in their political struggle. The September 1933 Vienna *Deutscher Katholikentag* meeting was therefore the platform for Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuß' declaration on his programme for the transformation of the First Austrian Republic into an outwardly reactionary and authoritarian *Ständestaat*. Dollfuß' future successor, then minster of Justice, Kurt von Schuschnigg, declared to the gathering on the 9th September that:

> "Without Catholic Austria, the German people cannot fulfil their mission in the Christian world, the true Holy Roman Empire cannot be reborn, and peace cannot be restored to Central Europe, which is bleeding from a thousand wounds."[2]

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[1] Karl von Vogelsang Institute, Party Archives CSP: box 62, pastoral letter from Bishop Johannes Maria Gföllner dated January 21, 1933, p. 7. Cited in Brigitte Behal, "Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten deutsch-nationaler katholischer Eliten im Zeitraum 1930–1965: Ihr Weg und Wandel in diesen Jahren am Beispiel Dr. Anton Böhms, Dr. Theodor Veiters und ihrer katholischen und politischen Netzwerke" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 2009), p. 39.

[2] Kurt von Schuschnigg, "Die Sendung des deutsches Volkes im christlichen Abendland," *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*. September 11, 1933, p. 3.

Denouncing the Prussian *Staatsidee* in favour of an Austrian Catholic *Reichsidee*, Schuschnigg argued: "We see only that the doctrine of the omnipotence of the state, founded on [Hegelian dialectics], is in all its manifestations the opposite of the true *Reichsgedanke*."[3]

Castigating the "so-called democracy" of the post-Imperial era, Dollfuss proclaimed that the "materialistic theories" of "Liberalism had been put to the test and failed" and now the forced consolidation of all political parties into a new *Vaterländische Front* (VF) platform was justified.[4] The view of the Catholic Right was —due to procedural technicalities on convening a voting session after successive resignations of the speaker and vice-speaker of the lower-house to break deadlock on a polemic vote — that the decadence of parliamentarianism had led to its own "self-destruction." Faced with the crisis of what Dollfuß refers to as a "war on two fronts," he, as Chancellor, rather than having new elections, would use Imperial-era emergency prerogative to rule by decree.[5] Supporters of Otto would rally to Dolfuß' call for a united Fatherland Front to oppose the Materialism of National and International Socialism. The more they could ingratiate themselves with the new anti-republican order, the more likely a Habsburg restoration was to occur. Legitimist-controlled publishing houses –such as Ernst Karl Winter's Gsur & Co.– released books like the 1932 work by Austrian Franciscan Zyrill Fischer entitled *The Swastika Bearers*[6] describing Hitler as a "pseudo-saviour" promoting a neo-pagan worldview of "National small-mindedness," "myths of Blood and Soil" and racialised anti-Semitism. These denunciations were juxtaposed with the all-embracing complementary charity of the supranational Catholic Church and the former Habsburg Monarchy.[7]

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[3] Ibid.
[4] NARA: 863.00/814, September 13, 1933, report no. 915 entitled ""Speech of Austrian Chancellor at a meeting of the Patriotic Front" from Merritt Swift (Legation of the United States of America, Vienna) Cordell Hull (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[5] Ibid.
[6] Zyrill Fischer, *Die Hakenkreuzler* (Vienna: Gsur, 1932).
[7] Christian Kitzmüller (Br. Stefan), "...ein unangenehmer Rufer in der Wüste": Der publizistische Widerstand des österreichischen Franziskaners Zyrill Fischer (1892–1945) gegen den Nationalsozialismus" (Master's thesis, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, 2012), p. 159.

Historians such as Anton Staudinger highlight how this "Catholic *Reich* Myth" contributed directly to the end of parliamentary republican democracy in Austria.[8] The interjection of the language of kingship, mission, rebirth, empire, and divine authority into mainstream political discourse was certainly warmly welcomed by Habsburg Legitimists who saw such political currents as a potential vehicle for their cause of restoring the monarchy under exiled Archduke Otto. Historian Peniston-Bird argues that in the building a truly Austrian national identity, for the Catholic Right the "claiming continuity between the past and their version of the future" was of paramount importance.[9] In such a light one should examine the dramatic 9th September 1933 declaration of the new *Ständestaat* (corporative state).

The 1933 *Katholikentag* was designed to coincide with the 250th anniversary of the 1683 siege of Vienna and saw a reported crowd of over 200,000 gathering at the Habsburg Schönbrunn summer palace. The event in the suburbs of the Austrian capital was accompanied by Catholic Mass and subsequent speeches by Dollfuss and Starhemberg — dressed in military attire— and cardinals from Austria and Poland, including a special papal legate. To accompany the declaration of the *Ständestaat* under the leadership of a "patriotic" VF, Otto sent a letter from exile addressing the crowds, calling for a new crusade in defence of Christendom.[10] During the *Katholikentag* celebration Bishop Waitz at a 11th September Mass in St. Stephen's Cathedral read this 7th September 1933 letter sent by Otto addressed to Cardinal Innitzer:

> "I and mine are forced by bitter, unjust exile to stay away from this magnificent manifestation of Catholic spirit! Hardly ever has exile been harder for me than in these days! […] I implore Almighty God that, as in 1683, these days in September will also mark a milestone in Catholic Austria's struggle for its existence, its independence and its future. May God grant me to return as soon as possible, so

[8] Anton Staudinger, "Katholischer Reichsmythos und Zerstörung der parlamentarischen Demokratie in Österreich," in *Österreich auf dem Weg zur 3. Republik*, ed. Reinhard Zeilinger (Vienna: Promedia, 1992), p. 48–59.
[9] C. M. Peniston-Bird, "The Debate on Austrian National Identity in the First Republic (1918–1938)" (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 1997), p. 138.
[10] Unknown, "Unser Kaiser Otto an Kardinal Innitzer," *Christliche Frauenzeitung*. October 1933, p. 7.

that I too can rebuild my beloved Austria on the unshakable foundation of eternal truths and lead it with a firm hand towards a more beautiful future."[11]

The letter —co-opting the "rebuilding" language of the new emerging VF regime— provides good insight into Otto's thinking regarding the opportunity an anti-Parliamentarian Austrian Right and an assurgent influence of the Church presented the Legitimist cause.

Furthermore, Dollfuß informed the Vatican that the Habsburg-sympathetic Dr. Richard Schmitz was selected in his new September 1933 cabinet due to his private studies on *Quadragesimo anno* (1931) and its application in Austria. Nuncio, Enrico Sibilia, reported that there was "well-founded hope that the Dollfuss directives will be faithfully followed for the religious and civil good of this beloved Nation."[12] VF officials kept a watchful eye on the response from the Catholic press in Germany where it was lauded that Otto –like the VF– was a bulwark against "Bolshevism and liberalism [...] nationalism and racial fanaticism, party discord and class warfare, promising 'a new, greater future worthy of the high past of [Austrian] religious and imperial unity."[13]

Civil war in Budapest had successfully brought about the restoration of Hungary as a kingdom. However, in Austria there was no comparable logic of the Crown of St. Stephen and the republican opposition to Habsburg restoration was less objectionably Bolshevik. The comparable moderation of Austromarxism —vis-à-vis it's Hungarian counterpart—made the argument for a pendulum swing towards reactionary monarchy less effective and divided opinion on the Austrian Right as to the utility of working within the democratic institutions created by the November 1918 revolutionaries. Nevertheless, going into the 1930s, the Papal Nuncio in Vienna was in no mood for such subtle distinctions and wrote to the Vatican: "Viennese socialism is Marxism and Bolshevism." Furthermore,

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[11] Ibid.

[12] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 849, Fascicolo 3, Ff. 307-309, September 22, 1933, report on new Dollfuss cabinet, post 11th September declarations regarding the implementation of papal encyclical *Quadragesima anno* from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Eugenio Pacelli (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[13] Dr. Hartmeyer, "Habsburg" *Fränkischer Kurier*. October 5, 1933, p. 1-2 found in AdR: NPA, Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919 – 1933, Ff. 487-488, October 6, 1933, report from Austrian consulate (Munich) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).

he highlighted the need to remain on guard to the risk of –who he referred derogatorily as– "the Jew Dr. Bauer" and the "[power] of Freemasonry" in establishing an anti-Habsburg Empire of Austromarxism which would co-opt the tradition of Vienna to spread Bolshevism throughout the Danube Basin.[14] Red Vienna —allegedly "led by 90% of Jewish leaders"—was claimed by the Nuncio to be propped up by the encouragement of Moscow and the elaborate banking sector inherited from the old Monarchy, and therefore, he argued, "the Bolsheviks will not disarm in preparation for the advent of a Soviet Republic."[15]

Not only had nascent Rump-Austria had to endure near ceaseless economic difficulties, but she also additionally lacked the political tradition of a loyal parliamentary opposition leading up to the 1933 Austrian Civil War. Schuschnigg and Dollfuß' mentor Msgr. Ignaz Seipel had publicly denounced and alienated potential anti-Nazi allies, the SPÖ opposition, as "adversaries of Christ."[16] The CSP –and later VF– renounced the International Socialism of the SPÖ as potential collaborators in warding off National Socialism. To political Catholicism, both were deemed to be of the same genesis in a break from supranational and supernatural Christendom.[17] Likewise, in the lead up to the February 1934 Austrian Civil War, in May 1933 the SPÖ released a statement equating Legitimism as an equal threat to that of Nazism, declaring:

> "*Anschluss* with a free and peaceful Germany of the future remains our goal […] we shall oppose any restoration of Habsburg rule just as we shall steadfastly resist subjugation to Hitler's tyranny."[18]

Demonstrative of an uncompromising attitude, this SPÖ statement with its use of the word "any" implicitly precluded even restoration along the lines of a moderate democratic constitutional monarchy like that of the UK. Thus, for the SPÖ, KPÖ, and their Czech

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[14] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Segreteria di Stato, Corrispondenza varia 1. 1923-1931, Fasc. 2 13), Ff. 380-381, April 10, 1929, report no. 79124 entitled "La Situazione a Vienna" from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Pietro Gasparri (Secretary of State, Vatican).
[15] Ibid.
[16] Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, *Hitler's Defeat in Austria 1933–1934: Europe's First Containment of Nazi Expansionism* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1988), p. 52.
[17] Unknown, "Die soziale Monarchie," *Vaterland: Blätter für katholisches Österreichertum*, no. 8 (1935/36): p. 1.
[18] Kindermann, *Hitler's Defeat in Austria 1933–1934,* p. 53.

counterparts —operating under the lens of class-warfare— there was a moral equivalency between Hitlerism and Habsburgism.[19]

Unlike Hungary, German-Austria was not a nation state with an identity rooted in a millennium of history. Absent this tradition, the forces on the Right leaned into their Catholic faith and regional Imperial identity as a source of anti-Socialist inspiration. In the days leading up to the civil war, the Socialist press covered the Habsburg property question speculating that Habsburg funds would be used to fund *Heimwehr* efforts to ignite and win a civil war.[20] The UK press reported of "Fierce Outburst of Civil Warfare All over Austria" as a "Socialist-Fascist clash"[21] and hyperbolically wrote of "several hundred dead" in front-page headlines,[22] with others even claiming up to 1,500 dead by the end of hostilities.[23] In contrast, to England, newspapers in Catholic Ireland saw the civil war was a battle between atheistic socialism and the Kingship of Christ. The Irish Catholic media reported of the VF as "adherents of the Catholic, Faith, striving with might and main to rear up a Christian state in accordance with the Papal Encyclicals of recent years."[24] The English Anglican publication, *Church Times*, summer up the divide within the Anglosphere, writing in the wake of the Austrian *Katholikentag* that Dollfuss "had in mind a Christian dictatorship, as [Irish Prime Minister] Mr. de Valera has in mind a Christian democracy."[25]

Despite protestations against their alleged lack of goodwill in seeking peace, the Austromarxist press had a clear narrative on the nature of the civil war:

> "The aristocrats and the imperial and royal generals commanding the *Heimwehr* wanted to crush the Austrian working class by force, so that the way would be clear for Otto Habsburg to enter the Hofburg."[26]

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[19] Unknown, "Weder Hitler noch Habsburg!," *Die Rote Fahne*, March 1, 1937, p. 13.
[20] Unknown, "Das Schicksal des Habsburger-Vermögens," *Die Stunde*. February 9, 1934, p. 5.
[21] Unknown, "Fierce Outburst of Civil Warfare All over Austria," *Aberdeen Journal.* February 13, 1934, p. 7.
[22] Unknown, "Several Hundreds Dead in Austria," *Nottingham Evening Post*. February 13, 1934, p. 1.
[23] Unknown, "Dollfuss in Getting Upper Hand," *Aberdeen Journal.* February 13, 1934, p. 7.
[24] Unknown, "Austria the Cockpit of Europe," *The Irish Catholic Herald*. February 17, 1934, p. 3.
[25] Unknwn, *Church Times*, September 15, 1933, 283.
[26] Unknown, "Nach dem Kampf!" *Arbeiter Zeitung.* February 25, 1934, p. 1.

Decrying the court martial sentences of fifteen and twenty years handed down to members of the RSB, the SPÖ promised that it would be "much less time before Dollfuss and Fey themselves will be in our prisons, standing before our revolutionary courts."[27] Indeed, by the end of February, no less than two weeks after the successful conclusion of the civil war, British press outlets reported on Starhemberg's attempt to capitalise on counter-revolutionary momentum to openly call for Otto's return to Austria.[28] Further demonstrative of a new emboldened status-quo post-bellum, shortly after the war Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna, Theodor Innitzer, addressed the topic of "Austria's Spiritual Mission" declaring:

> "The idea of the kingship of Christ, by right does not recognise any barrier nor limitation of its absolute claim to power."[29]

After its rapid conclusion in favour of the Austrian Right, American Catholic media drew much good in the recent civil war reporting with triumph that "hundreds of thousands have abandoned Socialism indignantly and are seeking refuge in the Church."[30]

In England, the Labour Party —in contrast to their Tory counterparts— were much more sceptical of the VF government in Vienna in the wake of the Austrian Civil War. Even with Austromarxism forced into exile, the Labour MP Garro-Jones proposed that should the UK give security guarantees for Austrian independence, and should Vienna insist on restoration, that for London "would it not be well to put forward a British candidate for the Throne."[31] Such a surprising proposal –if considered to be made with sincerity – is demonstrative of UK lack of understanding of the many nuanced complexities of Central Europe which separated the Habsburg Question in Austria from Hungary. Westminster could not resolve the issue of a potentially open throne in Vienna as she did Brussels or Athens in the 19th Century.

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Unknown, "Will Hapsburgs Return?" *Aberdeen Journal*. February 28, 1934, p. 7.
[29] Theodor Innitzer, "Erlässe und Kundmachungen Kardinal Innitzer zum Universitätssonntag am 11. März 1934 Um Oesterreichs geistige Sendung," *Salzburger Kirchenblatt*. March 8, 1934, p. 4.
[30] Unknown, "Many in Austria Rejoining Church," *The Catholic Transcript* (Hartford, Connecticut). March 15, 1934, p. 1 & 7.
[31] House of Commons debate on "Austria," March 24, 1937, found in House of Commons, *The Parliamentary Debates: Official Report, volume 321* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1927), p. 2880.

In posing the question as to whether the VF regime was by nature a reactionary or a revolutionary fascist, one needs to make distinction between superficial and substantial qualities. Lothar Höbelt notes how in contrast to Germany and Italy where revolutionary populists at first won over and then lost the trust of the previous ruling elite, "[i]n Austria, on the other hand, the "Austrofascists" themselves comprised the bulk of the old elites, the high nobility, the former officers, with a close relationship to industry."[32] Only a small minority of Legitimists looked to Italy "an example of preserving a monarchy despite a political revolution."[33] Furthermore, for Schuschnigg, the First Republic was no democracy whatsoever claiming "the reputed sovereignty of the people having existed on paper only."[34] His new VF movement would pursue a new path appealing to the three pillar principles of a German, Authoritative and Corporate Austria to unify the population. This idea of social contract was much more Burkean in nature. The civil war could therefore be portrayed as "a reaction against the enormities characterizing the revolutionary period."[35] Thus, when parliamentarianism was seen to hinder such efforts, becoming an end rather than a means, it became incumbent upon political leadership to, as they saw it, "smash the hollow demagogy of the party-state system."[36]

Despite the recent civil war and exiling of the SPÖ to Czechoslovakia, a 25th September 1935 Federal Chancellor's Office for Public Security report on "Confidential information about the restoration of the Habsburgs" optimistically argued that Prague "made it very clear that it no longer regards the return of the Habsburgs to the Austrian throne as an act of war."[37] The transition from First Republic to *Ständestaat* and subsequent gradual repeal of anti-Habsburg laws was viewed by the international press as

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[32] Lothar Höbelt, *Die Heimwehren und die österreichische Politik 1927–1936: Vom politischen "Kettenhund" zum "Austro-Fascismus"?* (Graz: Ares Verlag, 2016), p. 407.

[33] It should be noted that the Italian path to national unity and fascist claim to total power —and the role of both the House of Savoy and the Holy See within that campaign— stands in stark contrast to Austria's recent supranational and supranatural Habsburg tradition. See: Johannes Thaler, "Ally and Opposition: The Legitimist Movement under the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg Dictatorship," *Austrian History Yearbook* 45 (2014): 167–85, p. 169.

[34] Schuschnigg, *Farewell Austria,* p. 229.

[35] Ibid., p. 47.

[36] Edmund Weber, *Dollfuß an Österreich: Eines Mannes Wort und Ziel* (Vienna: Reinhold-Verlag, 1935), p. 9.

[37] AdR: BKA/Inneres, 22/Gen, Karton 4945, September 25, 1935, report no. 360822 entitled "Vertrauliche Information über die Restauration des Habsburger" from Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).

one more step naturally progressing toward a prophesised return of the Habsburg to the heart of European politics.[38] In the immediate wake of the Civil War, the *Irish Times* informed its readers:

> "Rumour throughout Europe was busy with the name of Archduke Otto […] certain important powers would welcome his return either to Budapest or to Vienna."[39]

Within the new *Ständestaat* Austria, these "important powers" enforced a creed upon VF members in which "respect toward the Habsburg dynasty and understanding for the achievements of the monarchy" became a virtuous article of faith. Conversely "all utterances which aim to belittle or revile the dynasty" were seen as vice which warranted political excommunication.[40]

[38] AdR, NPA, Karton 185, Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1934 – Februar 1936, Ff. 421-427, August 7, 1936, report entitled "Die Frage der Habsburger in Osterreich" from Georg von und zu Franckenstein (Austrian embassy, London) to Egon Berger-Waldenegg (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).
[39] "The Future of Austria," *Irish Times*. February 28, 1934, p. 6.
[40] AdR: Sonderarchiv Moskau Serie, Traditionsreferat Fond 514, Ff. 18–19. Cited in Johannes Thaler, "Ally and Opposition: The Legitimist Movement under the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg Dictatorship." *Austrian History Yearbook* 45 (2014): p. 172.

5.2: Parallel Deutschtums

Viktor von Andrian Werbung in 1843 remarked on the nebulous concept of Austria:

> "Austria is a purely imaginary name, which signifies no one self-contained people, no one country, no one nation […] if one excludes a span of land encompassing Vienna."[1]

Within this mid-nineteenth Century observation we see not only the unique nature of the city of Vienna as a cosmopolitan centre of culture, a microcosm of Central Europe, but also the pre-eminence of the Habsburg dynasty in giving a supernational Danubian Empire its *raison d'etre*. Vienna, since the 18th-Century was juxtaposed with the only other "German" city of comparable influence, Berlin. It was this polarity of Prussian-ness and Austrian-ness, within narratives of Christendom and the German-speaking world, which Seipel, Dollfuss, Schuschnigg and Otto independently sought to exploit for their respective agendas. In this way narratives of Austrian-ness were inheritably bound up in ideas of relational Habsburg identity and therefore also the Habsburg Question. Since the latter half of the 19th-Century, the Austrian identity of the German-speaking population within the Habsburg Monarchy had largely been characterised by who Austrians were not, i.e., *Reichsdeutsche* (those Germans who were citizens of the German Empire). The VF therefore —from a position of insecurity— sought to expand upon the foundational work of Seipel and others in pro-actively cultivating a positive Austrian national identity.

Janek Wasserman makes the argument that those "Black Viennese intellectuals [who] imagined Austria as the fulcrum for Central European affairs and the centre of any future German state," held to a political order which —despite its façade of cosmopolitanism— "was actually still German nationalist, Catholic, and exclusionary, serving to bridge the conservativism and fascism."[2] Nonetheless, while the ÖA —Zessner-

[1] Herbert Matis and Anton Burghardt, *Die Nation-Werdung Österreichs: Historische und soziologische Aspekte, Österreichische Gesellschaft für Wirtschaftssoziologie* (Vienna: Edition 13, 1976), p. 17, cited in C. M. Peniston-Bird, "The Debate on Austrian National Identity in the First Republic (1918–1938)" (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 1997), p. 4.
[2] Janek Wasserman, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918–1938* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), p. 44.

Spitzenberg chief among them— were indeed open to an anti-Socialist dictatorship as a means to Habsburg restoration,[3] other Monarchists such as Ernst Karl Winter strove for a more collegial means to arriving at Habsburg restoration, envisaged as a "Social Monarchy."[4] Furthermore, distinctions of fundamental importance need to be made between Italy and Austria in this regard. In Italy, Monarchy was a reluctantly tolerated framework in the achievement of a totalitarian fascist society. Conversely, this thesis proposes that in Austria —accepting the logic of a Legitimist dominated VF— a facade of clerical-fascism was not a telos but a temporarily tolerated emergency measure imposed by international conditions and had its goal in the achievement of a Catholic Monarchical state which could serve as a viable counter-Germany.

The British Sir E. Phipps, would note in June 1933, that Legitimists were confidently seeking to win the UK over to the idea that:

> "Austria has a 'mission' to fulfil towards the East, and Austrians, owing to their superior culture, are better fitted to carry out that mission than any other German-speaking people. Her independence therefore must be maintained."[5]

Historians such as Wolfram Pyta point to how, in the lead up to the NS rise to power, a monarchist Heinrich Brüning had also pitched the ideal of Monarchy to President Hindenburg. Matching the logic of Horthy in Budapest, Hindenburg dissuaded his political allies from conspiring to restoring the Hohenzollerns to Berlin on account of the contemporary domestic and geopolitical situation, assuring his fellow-travellers on the Right that the dilemma was personally "unbelievably painful."[6]

It was undoubtably true that Hohenzollern Prussian leadership in the German state building project had a distinctly protestant character with the German Emperor appointing

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[3] Ibid., p. 150.
[4] Adam Wandruszka, "Österreichs Politische Struktur: Die Entwicklung der Parteien und politischen Bewegungen," in *Geschichte der Republik Österreich*, ed. Heinrich Benedikt (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1954), p. 351 ;Kindermann, *Hitler's Defeat in Austria 1933–1934,* p. 21.
[5] PRO FO: C 4998/2092/3, June 2, 1933, report no. 52, E. Phipps (UK embassy, Vienna) to John Simon (Foreign Secretary, London) in *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–1939*, 2nd ser., vol. 5, 1933 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), p. 312.
[6] Paul von Hindenburg to Cramon, October 25, 1933, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg, Nachlaß Cramon, 25/1. Cited in Wolfram Pyta, "Hindenburg and the German Right," in *The German Right in the Weimar Republic: Studies in the History of German Conservatism, Nationalism, and Antisemitism, ed. Larry Eugene Jones* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), p. 35.

himself as the head of the Prussian state Lutheran church. Nonetheless, many Catholics in Weimar Germany believed so fervently in the principle of Monarchy that they favoured a return of the Hohenzollerns over the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, any such return was however contingent on the negotiating of a new, more favourable, constitutional arrangement. Richard Evans writes of the Centre party Brüning as "at best a fair-weather friend of Weimar democracy" who privately regarded "the restoration of the [Hohenzollern German] monarchy as his main purpose after becoming Chancellor."[7] In Berlin, Hitler was to have no patience for Monarchy of any shade, even Prussian. Albert Speer —privy to Hitler's personal mindset— recalls the new *Reichskanzler* noting:

> "Think whatever you like about them [SPD], you have to grant there is one thing to their credit: They did away with the monarchy. That was a great step forward. To that extent they prepared the way for us. And now we're supposed to bring back this monarchy? [8]

Speer recounts Hitler's concern for how Mussolini's power had been limited by his constitutional subordination to the House of Savoy. Furthermore, Hitler considered himself in continuity to his hero Bismarck, who —as it was not lost on the *Reichskanzler*— had been unceremoniously dismissed by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1890. To such an idea Hitler exclaimed: "No, I'm not falling for that. Even though the Hohenzollerns are being so friendly right now."[9]

No matter how friendly outward appearances were[10] or the prominent role the efforts of pro-Nazi aristocrats were at facilitating Hitler's rise to power, their existence —underpinned by the principle of traditional hereditary privilege— ran contrary to the racial ideals of the revolution which placed unconditional blood-solidarity and absolute personal political authority as the highest virtues of the state. The best that they could hope for in the short-term was expedited advancement within the state bureaucracy, all the time not presenting themselves as obstacles to NS goals. Anton Böhm —a Catholic in good standing with the Church and writer for *Schönere Zukunft*— simultaneously held NS party

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[7] Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 250.
[8] Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs by Albert Speer* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), p. 55.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Unknown, "Anläßlich des 44. Geburtstages des Reichskanzlers Adolf Hitler fand in der Berliner Gedächtniskirche ein Festgottesdienst statt, an dem Reichsminister Dr. Göbbels (Mitte) und Prinz August Wilhelm von Preußen (rechts) teilnahmen," *Das interessante Blatt*. April 27, 1933, p. 4.

membership from 1933.[11] He integrated the ideas of Eibl into his own writings and speeches, poetically declaring at the 1933 *Deutscher Katholikentag* in Vienna: "Austria already has the 'Reich' in its name."[12] This Pan-German flirtation with National Socialism co-existed side-by-side with the "Catholic Imperial myth" which sought "to Christianise society again, within the framework of little Austria, to re-establish the Empire of Christ and the Kingship of Christ."[13] Brigitte Behal notes how the linguistic power of the term of Reich "for religiously ideologized young people with a vision of a better world could only but fall on fertile ground."[14]

In his public speeches Schuschnigg sought to find a via media between the old generation of supporters having remembered the Habsburg Monarchy and the new generation of *Ständestaat* youth who came of age in the post-war republic. On one such occasion on 9th June 1936 in Vienna he entreated "the old Austrians among us" that while they "carry the image of the old fatherland in your hearts" and that for them "the new Austria is too small, measured against what once meant home and fatherland" that they should nonetheless, "not look backwards!"[15] In his next breath he urged young Austrians:

> "Learn the history of your Austrian fatherland, open your hearts to […] the synthesis of German and Christian culture."[16]

The international press picked up on such a generational gap of older nostalgic Legitimists in conflict with younger —and often more energetic— National Socialist leaning youth and concluded that "the Austrian is nevertheless —despite all admixtures of blood from the old Imperial days— a German."[17]

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[11] Behal, "Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten deutsch-nationaler katholischer Eliten im Zeitraum 1930–1965," p. 113–14.
[12] *Allgemeiner Deutscher Katholikentag Wien 1933* (Vienna: n.p., 1934), p. 36. Cited in Behal, "Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten deutsch-nationaler katholischer Eliten im Zeitraum 1930–1965," p. 99.
[13] Karl Umlauf, "Religiöse Schulprobleme in Österreich," in *Der Katholizismus in Österreich*, ed. Alois Hudal (Innsbruck: n.p., 1931), p. 101. Cited in Behal, "Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten deutsch-nationaler katholischer Eliten im Zeitraum 1930–1965," p. 36–37.
[14] Behal, "Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten deutsch-nationaler katholischer Eliten im Zeitraum 1930–1965," p. 37.
[15] Kurt von Schuschnigg, *Österreichs Erneuerung: Die Reden des Bundeskanzlers* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundespressedienst, 1934), p. 37.
[16] Ibid., p. 37.
[17] Shelton Scholefield, "Hapsburg or Hitler?," *Yorkshire Observer* (Bradford). October 19, 1936.

German-ness was therefore both a racial and cultural identity, and Austrian-ness a sub-identity with historical expression and mission in Central Europe. The question then arises; within this reactionary and romantic self-conceptualisation of Austrian-ness – between Christendom and German-ness– what role did the governing conservative camp envisage for the Habsburg dynasty and how could such a civilisation project be realised within the geopolitical parameters in which 1930s Austria found herself? In contrast to LE opposition to a Habsburg reconciliation of any sort, in Austria, due to a grassroots campaign of the Legitimist *Reichsbund*,[18] Otto was granted honorary citizen of 1,603 local districts between 1931 and 1938.[19] The Habsburg-approved *Reichsbund* existed within the *Eiserne Ring* as a "Umbrella organisation" for all Austrian Monarchist groups.[20] Despite contemporary Swiss estimates of over one million members,[21] the *Eiserne Ring* totalled over around 250,000 members within Austria,[22] notably including the Austrian chancellor Schuschnigg himself.[23]

In 1935 the Austrian Chancellery Office came to the conclusion that efforts towards Habsburg restoration would need to be expedited on account of the rise of National Socialism:

> "As long as Austria continues to exist as a small, powerless German state, its existence is, in fact, —and this must be said openly— a contradiction [to the claims of NS Third Reich]."[24]

The report goes on to assert that German-Austria's role in the Habsburg Empire gave her now "not only the full right to exist, but also a moral and political mission."[25] In contrast

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[18] Pronay, "Legitimismus," p. 60.
[19] Brigitte Schagerl, "Im Dienst eines Staates, den es nicht mehr geben sollte, nicht mehr gab, nicht mehr geben durfte: Friedrich Ritter von Wiesner Diplomat, Legitimist und NS-Verfolgter" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 2012), p. 131.
[20] Pronay, "Legitimismus," p. 60.
[21] AdR: NPA, Karton 186, Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich März 1936 – 1938, Ff. 589-591, December 4, 1939, report entitled "Schweizer Presse über die Legitimistenbewegung in Oesterreich," from Austrian embassy (Bern) to Egon Berger-Waldenegg (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).
[22] Pronay, "Legitimismus," p. 61.
[23] Ibid., p. 62.
[24] AdR: BKA/Inneres, 22/Gen, Karton 4945, September 25, 1935, report no. 360822 entitled "Vertrauliche Information über die Restauration des Habsburger" from Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).
[25] Ibid.

to viewing the Habsburg Question as an exclusively internal Austrian constitutional matter, Schuschnigg, as a matter of practice favoured an internationalisation of the *Anschluss* question seeking the aid of the LON.[26] Even if he —like his predecessor before him— stressed the German nature of his state, the Austrian chancellor didn't hesitate to make an appeal to the self-determination of the Austrian people in line with the logic of Wilsonian idealism. The Austrian chancellor would plea with Geneva:

> "Austria wants to be the subject, not the object, of its own destiny. Austria is not a chess piece on any European board." [27]

This was an affront to the National Socialist conceptualisation of international law. For Berlin the relationship between her and Vienna was a purely internal German matter. Berlin's ambassador to Austria, the conservative and Catholic NS collaborator Franz von Papen, saw "the dictates of Versailles and St. Germain" as the only barrier to *Anschluss*. Annexation was in his mind a "vital necessity for both countries," and it was his "main concern to exclude the Austrian question from the discussion among the major European powers and to make it an internal German matter."[28] To counteract these efforts Austria sought to internationalise the issue, her defence strategy revolving around the presumption of mobilising a European wide collective security policy.[29] The role of the Austrian *Bundesheer* was therefore not to attempt to outright repel a German invasion by force of arms but hinder such an invasion until a point when the Great Powers in the League of Nations would presumably intervene to defend Austria's territorial sovereignty.[30]

This standoff would persist until the fateful July 1936 agreement between Hitler and Schuschnigg. This underappreciated victory secured Schuschnigg's agreement to exclude foreign interference and adopt a common diplomatic policy. In the wake of the deal the international press noted how before, "in mid-June monarchist stock was running

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[26] Unknown, "Austria Case for the League," *Western Daily Press* (Yeovil, England). February 8, 1934, p. 12.
[27] Österreich Bundespressedienst, *Der Aufbau Eines Staates* (Vienna: Vörwärts A.G., 1935), p. 48.
[28] VAA: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1949-1958)], Parte Seconda (1949-1958), Germania, Pos, 976, Documenti circa l'attività politica del barone Franz von Papen, Ff. 43.
[29] AdR: NPA, Karton 231, Liasse Österreich 7 – Außenpolitik — 7/1 Österreichische Außenpolitik allgemein,, Ff. 93, May 29, 1934, report from Austrian embassy (Paris) to Engelbert Dollfuß (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).
[30] Dieter A. Binder, "Austrofaschismus und Außenpolitik: Die zu kurz geratene Diskussion," in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933–1938: Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2013), p. 582.

very high" and now after Schuschnigg's concessions, "suddenly all was changed: Otto was thrown to the wolves!"[31] VF authorities kept a careful eye on the international press' theories of Schuschnigg's next course of action in the wake of the July 1936 agreement. One such speculation was that Schuschnigg's weakened position would see Austria seek to adopt an Irish Free State style solution in which "eventually Archduke Otto will take the title of King of Austria and at the same time declare that he is a German prince […] but Austria would still retain a certain autonomy, similar to Ireland's relationship with Great Britain."[32] Schmidl notes how "the British envoy in Vienna suggested that Austria be annexed to the German Empire as an autonomous duchy under Dr. Otto von Habsburg."[33] The UK official speculated that this proposal was made indirectly at the behest of a defeatist VF regime.[34] Franz von Papen was asserted to be the author and primary proponent of the plan and retrospectively claimed it to have had been his ultimate objective to secure for Austria a similar status within the Third Reich as Bavaria had enjoyed within the *Kaiserreich* from 1871, i.e., "full sovereignty with the limitation of a common foreign policy and economy."[35] Otto's opposition to the Prussian *Staatsidee* and NS appetite for *Gleichschaltung* (integration of Austria to conform strictly with greater-Germany) would make any proposals mere idle speculation on the part of news-hungry journalists. Refusing to even entertain NS envoys, Otto would later —after Anschluss— rather be tried in absentia and sentences to death for high-treason due to his international activism demanding immediate military intervention from France and UK.[36]

Hitler maintained a bitter personal animosity towards the Habsburg dynasty from his youth as a vagrant in pre-war Vienna, seeing the supranational traditional order as the

[31] Shelton Scholefield, "Hapsburg or Hitler?" *Yorkshire Observer* (Bradford). October 19, 1936.
[32] AdR: NPA, Karton 186, ff. 262-264, November 9, 1936, report 43.879-13/36 entitled "Kampagne der französischen Presse gegen die 'Wiener Konferenz'der Römer Protokolle (Restaurationshetze)" from the Austrian embassy (Paris) to Guido Schmidt (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).
[33] Erwin A. Schmidl, *Der „Anschluß" Österreichs: Der deutsche Einmarsch im März 1938* (Bonn: Bernard & Graefe Verlag, 1994), p. 73.
[34] Ibid.
[35] VAA: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1949-1958)], Parte Seconda (1949-1958), Germania, Pos, 976, Documenti circa l'attività politica del barone Franz von Papen, Ff. 44.
[36] Carlo Moos, *Habsburg Post Mortem: Betrachtungen zum Weiterleben der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2016), p. 204.

primary obstacle to the unity of the German people.[37] In a conference of minsters on 26th May 1933 he commented that "[t]he situation in Austria today was one where 6 million Austrians were for the most part subject to the influence of the half-Jews of Vienna and the Legitimists."[38] Furthermore, NS propaganda openly declared that "[i]n Austria, Freemasons and Jews are the most zealous agitators for the Restoration."[39] Thus, to Berlin, the Habsburg Question was wedge exploited by the UK and France to divide the German people. The recently decriminalised Austrian NS press went so far as to mockingly refer to "Otto the Frenchman" as having neither support from Mussolini nor the Pope but only Jews, satirically suggesting "the establishment of the black-and-yellow throne in Jerusalem should be considered."[40]

In November 1937 von Papen reported to Hitler of his meeting with French Prime Minister, that Camille Chautemps, "answered emphatically in the negative when I asked whether France still considered the idea of a Hapsburg restoration open to discussion and worth supporting."[41] Nonetheless, Mussolini painted himself as a genuine Monarchist to Schuschnigg, instructing the Austrian chancellor to postpone restoration and in the interim period continue to reform Austria in line with Italian fascist principles thus simultaneously not antagonising Germany. In the wake of the July 1936 agreement, German Ambassador in Italy, Ulrich von Hassell, reported to Berlin how *il Duce* "expressed lively satisfaction over the event, which would bring to an end the unhappy situation of Austria as a football of foreign interests."[42] Nonetheless, von Hassell reminded Rome that Berlin was "still concerned about the Hapsburg agitation since a restoration would of course ruin everything."[43] In response Mussolini reassured von Hassell "that he had urgently exhorted

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[37] Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna: A Portrait of the Tyrant as a Young Man* (New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2010), p. 107.
[38] Kindermann, *Hitler's Defeat in Austria*, p. 149-150.
[39] Unknown, "Habsburgerpleite," *Österreichischer Beobachter*. March 1937, p. 1-2.
[40] Ibid; King of Jerusalem was a formal Habsburg title Otto inherited from his father.
[41] Franz von Papen to Adolf Hitler, November 8, 1937, German Archives: No. 22 625/251424-32, in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: Series D, Vol. I, From Neurath to Ribbentrop (September 1937–September 1938)* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 44.
[42] Hans Hassell to German Foreign Ministry, July 11, 1936, German Archives: 155 1744/402867-69, in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: Series D, Vol. I, From Neurath to Ribbentrop (September 1937–September 1938)* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 283–85.
[43] Ibid.

Schuschnigg, who had declared himself a Monarchist, just as he was himself, to let this question rest at present."[44]

In November 1936 the German Foreign Ministry concluded that even if "it was unmistakably evident that the Austrian Government is at least toying with the idea of a restoration," with the support of the LE, —combined with explicit threats of military invasion to "restore order"— Berlin had good grounds to hope that Schuschnigg would not proceed unilaterally.[45] By the following May, Berlin declared to have won Mussolini over to the view that "Hapsburg restoration would mean the end of Austria."[46] In contrast to France, the UK was seen as more remote to the concerns of the LE. Nonetheless, when Starhemberg travelled to London for the funeral of George V, he took the opportunity to meet with Edward VII, aristocratic-minded Tories, and "several eminent bankers and senior British officials" who were eager to meet and discuss Austria's situation.[47] Otto himself concurrently engaged in an uncoordinated parallel dialogue with Paris and London complicating Austrian foreign policy vis-à-vis the Habsburg Question.[48] Nonetheless, Schuschnigg was personally keen that Otto discreetly travel to London in October 1937 to establish a network of local British aristocratic allies. To this end the support of fellow Austrian aristocrat, VF ambassador in London, Georg von und zu Franckenstein, a personal friend of the English the King's sister, the Princess Royal, would be critical.[49]

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[44] Ibid.

[45] German Foreign Ministry to Various German Diplomatic Missions and Consulate General at Geneva, November 28, 1936, German Archives: 1687/306547-50, in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: Series D, Vol. I, From Neurath to Ribbentrop (September 1937–September 1938)* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 352–53.

[46] German Foreign Ministry to German Embassy in France and German Legations in Austria and Czechoslovakia, May 8, 1937, German Archives: 1486/368590-92, in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: Series D, Vol. I, From Neurath to Ribbentrop (September 1937–September 1938)* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 419.

[47] AdR: NPA, Karton 185, Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1934 – Februar 1936, Ff. 590-598, February 6, 1936 Federal Chancellor's Office (Vienna) report entitled "Mission des Fürsten Starhemberg in London; Gespräche und Wahrnehmungen."

[48] AdR: NPA, Karton 352, Liasse Österreich 2/Geheim — 2/11 Monarchistische Bewegung in Österreich 1935– 1937, Ff. 196-207, February 13, 1937, report entitled "Angebliche Anfrage Otto's von Habsburg in London wegen seines Besuches in England" from Alois Vollgruber (Austrian embassy, Paris) to Federal Chancellor's Office (Vienna).

[49] AdR: NPA, Karton 352, Liasse Österreich 2/Geheim— 2/11 Monarchistische Bewegung in Österreich 1935 – 1937, Ff. 330-339, October 13, 1937—November 25, 1937, reports entitled "Vorbereitung eines Besuches Erzherzogs Otto in England" from Austrian embassy (London) to Guido Schmidt (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

Austrian foreign policy vis-à-vis the West emphasised a narrative of Austria as a superior Germany, one without the barbarism of National Socialism, exploiting decades old anxieties and stereotypes of Prussian brutism.[50] Equally, the explicitly authoritarian and Catholic nature of the regime[51] was deemphasised for an international audience. Instead, they VF invoked a broader a "European mission" and focused on high culture which emphasised continuity of the new *Ständestaat* with its Imperial predecessor.[52] Von Papen from the NS embassy in Vienna reported in February 1937, how he saw a Schuschnigg who —while warning Legitimists to work within the VF framework— did not want to abide by the terms of the July 1936 agreement and furthermore was "undoubtedly aiming at the future restoration of Otto von Hapsburg."[53] According to post-war accounts given to the Vatican from Franz von Papen and other sources, the fact that Schuschnigg was in regular contact with Otto von Habsburg in his Belgian exile was no secret.[54] Von Papen alleged that Schuschnigg sought the exiled Archduke's approval for the terms of the initially secret July 1936 agreement between German and Austria before even consulting the Austrian president, who himself was also receptive to Monarchism.[55] The German ambassador claimed that only when Otto refused to give his ascent, Schuschnigg declared himself to haven been coerced into reaching an interim compromise with Berlin.[56]

German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop insisted that the VF could not maintain that the Habsburg Question was a purely internal matter "since the members of this [Habsburg] House did not conceal the fact that they did not intend to limit their

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[50] Georg von Franckenstein, *Facts and Features of My Life: Austrian Minister to the Court of St. James, 1920–1938* (London: Cassell, 1939), p. 158.
[51] Pronay, "Legitimismus," p. 60; Hildebrand, *Engelbert Dollfuß,* p. 55.
[52] Franckenstein, *Facts and Features of My Life,* p. 301 & 303-304; As seen in the example of the 1935 inaugural Vienna Opera Ball and politicisation of the *Salzburger Festspiele* which received much media attention internationally.
[53] Franz von Papen to Konstantin von Neurath (German Foreign Minister), February 18, 1937, German Archives: 2017/443593-95, in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: Series D, Vol. I, From Neurath to Ribbentrop (September 1937–September 1938)* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 394–96.
[54] Schmidl, *Der „Anschluß" Österreichs,* p. 18.
[55] Hannes Etzlstorfer, *Karl: Der letzte Kaiser* (Berndorf: Kral Verlag, 2022), p. 241.
[56] Franz von Papen and Brian Connell, *Memoirs* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1952), p. 370; Pronay, "Legitimismus," p. 64.

political aspirations to present-day Austria."[57] The Habsburg brand of supranationalism — as understood in the *Reichsidee*— was for National Socialism not just an impermissible legal barrier to German racial unity, but an attack on the movement's claim to authority. Well after the July 1936 agreement, NS officials unshakingly concurred that, for Schuschnigg, Otto's return as Archduke was necessary as "in Austria there was great affection for the old ruling house and that the return to monarchy was considered the best means of quieting internal political conditions."[58]

[57] Memorandum by the Konstantin von Neurath (German Foreign Minister), February 27, 1937, German Archives: 115/118243-47, in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: Series D, Vol. I, From Neurath to Ribbentrop (September 1937–September 1938)* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 399–401.
[58] Ibid.

5.3: Throne, Altar, and Military Revived

John Haag notes how Seipel, in continuity with political thinkers on the right like Othmar Spann, was not the "only German-speaking intellectual to praise the life-giving forces of the romanticist tradition as an antidote to western liberal and rationalistic values."[1] The CSP stand against NS integration positioned itself in opposition to what it saw as the false enlightenment logic of the French revolution and advent of Protestantism which was conceived of as the antithesis of a "the German spirit [which] had reached its highest development during the Middle-Ages, when feudal society and the Roman Catholic faith had both been able to bind man to eternal truths."[2] Julius Wolf would write in 1937 of the *Reichsidee*:

> "The idea of eternal peace is thus the main idea of the Holy Roman Empire. In God, all state power is grounded in its rights and duties. The worst enemy of this *Reichsidee* is the *confidere in sua feritate*, the insistence on one's own strength, the national arrogance."[3]

For proponents of the *Reichsidee*, the "noblest task" of secular authority was securing the rights of the Church, not to do so being "the deepest cause of the disintegration of the West."[4] We see the distinction between Dollfuß and Schuschnigg attitudes vis-à-vis the Habsburg Question manifested most evidently in the cabinet minutes of a 1934 debate regarding the new *Ständestaat* coat of arms to be included in the May 1934 constitution. Both men, like Seipel, saw post 1918 First Austrian Republic iconography as "Judeo-Bolshevik" and agreed in principle that a double-headed eagle should to replace the hammer and sickle armed single-headed republican eagle breaking from metal shackles.[5] However, there existed disagreement as to whether the eagle should be armed with either a

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[1] John Haag, "Othmar Spann and the Quest for a 'True State,'" Austrian History Yearbook 12, no. 1 (1976): p. 228-229.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Julius Wolf, Konrad J. Heilig, and Hermann M. Gorgen, *Österreich und die Reichsidee* (Vienna: Österreichischer Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1937), p. 49.
[4] Ibid.
[5] AdR: PKF PS I 2009 Staatswappen-Entwurf, vom Ministerat genehmigt, 1934.05.17; AdR: BKA, BKA-I Präs, SR Akten KtNr 1 Sign. 1 - Staatsinsignien, neue Staatswappen, 21911—Pr./34, August 27, 1934, Bundeskanzleramt report from Schwegl.

sword and *Reichsapfel* (*Globus cruciger*) or alternatively sword and cross.[6] Ultimately a compromise was established on a simplified form with empty talons, much to the disappointment of Schuschnigg who advocated for the inclusion of the *Reichsapfel*.[7] The initial Schuschnigg draft communicated an explicitly Imperial and Catholic vertical idea of sovereignty. His proposal was no doubt a —less than subtle— statement of receptivity towards a complete and definitive restoration of the Habsburg dynasty which bore this same *Reichsapfel* and sword wielding double-headed eagle for centuries.

Furthermore, even before the passing of the 1934 May constitution renaming the state, Bishop Waitz urged against the use of the title "Republic" of Austria for the signing of the July 1933 Vatican Concordat.[8] This new Austria looked to the old Habsburg Austria and not to the secular revolutionary German-Austria as the source of its progenitorship. Further consolidating the VF *Ständestaat* system, —facilitated by French intelligence— Schuschnigg would meet with Otto in Mulhouse on 9th September 1935, wherein it was agreed that Otto would not unilaterally return to Austria until invited by the government. Otto would be consulted on Austrian domestic and foreign policy, and finally, the *Reichsbund* would receive government endorsement for its activities and in turn would strictly police the Legitimist movement to operate within VF framework.[9] With a cohesive alliance of Church, government, and crown seemingly secure, the internal prerequisites for restoration appeared to be fulfilled.

VF consul in New York, Dr. Hans Kraus, compiled for the coordinator of *Ständestaat* foreign policy, Theodor von Hornbostel, a 31st March 1937 report entitled "The American Public and the Habsburg Question" noting how the US media was fixated on what he termed "restoration hype," commenting:

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[6] AdR: PKF, PS I 2009 Staatswappen-Entwurf.
[7] AdR: Adel HAA, Adelsgeneralien 625.8 Änderung des Staatswappens durch die Verfassung 1934, 1934-1935, Ff. 33.; Gertrude Enderle-Burcel, *Protokolle des Ministerrates der Ersten Republik. Abteilung VIII, Band 6, Kabinett Dr. Engelbert Dollfuß 23.Februar 1934 bis 18. April 1934*, (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1985), p. 142.
[8] Ernst Hanisch, "Der Politische Katholizismus als ideologischer Träger des 'Austrofaschismus,'" in *Austrofaschismus: Politik – Ökonomie – Kultur 1933–1938*, ed. Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2014), p. 71.
[9] Schagerl, "Friedrich Ritter von Wiesner, p. 145; Baier and Demmerle, *Otto von Habsburg,* p. 101.

> "I would ask you to bear in mind, however, that the Habsburg question, more than any other Central European issue, is by far the one that interests the American public most; not because of its political content, of course, but because it is a 'romantic story' [original English term in quotations] that women also read."[10]

In contrast to an attraction to the superficial accidental aesthetics of Monarchy, there was a much smaller receptive international audience for the so-called *Reichsidee* of a medieval style integralist conceptualisation of Church and State within a supernationalist Central Europe under Habsburg leadership. Nonetheless, there existed what Piers Brendon sees as persisting "mystical notions of restoring the Holy Roman Empire."[11] This idealistic and romantic nostalgia, at times bordering on naïve utopianism, finds its manifestation in a 1936 handcrafted constitution proposal and large map sent to the Austrian embassy in London by Adrian H.B. Jones for "Middle Europe" which went beyond restoring the Habsburgs to their Austrian or Hungarian thrones and explicitly called for the restoration of the HRE.[12] In continuity with logic extrapolated from *Quas primas* and *Quadragesimo anno*, Jones would be sure to include within his schema the stipulation:

> "The Principle of the Empire being Christian, no reigning Prince may publicly or officially proclaim himself either an Atheist or a Jew on pain of the Personal Ban, but otherwise there be complete Religious Toleration."[13]

Various competing and mutual exclusive understandings of the *Reichsidee* abounded throughout the Interwar period. On one extreme, popularised by Seipel in the 1920s, it was interpreted as a vague Catholic ideal of universal common political sphere of Christendom, regardless of the specific form of government. On the other hand, there was a divergent ideal propagated by more ardent Catholic Legitimists which envisioned a concrete state, one inseparable to the Habsburg dynasty. Höbelt writes of the *Reichsidee* as a "*Fluchtpunkt*", i.e., a concept of nebulous nature, attracting a broad spectrum of

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[10] AdR: NPA, Karton 186 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich März 1936 – 1938, Ff. 451-456, March, 31, 1937, report entitled "Die amerikanische Oeffentlichkeit und die Habsburgerfrage" from Austrian consulate (New York).
[11] Piers Brendon, *The Dark Valley: A Panorama of the 1930s* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), p. 456.
[12] AdR: AAng ÖVB 1Rep London 39, report Z118/Pol, letter received April 14, 1936, with enclosure "Articles for the Reconstruction of the Holy Roman Empire" from Adrian H. B. Jones to Georg von und zu Franckenstein (Austrian embassy, London).
[13] Ibid.

adherents both Ultramontanist and "Ghibelline" due to its lack of concrete specificity.[14] It can be further deduced that Gyula Gömbös and Miklós Horthy as protestants were unable to identify in Catholic supranational ideal and instead retreated into a unifying Hungarian ecumenism, the difference in doctrine among fellow Hungarian Christians taking a backseat to notions of national solidarity.

For von Hildebrand –and the VF in general– the struggle between National Socialist Germany and Authoritarian Austria took on a religious significance in which the reactionary regime was engaged in supernatural spiritual warfare against the dark paganism of National Socialism.[15] Therefore, seen from without –with the repeal of Habsburg laws and establishment of *Traditionsreferat* within the VF state apparatus, together with subtle and discreet work of Theodor von Hornbostel– the VF regime was operating under the long-term objective of establishing a Habsburg-led "Catholic Central Europe" as a counterweight to what they characterised as "godless National Socialism."[16] Seipel's hand-chosen political protégés Dollfuß and von Schuschnigg could look back upon centuries of Habsburg existence as a Great Power with relative economic stability and political order and could juxtapose the predicaments of Rump-Austria. This view of history contributed to narratives of an idealised nostalgic past contrasted to the chaotic present of modernity. From the perspective of Austrian Political Catholicism, this fall from grace had been brought about by defeat at the hands of modernity and had resulted in moral decadence. Kozuchowski notes how:

> "[O]ne should also remember that the dreadful but also ambiguous legacy of the Great War was fertile soil for theories of history. The catastrophist visions of the decline of Western civilisation mesmerized the exhausted Europeans."[17]

Viewing recent history, it would appear as if Dollfuß and Schuschnigg took very different approaches to the indispensability of the Habsburg dynasty to reformulating a reactionary political status-quo based upon a synthesis of pre-1918 monarchical order and Rump-

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[14] Lothar Höbelt, "Adel und Reichsidee in der Zwischenkriegszeit," in *Integration und Desintegration in Mitteleuropa: Pläne und Realität*, ed. Marcella Rossová (Munich: Meidenbauer, 2009), p. 153.
[15] Hildebrand von, Dietrich von. *My Battle Against Hitler: Faith, Truth, and Defiance in the Shadow of the Third Reich* 1. ed.. New York, NY, 2014, p. 87.
[16] Binder, "Austrofaschismus und Außenpolitik. Die zu kurz geratene Diskussion," p. 587.
[17] Adam Kozuchowski, *The Afterlife of Austria-Hungary: The Image of the Habsburg Monarchy in Interwar Europe* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), p. 17.

Austria's current geopolitical happenstance. Nonetheless, both were in agreement that a spiritual renewal would have to heal the homeland and wider Danubian region before any political re-ordering could be achieved.

Driven by the dual catalyst of the internal strength of the urban Socialist movement and the external rapid ascent of the National Socialist party in Germany, there is much merit in viewing the radicalisation within the Austrian Conservative camp as reactionary in nature. This turn away from the institutions of the Republic to solve the problems of the Republic therefore resulted in the violent suppression of internal political opposition. The *raison d'etre* of the new Austrian state was therefore to create a Catholic state at home and wage a Cold War against National Socialism abroad. Thorpe, argues that the "new" Austria of the VF understood her historical mission as bridge between cultures within Christendom was now not primarily aimed to the Slavic and Magyar peoples to the East, but rather their fellow German brothers to the North.[18]

While Prince Starhemberg would argue within Legitimist publications that "Austria's complete renewal is unthinkable without the return of the first family of the state to their function."[19] Fellow-member of Austrian upper-aristocracy, Max Hohenberg, reported Dollfuss as confiding to him in private:

> "I am not a Legitimist, I am an Austrian patriot. If I become convinced that a monarchy would benefit the country, then Austria would become a Monarchy better today than tomorrow."[20]

Therefore, this view of Dollfuß as a *realpolitik* calculator seeing Monarchy, like parliamentary democracy, as one acceptable means among many to achieve the "renewal of the state"[21] is shared by Brigitte Schagerl who stresses the short-term utility of incorporating Legitimists within the VF over any long-term objection of Habsburg

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[18] Julia Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933–38* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 232.
[19] Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, "Vizekanzler Fürst Starhemberg," *Die Alte Front*. December 16, 1935, p. 1.
[20] *Anschluß 1938: Eine Dokumentation*, ed. Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1988), p. 29, cited in Pronay, "Legitimismus," p. 61.
[21] Richard Schmitz, *Die Bedeutung der Schule für den Neuaufbau Österreichs* (Vienna: Dt. Verl. f. Jugend u. Volk, 1935); Österreich Bundespressedienst, *Der Aufbau Eines Staates* (Vienna: Vörwärts A.G., 1935).

restoration. [22] Therefore, to achieve a supranatural and supranational re-ordering of political life the common enemy of NS and SPÖ materialism would have to be defeated in the interim and mutual collaboration towards this objective was in the VF and Legitimists common political interest.

After surviving a 3rd October 1933 assassination attempt by a young National Socialist, the nuncio in Vienna reported of Dollfuß to the Vatican:

"This is commonly attributed here to a manifest and very special protection of Divine Providence, which has spared this noble nation such a grave misfortune"[23]

Later after the successful assassination of Dollfuß the following July, the same nuncio would report: "The situation is apparently calm; may the Lord continue to protect this dear Nation."[24] Propaganda on the right in the wake of the 1934 July attempted Putsch fostered a devotional cult which sought to establish the assassinated chancellor as a martyr, in continuity with Kaiser Karl,[25] and praised his "*Reichsidee* as a lifeline" for the new state.[26] Hildebrand, Schuschnigg and others took up the mantle of "[m]ythicised, theologically charged visions of an empire in the tradition of the Holy Roman Empire"[27] and looked to the Habsburgs as an antidote to the Prussian-ness which they theorised had given rise to National Socialism. Nonetheless, some the German speaking exiles fleeing Bavaria and the Rhineland after 1933, such as Dietrich von Hildebrand and Hermann Görgen,[28] were originally largely opposed to a new reactionary conceptualisation of *Österreichertum*. This VF ideal was shifting increasingly away from the supranational rhetoric of Seipel and Dollfuß. They feared an effort to distance Austria from not only *Preußentum* but also *Deutschtum* and likewise preferred an idealised vision of a German-centric pro-Habsburg

[22] Schagerl, "Im Dienst eines Staates, den es nicht mehr geben sollte, nicht mehr gab, nicht mehr geben durfte: Friedrich Ritter von Wiesner Diplomat, Legitimist und NS-Verfolgter," p. 144.
[23] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 849, Fascicolo 3, Ff. 324-326, October 5, 1933, report from Papal Nuncio to Cardinale Eugenio Pacelli, Segretario di Stato di Sua Santità, on a failed assassination attempt on Dollfuss and the Nuncio's perception of Divine Providence for Austria.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Thaler, "Ally and Opposition," p. 172.
[26] Höbelt, *Die Heimwehren und die österreichische Politik 1927–1936,* p. 352.
[27] Elke Seefried, "«Reich» und «Ständestaat» als Antithesen zum Nationalsozialismus: Die katholische Zeitschrift Der Christliche Ständestaat," in *Das katholische Intellektuellenmilieu in Deutschland, seine Presse und seine Netzwerke (1871–1963)*, ed. Michel Grunewald (Vienna: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 417.
[28] Not to be confused with NS high-ranking official Hermann Göring.

HRE *Reichsidee* over a mere local restoration of Habsburg rule in either Austria or Hungary.

Consequently, Hungarian Foreign Minister von Kánya urged Hans Georg von Mackensen[29] to use his influence with Hitler to de-intensify NS pressure on Austria in the wake of the failed 1934 July-Putsch so as not to cause what Hungarian regent Horthy genuinely feared was an imminent reactionary pendulum swing of Monarchism in Vienna.[30] This concern was also shared by a German embassy in Vienna which reported the potential for international intervention in defence of Austrian sovereignty:

> "Even a Hapsburg restoration might perhaps appear not impossible after the failure of such a venture, and it might then perhaps receive the approval of powers which might otherwise seek to prevent it."[31]

In such internal correspondence we see how NS officials perceived restoration as a real threat and sought to not back Austria —no doubt encouraged by 17th February 1934 declaration by UK, France and Italy on "independence and integrity of Austria"—[32] into a corner in which she had nothing to lose.

Furthermore, Legitimist confidant of Otto, Bishop Waitz, led the charge to capitalise on the potential which the suppression of the SPÖ represented and a year after the civil war was successful in securing a declaration of the Austrian Bishops that the state was no longer "a simple republic" and that conditions have changed which made possible a new political order.[33] In November 1934 the Austrian bishops collectively petitioned Schuschnigg's government to not only "abolish the expulsion law of 19th March 1919, which is a grave injustice against the Imperial Family" but to also "finally implement the

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[29] German diplomatic representative in Budapest.

[30] Christian Dörner and Barbara Dörner-Fazeny, *Theodor von Hornbostel: 1889–1973* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2006), p. 99.

[31] Minister Rieth to State Secretary Bülow, August 17, 1933, German embassy report on the potential danger of the 'Austrian Legion,' in Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, *Hitler's Defeat in Austria 1933–1934: Europe's First Containment of Nazi Expansionism* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1988), p. 151–52.

[32] AdR: NPA Karton 231, Liasse Österreich 7, Außenpolitik 7/1, Österreichische Außenpolitik allgemein, Ff. 24–31, October 1, 1934 Federal Chancellor's Office, (Vienna) report entitled "Die Verhandlungen in Genf betreffs der Sicherung der Unabhängigkeit Oesterreichs."

[33] VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 854, Fasc. 2, 23, Famiglia Imperiale, Ff. 546–53, February 16, 1935, report entitled "Affari relativi alla Famiglia Imperiale," from Enrico Sibilia (Papal Nuncio, Vienna) to Eugenio Pacelli (Secretary of State, Vatican).

settlement of the financial conditions of the Imperial Family."[34] Nonetheless, the Bishop's 8th February 1935 letter based its argument on humanitarian and not openly-Legitimist logic, decrying how the Habsburg Family "members were and are treated worse than criminals." It was therefore argued that such a constitution as that of the May 1934 which claimed "in the name of God, the Almighty, from Whom all rights derive" could not tolerated such an injustice and no geopolitical convenience could prevent the application of domestic justice.[35]

Schuschnigg's reply to the Austrian bishops three days later emphasised his incremental approach to rehabilitation of the Habsburg dynasty in Austria. His logic took into consideration the debate within the Habsburg circles if it was better for the Legitimist cause that Otto to return as a private citizen or wait patiently to be acknowledged as a triumphant Archduke.[36] The Austrian chancellor emphasised how Otto —"encouraged by the patriotic propaganda of the new Austria"— recognised the Legitimacy of the VF state and saw Schuschnigg as "his" chancellor.[37] While such a relationship finds a superficial parallel in the early correspondence of Horthy and Karl, unlike the Hungarian regent, Schuschnigg as a de facto Austrian regent was making concrete goodwill steps towards restoration. Furthermore, the VF were happily working with Archduke Eugen and Max who had at that point already returned to Austria and had been deputised by Otto to represent him in discussions with the government.

Parallel to efforts at establishing a loyal paramilitary force, so too did the third pillar of the Old Monarchy —after the Emperor and the Church— the army undergo a major reform in this period to restore the identity and traditions of its Imperial predecessor. The Austrian army (*Bundesheer*), restricted by the treaty of St. Germain and resultingly officer heavy, while an instrument of the ruling government, also had its own self-awareness and agency.[38] Throughout the 1930s, republican socialists in the armed forces

[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Harald Pöcher and Roland Schaffer, *Das österreichische Bundesheer der Ersten Republik zwischen 1920 und 1930: Ein Heer, das keines sein durfte* (Salzburg: Österreichischer Milizverlag, 2020), p. 15.

like Theodor Körner were marginalised[39] and the VF forwarded a rapid intensification of the disproportionate influence of the old Imperial aristocratic elite at the highest ranks. The *Bundesheer* under the VF fostered a culture of memory which embraced the iconography of the old Monarchy[40] and state propaganda in Vienna lauded the "strengthening of the spirit of defence, building on the glorious traditions of the old army."[41]

Through strong collaboration with veteran's organisations and Legitimist activists, these efforts also overspilled into the formation of a militarised youth group called the *Ostmärkische Sturmscharen* under the close direction of the Federal Chancellor.[42] Seen from outside, Schuschnigg's personal paramilitary force —flying "the double-headed eagle of Imperial Austria" —were exalted as having "wore no uniform and acknowledged no Fuehrer beyond Christ the King."[43] This praise coincided with the repeated narrative of Tyrol as a bastion of Catholic pre-industrial bliss where "the idea of the old Austria and support of her Emperor was very strong." Therefore the re-birth of an agrarian paramilitary culture there was, for some contemporary American journalists, "the first proof of young Austria's pride in her national and historic heritage, her Catholic and Habsburg tradition."[44]

Austrian authorities themselves noted that "the leaders of the *Ostmärkische Sturmscharen* had for some time now been openly and unequivocally advocating the return of the Habsburgs in public" and such a development "it must be assumed with absolute certainty" came from the top down.[45] Such a disconnect from the Chancellor's office and the paramilitary formations —both led by Schuschnigg— is telling of the nature of VF political life. Further noted was that Schuschnigg wanted to incorporate the *Heimwehr* into his own paramilitary structure of which he would be the "supreme leader."[46] Such a

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[39] Unknown, "General Körner," *Das interessante Blatt*. May 4, 1933, p. 5.
[40] Johannes Thaler, "Ally and Opposition: The Legitimist Movement under the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg Dictatorship," *Austrian History Yearbook* 45 (2014): p. 171.
[41] Österreich Bundespressedienst, *Der Aufbau Eines Staates*, p. 65.
[42] Unknown, "Unser Oberster führer," *Die alte Front*. October 7, 1931, p. 1.
[43] R.K. Sheridon, *Kurt von Schuschnigg: A Tribute* (London: English Universities Press, 1942), p. 55.
[44] Ibid.
[45] AdR: BKA/Inneres, 22/Gen, Karton 4945, September 25, 1935, report no. 360822 entitled "Vertrauliche Information über die Restauration des Habsburger" from Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).
[46] Ibid.

consolidation was seen by the chancellor as desirable and achievable based on the Vice-Chancellor Prince Starhemberg's recent rhetoric which "clearly indicated a desire to re-establish the old Austro-Hungarian empire in Central Europe."[47]

Austrian military historians Harald Pöcher and Roland Schaffer write of the armed forces which the CSP inherited: "When the *Volkswehr* was disbanded and the Federal Army was created, it remained merely a façade."[48] This was a moral outrage to Dollfuss, Starhemberg, and Schuschnigg, all of whom were volunteer officers in the First World War.[49] Starhemberg and Schuschnigg were only 16 and 17 years-old respectively upon commissioning.[50] They were and remained convinced of the justification of their cause as a defensive war for the Habsburg Austrian *Heimat*. Happy with how treaty restrictions on the size of the Austrian army from 10,000 officers in August 1919 to a mere 1,500 officers had been used to achieve the "depoliticization" of the 'red people's army',"[51] they now wanted to not only undo the revolutionary spirit of the army but instil a strong counter-revolutionary culture. Be it speaking at political rallies or state functions, all three embraced the old Habsburg uniform and choose to model the new 1934 *Bundesheer* uniform and ceremonial field banners upon the old Imperial style.[52] Most iconic turning points of the VF State, such as the September 1933 *Katholikentag* address and the July 25th, 1934, funeral of Dollfuss featured old Imperial uniforms prominently. The assassinated chancellor was laid out and buried in his *Kaiserschützen* uniform, flanked by successor Schuschnigg and allies likewise attired in First World War uniforms. It was internationally acknowledged that the "old military glories of Austria were spoken of once

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Pöcher and Schaffer. *Das Österreichische Bundesheer der Ersten Republik zwischen 1920 und 1930*, p. 36-7.

[49] Schuschnigg, *Farewell Austria*, p. 24; Pöcher and Schaffer go on to describe how "officers were insulted on the streets. Order and discipline were considered reactionary and were therefore opposed. Training was negligible. Members of the army marched in uniform with waving red flags at rallies and demonstrated on the streets for the International"

[50] Gerwarth and Üngör, "The Collapse of the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires and the Brutalisation of the Successor States," p. 236.

[51] Martin Senekowitsch and Johann Friedländer. *Feldmarschalleutnant Johann Friedländer 1882 – 1945: ein vergessener Offizier des Bundesheeres* (Vienna: Bundesministeriums für Landesverteidigung, Büro für Wehrpolitik, 1995), p. 16.

[52] Ibid., p. 20; Rolf M. Urrisk, *Die Traditionspflege des österreichischen Bundesheeres: 1918 - 1998* (Gnas: Weishaupt Verlag, 1997), p. 54; Schmidl, "Militärische Symbole in Österreich seit 1918," p. 105.

again. It was no longer an act of daring to wear one's war medals in the street."[53] In this way we can say that Dollfuss and his allies never truly demobilised from the formative combat experience of their youth, seeing themselves as fighting the same war, by different means. Seeking to exploit such developments, photographs of Otto in the old Imperial uniform circulated throughout the international press and gave the impression of portraying himself as commander and chief.[54]

Over time as the Vienna-Berlin Cold War intensified, there began to emerge within the anti-Nazi Legitimists an intensified push for a Danube Federation supranational framework as a means of containing Hitler.[55] *Reichsdeustche* exiles fluctuated between these two attitudes and retained the ambitious abstract goal of a Pan-German "Fourth Reich" in continuity with a "mission of the Habsburgs for Catholic empire."[56] Such political programme was argued by German émigrés as expressly in opposition to a modernity which was theorised had its genesis in the spirit of French Revolution and 16th Century Protestant Revolt.[57] Likewise, Lothar Höbelt in his assessment of *Heimwehr* long-term goals, asserts that "[t]he leadership of the *Heimwehr* surrounding Starhemberg wanted to combine the dichotomy of Anschluss and Restoration into the synthesis of the *Reichsidee*"[58] with Starhemberg thinking of an Austrian Habsburg restoration as a prelude to a wider "reorganisation of the Central European area realised from Austria over time."[59]

While internal criticism of the VF did exist, —such as from the hard-line KtVp organised by Gustav Wolff—[60] Otto in exile urged mainstream Legitimism to take a softer approach to the Seipel and Dollfuß era language of "reconstruction" and "renewal" of the

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[53] Sheridon, *Kurt von Schuschnigg*, p. 83.
[54] Italo Zingarelli, "Come in Austria si spiana la via al giovane re Ottone d'Asburgo," *La Stampa* (Turin). February 1, 1936.
[55] Seefried, "«Reich» und «Ständestaat» als Antithesen zum Nationalsozialismus: Die katholische Zeitschrift Der Christliche Ständestaat," p. 434.
[56] Ibid., p. 435.
[57] Hildebrand, *Engelbert Dollfuß: Ein katholischer Staatsmann*, p. 9; Weber, *Dollfuß an Österreich*, p. 21.
[58] Lothar Höbelt, *Die Erste Republik Österreich (1918-1938): Das Provisorium* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2018), p. 59.
[59] Höbelt, "Adel und Reichsidee in der Zwischenkriegszeit," p. 152.
[60] AdR: NPA, Karton 186 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich März 1936 – 1938, Ff. 628-632, January 27, 1938, Polizeidirektion Wien report on Assembly of Kaisertreuevolkspartei organised by Wolff.

Austrian Fatherland.[61] Nonetheless, some Legitimist pushed the limits of VF toleration by denouncing the official line of a restoration being "not opportune," and calling for a "comprehensive renewal" to include restoration for the good of "Austria's innermost soul."[62] Moreover, with the power of the *Heimwehr* growing and the VF abandonment of parliamentary democracy complete, many international observers —von Papen chief amongst them— speculated the possibility of a Starhemberg regency as a transition towards Monarchy.[63]

Accordingly, Maria Pronay comes to the conclusion that for Schuschnigg, restoration was the "ultimate goal of his chancellorship."[64] This position is largely based upon appraisals by German ambassador to Austria, Franz von Papen, in his diplomatic reports back to Berlin.[65] Polemic historian Lothar Höbelt concludes that Schuschnigg did indeed what want a plebiscite to restore the monarchy,[66] even if such a plebiscite tacitly accepted the principle of sovereignty from below as opposed to the Habsburg understanding of hereditary monarchy; rooted in the "dynasty's right to the throne as considered God-given and indissoluble,"[67] a direct devolution of divine kingship of Christ, i.e., from above. Anxiety of civilisational rupture and decline permeated Conservative thought in Austria. For leaders such as Schuschnigg, the ultimate retreat from a perceived disenchanting modernity was Habsburg Monarchism. A political order of supranational and supernatural character.

While the military and paramilitary forces regularly deployed pro-Habsburg rhetoric, some legitimists within the official *Bundesheer* were willing to not just facilitate,

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[61] Moos, *Habsburg post mortem*, p. 226.; AdR: NPA, Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 309-323, August 30, 1925, Polizeidirektion Wien report to "Bundeskanzleramt" entitled "Angeblicher Brief des Theobald Grafen Westphalen an den Präsidenten der konservativen Volkspartei; Veröffentlichung in der Roten Fahne."
[62] Unknown, "Die Habsburgerfrage – nicht aktuell!." *Die alte Front*. December 16, 1935, p. 2.
[63] Papen and Connell, *Memoirs*, p. 378; AdR: NPA, Karton 185 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage— 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1934 – Februar 1936, Ff. 513-518, December 30, 1935, entitled: "Gerüchte von einer bevorstehenden Regentschaft des Fürsten Starhemberg; Stellungnahme der kleinen Entente" from Austrian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary Ferdinand Marek (Austrian Embassy, Prague) to Federal Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg (Vienna).
[64] Pronay, "Legitimismus," p. 63.
[65] Ibid., p. 65.
[66] Höbelt, *Die Heimwehren und die österreichische Politik 1927-1936,* p.431.
[67] Thaler, "Ally and Opposition," p. 168.

or advocate, but also covertly plot for restoration. One such case was that of Alois Schönbach, Viktor Dankl and Chief of the General Staff Alfred Jansa when presented with Austro-German rapprochement in the aftermath of the February 1938 Berchtesgaden agreement.[68] For self-styled "Legitimists," the Habsburg question was a "question of law" and not a "question of power,"[69] such that an "illegitimate" 1918 republican revolution had no authority, despite having been imposed and maintained by threat of force, and therefore could be equally undone by force. However, among the common enlisted ranks there was little appetite to provoke numerically superior and better equipped *Wehrmacht*.

It did not escape VF authorities that the question of restoration was most pertinent to the old aristocracy who held "matter close to their hearts" but were a minority of the population. Furthermore, it was calculated that the solution to the question would be found in winning over the peasantry to the idea of a Habsburg restoration not leading to "inevitable return of militarism."[70] Much to the satisfaction of Legitimists, the return of Archduke Eugen and Archduke Anton was met with a certain Viennese splendour with high-society balls and military honour guards identical to that of the Old Monarchy. Such occasions were used by the Legitimist press to magnify a popular impression of the absent Otto as "the only real guarantor of Austria's autonomy and independence." These efforts would be aided by declarations of VF officials such as Friedrich von Wiesner proclaiming, "the organic unity of this Austria, which cannot be divided into dynasty and people."[71] An integral part of this forwarding this "organic unity" would be promoting the religious cult of devotion to deceased emperor Karl. To this end Schuschnigg co-operated with the emperor's former personal secretary, Baron Werkmann of the *Reichsbund*, to produce propaganda testifying to Karl's sanctity and presenting him as an example to emulate and

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[68] Schmidl, *Der „Anschluß" Österreichs: Der Deutsche Einmarsch im März 1938*, p. 74.
[69] Unknown, "Der Kampf des Dritten Reichs gegen die Restauration," *Die alte Front*. March 26, 1937, p. 3.
[70] AdR: BKA/Inneres, 22/Gen, Karton 4945, September 25, 1935, report no. 360822 entitled "Vertrauliche Information über die Restauration des Habsburger" from Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).
[71] Unknown, "Der Wiener Kaiserferier," *Der Österreicher*. November 22, 1935, p. 1 found in ÖSTA, AdR, BKA/Inneres, 22/Gen, Karton 4945.

emphasising the necessity for the population at large —with "the new spirit which is filled with respect for the past"—to celebrate what would have been his 50th birthday.[72]

Austrian officials were aware "from a very reliable source" that ideally the Pope was a proponent of strategic Pan-Germanism in principle believing that "the unification of all Germans would be in the interest of the Church" on the grounds that "Catholics have a higher fertility rate than Protestants and the latter would be decisively outnumbered" over time.[73] Nonetheless, as early as 1927 Legitimists presented themselves as the premiere embodiment of the Church's teaching proclaiming: "The Austrian Emperor of the future will have to be a secular representative of Christ."[74] Now in the VF-era they openly collaborated with the Vatican to establishment of a Catholic University of Salzburg in 1935 and shortly thereafter organise a Salzburg "International Congress of Christ the King."[75]

Depending on the audience, Otto did not shy away from charged supernatural rhetoric. Italian authorities took careful note of a 20th September 1936 letter by Otto read aloud to a 13th December meeting of "the Association of Catholic Nobles of Austria" with by high-ranking aristocratic Legitimists including Otto's sister, Archduchess Adelaide, in attendance. In the letter the exiled Archduke commended the Austrian aristocracy for —even though being "the object of attacks by the leaders and traitors of the people"— resisting "an era in which the tendency to destroy the throne and the altars and thus to

[72] NARA: General Records, 1936–1941 — Austria; U.S. Legation and Consulate General, Vienna; General Records — Department of State. U.S. Consulate General, Vienna, Germany. ca. 3/12/1938-1941 (Most Recent) — Box 26: 1937: Ff. 500–720, Correspondence American Legation Vienna 1937 part 19 File No. 650-720, August 30, 1937, report no. 1195 "Political Events During This Period August 24 to August 30" from John C. Wiley (Vienna) to The Secretary of State, Washington.
[73] AdR: NPA, Karton Karton 352 Liasse Österreich 2/Geheim — 2/11 Monarchistische Bewegung in Österreich 1935-1937, Ff. 326-327, March 12, 1937, report no. 71/res entitled "Stellung zum Anshcluss" from Austrian Embassy to the Holy See to Guido Schmidt (Ministry for foreign affairs, Vienna).
[74] August M. Knoll, "Kaisertum und Proletariat oder Die soziale Monarchie," in *Die österreichische Aktion (Action): Programmatische Studien*, ed. August Maria Knoll et al. (Vienna: Ernst Karl Winter Verlag, 1927), p. 215.
[75] Archivo della Nunziatura Apostolica di Vienna Arch. Nunz. Vienna 856 Busta 856 Fasc. 26, ff. 384-433: VAA: Arch. Nunz. Vienna 856, Busta 856, Fasc. 26, ff. 384–433, "Progetto Università cattolica a Salisburgo," 18 April–9 June 1935.

demoralise Austrian society was dominant."[76] Italian officials thus concluded that "the Catholic faith, Austrian conviction and the Legitimist creed are the three pillars on which" the "new Austria" would be upheld. [77] In such remarks by Otto one can see a conscious effort to associate his campaign with the temporal success of the Catholic Church as expressed in the Kingship of Christ over public life, emphasising republican — Wilsonian— revolution as a common enemy.

Nonetheless, Vice-Chancellor Starhemberg was quoted in a 1935 interview with *Popolo D'Italia* in which he stated:

> "The Hapsburg question is not yet ripe and will not be so in the near future. It cannot be solved satisfactorily as long as the masses do not desire a solution. It is not a problem that can be decided at conferences and by after-dinner speeches."[78]

In the lead up to the March 1938 Anschluss, within the Vatican Secretariate of State, Archbishop Giuseppe Pizzardo repeatedly warned the VF of the potential danger of NS Germany and expressed desires to coordinate Catholic Reaction.[79] Within the Roman Curia, it was made known that Austrian independence and specifically the Habsburg question was not a matter of indifferent neutrality for the Church. As the Austrian embassy to the Holy See relayed back to Vienna on 19th February 1937 in a "top-secret" report entitled "Statements on the question of an introduction of the monarchy":

> "[Pizzardo] pointed out that the French were now the loudest advocates of restoration and said that there was even a great deal of sentiment in favour of it among the French clergy. One would ideally like to see there already the restoration of the old Holy Roman Empire including Italy, he added —somewhat ironically."[80]

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[76] ACdS: Ministero della Cultura Popolare, Busta no. 15, *Propaganda presso gli Stati esteri 1930-1943*, December 17, 1936, Report no. 4488-A73, "Legittimismo in Austria," Italian Legation, Vienna, to Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Royal Ministry for Press and Propaganda.
[77] Ibid.
[78] NARA: 860.01/130, April 4, 1935, report no. 376 entitled "The Present Status of the Hapsburg Question" from Alfred W. Klieforth, (Legation of the United States of America, Vienna) to Cordell Hull (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[79] AdR: NPA, Karton 196 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage 2/21, Ff. 91-94, February 3, 1938, report entitled "Gespräch über Österreich" from Austrian Vatican embassy to Guido Schmidt (Ministry for foreign affairs, Vienna).
[80] AdR: NPA, Karton 186 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich März 1936 – 1938, Ff. 370-373, February 19, 1937, entitled "Aeusserungen zur Frage einer

From this report we can perhaps gain insight to the confirmation biases of internal prejudices of the Church in France overspilling into communications to the Vatican, allowing for a potential overestimation of support for the exiled Habsburgs among the general population. The whimsical remark about northern Italian HRE historical heritage is, however, no doubt demonstrative of the legacy of the Vatican's long lasting "prisoner behind the walls" mentality existing beyond the 1929 Lateran Treaty.

The failure of VF corporatism to accumulate a critical mass of popular grassroots support was in fact advantageous to Legitimism. As tensions between Austria and Germany deteriorated and Austria's internal economic situation became more precarious, the VF could rely on Legitimists as unequivocal regime loyalists, and thus in the latter half of the regime's lifetime, pivoted toward rhetoric of "Social Monarchy."[81] Such an endeavour involved a propaganda campaign to rebrand Austrian Legitimism away from class stereotypes and towards the only unifying force above political squabbles.[82] Likewise, for National Socialists, Habsburg Legitimism was a useful scapegoat. Maria Pronay notes the "great importance the National Socialists attached to the Habsburg myth as an antithesis to their ideology."[83] In conjunction to von Papen's efforts at disputing an Austrian monopoly on "Western Culture,"[84] Berlin had determined to undermine the plan of Schuschnigg to utilise the Papal Nuncio to Vienna, Archbishop Enrico Sibilia, in exerting covert diplomatic pressure on the LE to accept a localised Austrian Habsburg restoration in exchange for guarantees renouncing territorial revisionism.[85] Papen alerted Hitler to what he saw as a conspiracy of Austria and the Vatican to collude in facilitating French machinations to contain German expansionism by encouraging an Austrian VF pro-Habsburg agenda. Therefore, Papen ultimately recommended the need to combine forces with Yugoslavia to thwart such endeavours by having them intransigent to Paris.[86]

Einführung der Monarchie" from Austrian Vatican embassy to Guido Schmidt (Ministry for foreign affairs, Vienna).

[81] Seefried, "«Reich» und «Ständestaat»," p. 436.

[82] NARA: General Records, 1936–1941, Austria; U.S. Legation and Consulate General, Vienna; General Records, Department of State, Box 26: 1937: ff.500-720, November 20, 1937, John C. Wiley (Vienna) report to Cordell Hull (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

[83] Pronay, "Legitimismus," p. 68.

[84] Franz von Papen, *Reich und Kirche. Eine Schriftenreihe: Der 12. November 1933 und die deutschen Katholiken* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1934), p. 15.

[85] Pronay, "Legitimismus," p. 63.

[86] Ibid.

5.4: Vienna-Budapest-Rome Axis

In 1921, after the Treaty of Rapallo between Rome and Belgrade the year before, Austrian diplomats speculated with pessimism the potential of any legacy of inter-monarchical solidarity being turned to Austria's favour.[1] In a government declaration to the Hungarian upper-house on 13th October 1932, Gyula Gömbös stated of Hungarian foreign policy:

> "I emphasise that we must always think gratefully of Italy, which was the first great power to take up the Hungarian cause […] but as far as the neighbouring states are concerned, I am declaring peace and seeking understanding."[2]

For Gömbös, history and destiny had given Germany and Austria good relations, the Anglosphere and France were beginning to realise the error of Trianon, but the LE were nonetheless preventing the resurrection of the Hungarian nation. A disgruntled Italy remained the only power of significance which could facilitate Hungary's deep desire for treaty revision.

While Gömbös could travel to Vienna in July 1933 to meet with Dollfuß as part of an "Austro-Hungarian Action Committee for Danube Policy," the Lutheran Magyar Prime Minster and Austrian Catholic Chancellor had very different ideas concerning what that Danube policy was ordered towards. [3] For Budapest a healthy bi-lateral relationship with Vienna was welcome reprieve from the surrounding hostile LE. For Dollfuß, it was the foundational basis for a supranational *Reich* which could stand up to neo-Pagan National Socialism. Under Gömbös' watch Legitimist propaganda which declared Otto as king were regarded as treasonous contraband.[4] Furthermore, he and Horthy had Oktogon square in

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[1] AdR: NPA, Karton 727 Liasse Ungarn XII-1/II, ff. 76-79, February 6, 1921, report no. Zl. 23/pol entitled "Die Habsburgerfrage" from Austrian Embassy (Budapest) to Michael Mayr (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).

[2] Gyula Gömbös, *Für die Nationale Selbstzwecklichkeit: Zwölf Reden des Ministerpräsidenten Julius Gömbös* (Budapest: Druckerei der Pester Lloyd-Gesellschaft, 1932), p. 74.

[3] Unknown, "Ministerpräsident Gömbös in Wien: Oesterreichisch-ungarische Aktionsgemeinschaft in der Donaupolitik," *Das interessante Blatt*. 13 July 1933, p. 1.

[4] AdR: NPA, Karton Karton 731, Liasse Ungarn 2/11 Monarchistische Bewegung 1920–1937, Ff. 711-714, December 6, 1935, entitled "Bekämpfung der legitimistischen Bewegung" from Austrian embassy (Budapest) to Egon Berger-Waldenegg (Ministry of External Affairs, Vienna).

Budapest re-named Mussolini square and hosted there a state visit from the king and queen of Italy in May 1937, and likewise adopted a stronger executive approach to his office as regent over the 1930s.[5] Nonetheless, the Austrian ambassador in Budapest would remark in 1937 to his superior (the aristocratic Legitimist Egon Berger-Waldenegg) that Horthy's "well-known role in the royal coups weighs heavily on his conscience."[6] Furthermore, it was reported:

> "In view of his mental and character weaknesses, some observers also consider him to be open to the idea of Legitimism, provided that a restoration would offer him advantages commensurate with his prestige and vanity."[7]

The myriad of obstacles to a return of Otto von Habsburg as sovereign to Austria were identified early and presented a constant concern to Seipel. According to US intelligence reports, Seipel —as then minister for foreign affairs— made October 1930 "off the record" comments to a US agent posing as a journalist, about the recently come-of-age pretender:

> "It was fear of the resurrection of the old Habsburg Empire which was the chief bar to the return of Otto in Hungary, which otherwise would be simple and normal. Both the French and the Italians realized that the violation of international treaties would occur if Austria and Hungary together received Otto back." [8]

The report goes on to note that Seipel was "convinced that Otto will come back to Hungary eventually, but that his return is not an immediate prospect." From his information the French would reluctantly have to support the LE even if Paris "would probably not object to his return to Hungary alone."[9] Seipel further told the US agent that in his view "it is Mussolini who is the chief supporter of Otto's efforts." If such claims were accurate, as Italian influence grew in Austria, so too would Otto's chances at

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[5] Tibor Frank, *Discussing Hitler: Advisers of U.S. Diplomacy in Central Europe, 1934-41* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003), p. 32 & 35.
[6] AdR: NPA, Karton Karton 731 Liasse Ungarn 2/11 Monarchistische Bewegung 1920–1937, Ff. 720-725, January 5, 1937, report entitled "Zur Frage des Legitimismus in Ungarn" from Austrian embassy (Budapest)
to Guido Schmidt (Ministry for foreign affairs, Vienna).
[7] Ibid.
[8] NARA: 863.00/702, November 4, 1930, report no. 140 from G.B. Stockton (Legation of the United States of America in Vienna) to Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[9] Ibid.

restoration. Nonetheless, Rome would only support a localized Habsburg restoration as a means of safeguarding her Alpine buffer from Socialism.[10] Therefore Otto, like his father before him, was presented the decision to forfeit one throne in the hope of perhaps improving his chance at a partial restoration. Count Bethlen was reported to having rejected the possibility of a potential personal union between Austrian and Hungary should Otto be simultaneous sovereign of both states, declaring before cabinet: "Never fear! The Government will never permit a foreigner to mount the throne of Hungary."[11] Seipel commenting on this potential personal union describes how it "could only came about by a miracle."[12] From such an assessment at the onset of the decade, we see a passivity amongst the Great Powers regarding a conditional limited restoration of Habsburg power in either Vienna or Budapest. Likewise, there was an active hostility on the part of LE who would not trust that Legitimists would be satiated with a partial victory and abandon deeply entrenched notions of supranational mission mandated by an irreputable duty of historical mission.

A political union under common Habsburg rule was not however considered an impossibility. Hungarian ambassador to Vienna, Baron Apor, who, when speaking freely over a private dinner hosted by his American counterpart George S. Messersmith, is reported by the US as having speculated that "it was becoming clearer and clearer that Austria and Hungary would have to begin sleeping with each other again […] and said they might even have to take a Hapsburg into the bed with them." Messersmith summarises in this January 18th, 1935, report to Washington DC that he had "the feeling recently that Schuschnigg is more than ever in his inner mind leaning towards Monarchy" and that the Austrian Chancellor "sees more and more a safe haven in Monarchy."[13] In this period between Schuschnigg's rise to power in the wake of his predecessor's assassination in July 1934 and the signing of the July 1936 agreement one finds a golden window of the Legitimists cause. Notwithstanding, a faction of Hungarian nationalistic revisionists on the Right saw their best chance at gaining international support was not to be found upstream

[10] Ibid.
[11] Unknown, "HUNGARY: 100% King." *Time Magazine.* June 9, 1930.
[12] NARA: 863.00/702, November 4, 1930, report no. 140 from G.B. Stockton (Legation of the United States of America in Vienna) to Henry L. Stimson (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[13] NARA: 863.00/1173, January 18, 1935, letter from George S. Messersmith (Legation of the United States of America in Vienna) to William Phillips (Under Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

in Vienna, but rather by inviting a British candidate for the throne. Many spectators considered the far-right Harold Harmsworth, the Viscount Rothermere, due to him being a noted revisionist sympatric to the Hungarian plight in the wake of the treaty of Trianon.[14]

Schuschnigg was however not the first to see the significance of wining favour with Paris and London directly. Some of the first efforts to lobby recent enemy belligerents on the question can be seen in the case of former Habsburg (K.u.K.) Minister of Foreign Affairs Graf Czernin, who, just before his death, held 1931 secret talks in Paris with French authorities with the unofficial support of contacts within the Weimar German diplomatic corps. Quai d'Orsay, while not yet worried specifically by the rise of National Socialism, still wished to contain German power by maintaining a strong united western-orientated Central Europe and thus desired not to destabilise her relations with both the Little Entente and Socialist counterparts within Austria.[15] This position would alter dramatically with the National Socialist rise to power in 1933. Under these circumstances, Western support, from a UK and France, was gradually being secured for a toleration towards restoration. In contrast, with Mussolini's geopolitical isolation resulting from the ongoing Abyssinian war, Italian foreign policy underwent a radical shift towards Berlin. A VF 4th February 1936 memorandum described the situation as such "that the restoration of the Austrian throne is not appropriate for the time being."[16] The mood in France was such that Quai d'Orsay wanted above all else a strong united western-orientated Central Europe but in doing so had to balance many complex competing interests such as her conflicting commitments to the Little Entente.[17]

[14] AdR: NPA, Karton, 731 Liasse Ungarn 2/11 Monarchistische Bewegung 1920–1937, Ff. 579-582, January 3, 1933, report entitled "Die angebliche Kandidatur Lord Rothermeres auf den ungarnischen Königsthron" from Austrian embassy (Budapest) to Engelbert Dollfuss (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).
[15] AdR: NPA, Karton 184 Liasse Österreich 2/11– Innere Lage—2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919 – 1933, Ff. 408-410, December 22, 1931, Bundeskanzleramt report entitled "Die französische Regierung und die Restaurationsfrage."
[16] AdR: NPA, Karton 185 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1934 – Februar 1936, Ff. 570-575, February 4, 1936, Bundeskanzleramt report entitled "Zeitungsmeldungen über Restaurationsfrage."
[17] AdR: NPA, Karton 231 Liasse Österreich 7– Außenpolitik—7/1 Österreichische Außenpolitik allgemein — Ff. 93, May 29, 1934, Bundeskanzleramt report on French press.

Loyal VF proponent of Austrian-ness, —but unlike most of his high-ranking colleagues not himself a unilaterally convinced Legitimist—[18] Theodor von Hornbostel, as the head of the Foreign Office Political Department within the Federal Chancellery since April 1933, presented an internal white paper lecture to VF diplomats and political leaders in March 1936 arguing:

> "Domestically, there would be no difficulty; externally, the idea is momentarily blocked. It is therefore that any exaggerated push for a definitive resolution to this problem is not only at present a futile effort, but even harmful."[19]

While thought of as an internal question, the most ardent of Habsburg supporters acknowledged the international geopolitical ramifications of unilateral action of complete Restoration. There were those in the VF establishment who called for a *realpolitik* pragmatism vis-à-vis the Habsburg Question and were eager to point out the problem of Austria's overreliance on Italian goodwill to maintain her sovereignty.

Christian Dörner and Barbara Dörner-Fazeny record von Hornbostel's differentiation between Dollfuß and Schuschnigg summarising that "Dollfuß was an avowed republican" whereas Schuschnigg was a conditional Monarchist viewing fellow Legitimists as "[t]he only group he could be sure were not official or covert Nazis."[20] In such a view the archetypical *Ständestaat* loyalist was a pragmatic Legitimist. In this logic Legitimism therefore in part transformed from a proscriptive solution to Austria's predicament to a litmus test for office and vehicle to attack International Socialist and National Socialist opposition. With the unsuccessful progress of the supranational French Briand Plan and other idealist supranational schemes of the previous decade as covered in chapter two, Parisian Foreign Minister Tardieu proposed a multi-lateral military alliance of Danubian countries. This apparent abandonment of the 1930 Briand schema[21] was heavily criticised by segments of the French press, which according to Dörner and Dörner-Fazeny:

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[18] Oliver R. Rathkolb, "The Austrian Foreign Service and the Anschluß in 1938," *German Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (1990): p. 67.
[19] Robert Kriechbaumer, *Österreich! und Front Heil! Aus den Akten des Generalsekretariats der Vaterländischen Front. Innenansichten eines Regimes* (Vienna: Schriftenreihe der Forschungs-institutes für politisch-historische Studien der Dr.-Wilfried-Haslauer-Bibliothek, 2005), p. 350.
[20] Dörner and Dörner-Fazeny, *Theodor von Hornbostel*, p. 98.
[21] "The Movement Towards European Economic Co-Operation.—II," *Bulletin of International News* 7, no. 24 (1931): p. 3.

> "Effectively saw only the possibility of a European alliance along the lines of Briand's, in which all customs borders would fall in Central Europe, or a monarchist Danubian alliance led by the Habsburgs."[22]

With collegial supranationalism seeming increasingly unattainable, the VF would have to pivot and capitalise on the opportunity presented by recent Italian desires to have quasi-fascist or fascist-friendly states at her boarders to forward her Balkan Danube regional aspirations. Although these geopolitical objectives of Rome were detrimentally mutual incompatible with Austria's aspiration of pursuing a supranational Habsburg order in the Danube region, Schuschnigg nonetheless saw in such support from Fascist Italy a Faustian pact which could facilitate a local Habsburg restoration in Vienna and suppress the internal threat of Austromarxism.

Furthermore, it can be reasonably argued that that Italian interest in Habsburg restoration was more pragmatic than ideological in nature. Austrian independence conveniently created a buffer zone between Italy and a post-1933 National Socialist Germany which laid claim to not only Austria, but formerly Austrian German-speaking South Tyrol, recently annexed to Italy in 1919 under the treaty of St. Germain. After the initial Italian invasion of Abyssinia, and before Rome-Berlin Axis reproachment, Italian attitude to Otto was self-described as "sympathetic."[23] Nonetheless, it was well understood in Vienna that if Austria were to pursue a path of alignment with Italy at the expense of alienating the goodwill of the Great Powers, should Italy ever seek a reproachment with Germany, Austria would be left without any ally who could intercede on her behalf.[24] Schuschnigg personally was wary of Italian aid. From experiences in his youth as an officer in the K.u.K. army and later prisoner of war in Italy he had regarded Italy as the perfidious hereditary enemy of Austria. Schuschnigg was sceptical not only Prussian

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[22] Dörner and Dörner-Fazeny, *Theodor von Hornbostel*, p. 177.
[23] AdR: NPA, Karton 185 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage— 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1934 – Februar 1936, Ff. 537-540, January 9, 1936, Bundeskanzleramt report entitled: "Herr Suvich über die innere Lage in Oesterreich."
[24] AdR: NPA, Karton 352 Liasse Österreich 2/Geheim— 2/11 Monarchistische Bewegung in Österreich 1935 – 1937, Ff. 183, February 26, 1937, report entitled "Zusammenspiel Rom-Berlin auch in der Habsburg-Frage"; AdR: NPA, Karton 352 Liasse Österreich 2/Geheim— 2/11 Monarchistische Bewegung in Österreich 1935 – 1937, Ff. 223-238, February 26, 1936, report entitled "Oesterreich und das Restaurationsproblem" from Austrian embassy (Rome) to Kurt von Schuschnigg (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).

militarism, but also Italian guarantees granted to Austria under the chancellorship of Dollfuss in exchange of an understanding of Austrian coordinated military involvement should war break out between Italy and Yugoslavia.[25]

French diplomacy of German-containment was nominally aligned with Austrian interest. If Paris could secure the harmonious relations between the LE and Austria an Anschluss would seem preventable. Schuschnigg recounts in his memoirs how French Prime Minister Pierre Laval had "asked us outright whether we could give a formal pledge that we would not restore the Hapsburg throne."[26] To that, the Austrian Chancellor could only possibly reply in the negative, asserting:

> "As a matter of principle, we considered it an essential part of our sovereign rights to choose the form of government we pleased. We could therefore not yield to any demands from outside."[27]

This statement however is somewhat contradicted by the previous acquiescence to Italian fascist demands that the Austrian Right eliminate Socialist opposition by force in the brief February 1934 civil war. Furthermore, Schuschnigg himself acknowledged that favourable international opinion was essential to achieve any positive development with regards to the Habsburg Question. It was his view —even a decade later— that "the psychological prerequisite of popular support was evident, every experiment in that direction was out of the question for reasons of foreign policy."[28]

The retrospective Schuschnigg of post-WW2 era Europe would highlight how "Austria and Hungary worked in closest co-operation with the Italian delegation in Geneva," but with regards to the UK and France, his "foremost task was to dispel [the LE's] almost hysterical, and to us outright surprising, fears of a Hapsburg restoration."[29] Seeking to justify his handling of the precarious later-interwar period, Schuschnigg confidently asserted: "Nobody in Austria believed at that time that this question could be raised for years. Monarchism and Legitimism were a question of legal theory, not of

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[25] Binder, "Austrofaschismus und Außenpolitik," p. 582.
[26] Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, trans. Franz von Hildebrand (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), p. 152.
[27] Kurt von Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, p. 152.
[28] Ibid., p. 134.
[29] Ibid.

political practice."[30] The Schuschnigg of the VF era —as revealed by archival evidence— paints a different picture. The former chancellor was correct in maintaining that the geo-political situation was not opportune to carrying out a unilateral Vienna restoration, but nor did he regard it as a mere hypothetical rather a goal to strive towards.

Italian Fascism had an interest in the stability of an anti-Socialist Austria. Her diplomatic representatives in Vienna urged an expressly modern corporative political direction of the new VF, yet, nonetheless appreciated the power of tradition. They noted that the aristocratic Legitimists who cried en masse; "We want our Emperor back!" were the same strongest supporters of the VF and specifically defenders of Schuschnigg's record on the Habsburg Question.[31] However, these voices opposed the plan to indefinitely wait patiently for the correct moment of geopolitical opportunity. One such instance was a 7th March 1937 demonisation of 3,000 Legitimists which resulted in 22 arrests after vigilantes attacked disruptors who throw "noxious bombs" into the crowd. Baron Zessner von Spitzenberg of the official VF *Traditionsreferat* (Office for Preservation of Tradition) organised event sought to appease the appetite of the populist wing of Legitimists unsatisfied with an incremental programme towards restoration.[32] To the pleasure of the crowd, Italian observers noted it was once more publicly declared, this time by a Dr. Steiner:

> "The path being followed by all Austrian loyalists is that marked out by Dollfuss; a path whose final destination is Monarchy. All the opponents who oppose this irresistible movement will be eliminated, whoever they are."[33]

The Italian push for a centralised exclusive state in Austria was hoped to be the wave which carried this objective to shore. Count Ciano met with State Secretary Zernatto in Rome March 12th, 1937, during which "the whole entire conversation revolved almost exclusively around Italy's position on the [Habsburg] restoration question and that the

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[30] Ibid.
[31] ACdS: Ministero della Cultura Populare Busta no.15, Propaganda presso glI Stati esteri 1930-1943, December 17, 1936, report no. 4488-A73 entitled "Legittimismo in Austria" from Italian Legation, Vienna to Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Royal Ministry for Press and Propaganda.
[32] ACdS: Ministero Della Cultura Popolari D. G. Propaganda Busta no. 16, "Manifestazione politiche varie" Italian embassy Vienna reports numbered 1005-A73/504 entitled "Adunanza Legittimista" from Italian embassy (Vienna) March 8, 1937, sent to "R. Ministero Affari Esteri" and "R. Ministero Stampa e Propaganda.
[33] Ibid.

Italian Foreign Minister repeated all the arguments for and against."[34] Mussolini was no Monarchist, for him exiled royals were potential assets in his regional power politics. *Il Duce* agreed to host King Alphonso of Spain in 1933.[35] Alphonso himself in turn —either out of monarchical solidarity or personal interest— was willing to act as a clandestine transmitter of information to Vienna, informing the VF ambassador in Rome, Baron Berger-Waldenegg, of private 1937 discussions with Hermann Göring in which the *Ministerpräsident* of Prussia boldly asserted that due to progress made by the VF toward restoration, "the German army will unhesitatingly march with all its might to Austria and establish order."[36]

Von Papen from Vienna in 1937 claimed that it "had been known for some time" that Italy was willing to make a distinction between a localised resolution to the Habsburg Question which would be a "purely domestic concern to Austria" and then conversely, the danger of a Central European supranational restoration.[37] This conflicted with Austrian aims at securing economic viability via a regional federal structure which could "permanently restore the natural economic area in the Danube basin."[38] In contrast, restoration in Vienna alone would have isolated landlocked Austria from her neighbours on which she depended so much. In these deliberations between sovereignty and economic subsistence, the Austrian Chancellery nonetheless argued: "But all those who view things from a higher vantage point agree that even the recall of the Habsburg prince from Steenockerzeel, who already bears the title of emperor, will by no means eliminate Austria's economic difficulties in the near future."[39] Such "pre-occupation" with the

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[34] AdR: NPA, Karton 353, Liasse Österrich 2/11 "Stellung zum Anschluss" March 12, 1937 Ff. 328, March 12, 1937, report no. 64/Pol entitled "Staatssekretar Zernatto bei Graf Ciano" from Austrian embassy (Rome) to Guido Schmidt (Austrian Foreign Ministry, Vienna).
[35] Unknown, "Exkönigs Alfons sucht eine neue Heimat," *Das interessante Blatt*. February 9, 1933, p. 7.
[36] AdR: NPA, Karton 186 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich März 1936 – 1938, Ff. 314-318, January 23, 1937, report on "Konversation mit dem König von Spanien" from from Austrian embassy (Rome) to Guido Schmidt (Austrian Foreign Ministry, Vienna).
[37] Franz von Papen to Konstantin von Neurath (German Foreign Minister), February 18, 1937, German Archives: 2017/443593-95, in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: Series D, Vol. I, From Neurath to Ribbentrop (September 1937–September 1938)* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 394–96.
[38] AdR: BKA/Inneres, 22/Gen, Karton 4945, September 25, 1935, report no. 360822 entitled "Vertrauliche Information über die Restauration des Habsburger" from Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).
[39] Ibid.

Habsburg Question on the part of the LE was on Schuschnigg's mind "the result of irresponsible publicity and coordinated hostile propaganda."[40] Even in February 1936 –as Otto was in Paris– Austrian ambassador in London highlighted how France maintained it could win Italy over to restoration once more, revive the old anti-Prussian Entente and alienate NS Germany by depriving them Fascist Italy as an ally.[41]

[40] Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, p. 134.

[41] AdR: NPA, Karton 185 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1934 – Februar 1936 — Ff. 619-630, February 7, 1936 report entitled "Britische Blätterstimmen zur Reise Erzherzog Ottos nach Paris" from Franckenstein (Austrian embassy, London) to Egon Berger-Waldenegg (Austrian Ministry for External Affairs)

5.5: Little Entente, Appeasement, and Anschluss

Duncan Sandys, UK Foreign Office senior civil servant turned conservative MP, had summed up the ambitious, yet risk-adverse, pro-appeasement institutional attitude of London on the unviability of "rump Austria" previously in May 1935, stating in his maiden speech before the House of Commons:

> "The setting up of a Danubian Economic Federation, or possibly a union with Hungary under a restored Hapsburg monarchy, would be the most satisfactory solution to the problem; but, failing this, even a union with Germany would undoubtedly be preferable to the indefinite prolongation of the present dangerous state of uncertainty."[1]

For much of the Westminster political and Whitehall administrative elite the Habsburg Question was rather the Habsburg Problem. Yugoslavia continued in 1935 to cite the 4th of February 1920 and 1st April 1921 Paris declarations on Entente opposition to Karl's return to Budapest as a threat to "the liberation of the peoples hitherto enslaved."[2] It was further argued in Belgrade that the wording of such declarations committed France and the UK to likewise oppose Habsburg restoration in Vienna. Czechoslovakia in contrast saw a gentle softening of her position relative to other central European States.[3] Here, however, it also becomes necessary to distinguish between state actors and local regionalised sympathies. All three LE states, despite nationalistic narratives, were multinational heterogeneous pluralistic political entities. Austrian diplomatic and intelligence apparatus in the mid-1930s speculated on potential for Habsburg sympathy to be found in Moravia and Slovakia, Transylvania, or Croatian Yugoslavia, in contrast to the more dominant Serbian,

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[1] House of Commons debate "Foreign Office," May 2, 1935. Accessed February 10, 2023: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1935/may/02/foreign-office.

[2] AdR: NPA, Karton 232 Liasse Österreich 7 – Außenpolitik— 7/1 Österreichische Außenpolitik allgemein, Ff. 371-376, August 23, 1935, report entitled "Französisches Bohema eines Donaupaktes; Stellungnahme der österreichischen Bundes regierung" and copy of April 1921 conference of ambassadors Paris letter in French from Austrian embassy (Budapest) to Egon Berger-Waldenegg (Ministry for foreign affairs, Vienna).

[3] AdR: NPA, Karton 185 Liasse Österreich 2 –Innere Lage— 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1934 – Februar 1936, Ff. 560-561, January 24, 1936, report entitled "Stellungnahme hiesiger politischer Kreise zur Habsburgerfarge" from Austrian embassy (Prague) to "Herrn Bundesminister für Auswärtigen Angelegenheiten, Egon Berger-Waldenegg."

Romanian, and Czech lands which exercised institutional control over their respective states.[4]

Despite French efforts to harmonise the mutually exclusive interests amongst Central European states,[5] Yugoslavia, remained more fearful of the role Habsburg restoration could play in Italian regional aspirations than the prospect of German aggression. Like Czechoslovakia,[6] Yugoslavia wanted to internationalise the Habsburg Question before the LON. Failing that, Belgrade demanded Vienna formally renounce all plans at restoration,[7] and thus refused to sign a non-intervention treaty without such a declaration.[8] Such threats were not spontaneous utterances, but calculated manifestations of military contingency plans drawn up during the June 1936 LE General Staff summit in Bucharest. These meetings —which Viennese intelligence had claimed to have infiltrated—[9] decided on air and land operations aimed at Vienna from Yugoslavia in the South and Czechoslovakia in the North should the VF take unilateral action towards restoration.[10] Unlike her northern Slavic co-conspirator, Yugoslavia even made direct threat to coordinate its military response with Nazi Germany.[11] This Yugoslavian

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[4] Binder, "Austrofaschismus und Außenpolitik. p. 587.
[5] AdR: NPA, Karton 231 Liasse Österreich 7 – Außenpolitik — 7/1 Österreichische Außenpolitik allgemein – Ff.187-188, January 3, 1935, report "Mit Bezug auf Telegram No. 2 von heute. Herr Surich dankte für ihm auftragsgemäss gemachte Mittel lungen; er fügte bei, dass man französischerseits Habsburger-Frage in Konversationsprogramm aufnehmen habe lassen wollen, dass man hier aber abgelehnt hätte" from Austrian embassy Rome to Guido Schmidt (Ministry for foreign affairs, Vienna).
[6] Eduard Beneš, *Das Problem Mitteleuropas und die Lösung der österreichischen Frage: Exposé des Ministers der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten … am 21. März 1934* (Prague: Orbis, 1934), p. 56.
[7] AdR: NPA Karton 231 Liasse Österreich 7 – Außenpolitik — 7/1 Österreichische Außenpolitik allgemein – Ff. 24-31, October 1, 1934 report "Die Verhandlungen in Genf betreffs der Sicherung der Unabhängigkeit Oesterreichs."
[8] AdR: NPA Karton 231 Liasse Österreich 7 – Außenpolitik — 7/1 Österreichische Außenpolitik allgemein – Ff. 546-568, February 6, 1935, report entitled "Die Stellungnahme Jugoslaviens zu dem franco-italienischen Pakt betreffend eine. Nichteinmarschungskonvention" from Austrian embassy Belgrade; AdR: NPA Karton 232 Liasse Österreich 7 –Außenpolitik— 7/1 Österreichische Außenpolitik allgemein— Ff. 386-387, August 23, 1935, from *Bundes Polizeidirektion* (Vienna).
[9] AdR: NPA Karton 186 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich März 1936 – 1938, Ff. 431-433, March 22, 1937, report entitled "Vertrauliche Information über die Kleine Entente" from *Bundes Polizeidirektion* (Vienna).
[10] Schmidl, Der „Anschluß" *Österreichs,* p. 73; Hildebrand, *Engelbert Dollfuß*, p. 18.
[11] Höbelt, "Adel und Reichsidee in der Zwischenkriegszeit," p. 152; AdR: NPA, Karton 185 Liasse Österreich 2 –Innere Lage— 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1934 – Februar 1936, Ff. 560-561, January 24, 1936, report entitled "Stellungnahme hiesiger politischer Kreise zur Habsburgerfarge" from Austrian embassy (Prague) to "Herrn Bundesminister für Auswärtigen Angelegenheiten, Egon Berger-Waldenegg."

intransigence on the question of restoration, was described in 1936 Austrian reports as "hysterical."[12] The Austrian ambassador in Belgrade 1937 wrote of the Habsburg Question as a matter "which for a long time has hung over our relations like a gloomy spectre,"[13] and went so far as to even oppose unrealised intentions to repatriate former-Emperor Karl's remains to Austria as such a gesture would be seen as a provocation.[14] Such diplomatic inflexibility in Yugoslav foreign policy could well be attributed to the internal political balance of power dynamic between Western orientated Catholic Croats, and eastern orientated Orthodox Serbs.[15] A potential Habsburg state to the North was seen as potentially having the effect of reigniting Croatian self-consciousness in contradiction to the state approved national-building ideology of Pan-Slavism.

Starhemberg made comments to the French press reprinted in 1935 VF propaganda which lamented the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy and sought to re-characterise Austria's modern Danubian diplomacy from that of a generation prior:

> "I believe that the victorious powers have defeated themselves by destroying the former monarchy. Today, times have changed and this unity, in the context of which Vienna in particular can rediscover the essential role that corresponds to its history and geographical location, must be restored in a new form."[16]

Furthermore –conscious of anxieties of Austrian "hegemony"– the VF took heed of fervent LE objections to Austrian officials using the term "Kaiser Otto" which implied a jurisdictional claim on all former Austrian Cisleithanian lands,[17] Schuschnigg considered a

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[12] AdR: NPA, Karton 186 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich März 1936 – 1938, Ff. 196-203, July 3, 1936, Bundes-Polizeidirektion (Vienna) report entitled "Vertrauliche Information über die Stellungnahme der Staaten der Kleinen Entente zur Frage der Habsburger-restauration."

[13] AdR: NPA, Karton 186 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich März 1936 – 1938, Ff. 338-341, January 29, 1937, report from Austrian embassy (Belgrade) to Guido Schmidt (Ministry for foreign affairs, Vienna).

[14] AdR: NPA, Karton 185 Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage— 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1934 – Februar 1936, Ff. 31-36, April 12, 1934, report from Austrian consulate in Triest entitled "Ex-Kaiser u. König Karl, Ueberführung der Leiche nach Oesterreich."

[15] Pronay, "Legitimismus," p. 63.

[16] Julius Patzelt, *Ein Jahr Regierung Schuschnigg 29. Juli 1934 — 29. Juli 1935* (Vienna: Verlag des Oesterreichischen Bundespressedienstes, 1935), p. 22.

[17] AdR: NPA, Karton 185, Liasse Österreich 2 – Innere Lage 2/11, monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1934–Februar 1936, ff. 547–550, January 20, 1936, report entitled "Vorstellungen Dr. Hodzas anlässlich der vom Herrn Vizekanzler mein Appel der Vaterländische Front gehalten Ansprache" from Austrian embassy (Prague) to Guido Schmidt (Ministry for foreign affairs, Vienna).

restoration under which Otto would not be a Kaiser (Emperor) like his father but rather a *Landesfürst* (Prince)[18] and a referendum would be organised making the new Monarchy palatable to the international community.[19] Schuschnigg was happy to exempt Legitimists from bans on political assemblies but instructed that from June 1936 that it was "undesirable for reasons of foreign policy and therefore cannot be permitted in the future" to name any more schools or streets after "Kaiser Otto." Nonetheless those already re-named "were to be tacitly tolerated."[20] Ultimately, despite its implications on foreign policy, the Chancellor's office for public security further made the calculation that "monarchist propaganda is a valuable factor in the sense of the progressive consolidation of domestic political conditions in Austria due to its state-affirmative tendency." [21]

The Czechoslovakian position evolved over the course of the 1930s with somewhat of a softening of its anti-Habsburg rhetoric as the NS threat increased. In contrast Romanian and Yugoslavian opposition never dissipated and even intensified.[22] However, notwithstanding, Czechoslovakian President Edvard Benes, while open to multilateral Central European Cooperation[23] —having worked with Jan Masaryk in founding the Prague-based "Danubian Federation Committee" to forward the "Central European Idea"—[24] nonetheless in 1934 publicly declared the maxim "Rather Hitler than Habsburg."[25] Later that year he would qualify his remarks taking a more reconciliatory approach, suggesting that restoration, while well-intentioned, would be imprudent due to its potential to further splinter Danubian states and jeopardise opposition to NS expansionist *Lebensraumpolitik*.[26] While preferring a so-called "Neutralisation" of Austria

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[18] Jamie Andrew McGregor-Bulloch, "*The Promotion of an Austrian Identity 1918-1938*" (PhD thesis, University College London, United Kingdom, 2002), p. 131.
[19] Ibid; Mosser, Ingrid. "Der Legitimismus und die Frage der Habsburger-Restauration in der innenpolitischen Zielsetzung des autoritären Regimes in Österreich (1933–1938)." PhD thesis, University of Vienna, Austria, 1979, 201.
[20] AdR: Bundeskanzleramt/Inneres, 22/Gen, Karton 4945, report no. 347.500/GD, "Monarchistische Propagandatätigkeit während des Versammlungsverbotes," report June 2, 1936.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Unknown "Veto on Habsburgs" *Irish Times*. July 12, 1935, p. 5.
[23] Kamil Krofta, *Die Tschechoslowakei und die Kleine Entente in der heutigen europäischen Politik: Exposé des Außenministers …* (Prague: Orbis, 1937), p. 54; AdR: NPA, Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11 – Innere Lage 2/11, monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 443–447.
[24] Dörner and Dörner-Fazeny, *Theodor von Hornbostel: 1889–1973*, p.178.
[25] Höbelt, "Adel und Reichsidee in der Zwischenkriegszeit," p. 152.
[26] Beneš, *Das Problem Mitteleuropas und die Lösung der österreichischen Frage*, p. 52.

along the lines of Switzerland,[27] Benes was in fact open to preliminary discussions on federal solutions to Central European geopolitical situation with Hungary and Austria in 1933.[28] Such a schema could be workable so long as it did not lead to a reverse engineered Franz-Ferdinand style Trialism in which a Habsburg monarch would rule from Vienna, Budapest and Prague.[29] Nonetheless, Vienna's ambassador in Prague remained adamant in May 1933 that despite bellicose rhetoric, Czechoslovakia —under pressure from Paris and fear of Berlin— would not intervene militarily to prevent a localised conditional restoration of Habsburg dynasty in Vienna.[30]

Legitimist momentum from 1933 onward precipitated Czechoslovakian anxiety and even gullibility into falsely believing alleged "unquestionable and authenticated information" that Otto was in Vienna secretly conspiring with aristocratic Austrian Army top-leadership and also with the Hungarian head of government, Gömbös.[31] This observation of renewed monarchist energy was share by French ambassador Puaux, observing in September 1933 how the "restoration movement in Austria had recently been making 'frighteningly' strong progress." This led him to inquiry of Dollfuss as to whether the nascent *Ständestaat* cabinet was united on its Habsburg course or if rather it was merely a tool of rhetoric deployed to secure the support of a Legitimist minority.[32]

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[27] AdR: NPA, Karton 230, Liasse Österreich 5 – Diplomatische Vertretungen 7/III Deutschösterreichische auswärtige Politik – Instruktionen etc. 1918 – 1932, Ff. 3-12, January 21, 1932, Austrian embassy (Prague) entitled "Eine Erweiterung der mitteleuropäischen Annäherungsprojekte Dr. Benes' Der Plan einer Neutralisierung Oesterr."

[28] AdR: NPA, Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919 – 1933, Ff. 443-447, February 1, 1933, Bundes-Polizeidirektion (Vienna) entitled "Bemühungen des Gesandten a.D. Dr. Friedrich Wiesner für eine Annäherung der Tschechoslowakei-Ungarns und Österreichs."

[29] Dörner and Dörner-Fazeny, *Theodor von Hornbostel: 1889–1973*, p. 177.

[30] AdR: NPA, Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11 – Innere Lage 2/11, monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 463–469, May 18, 1933, report entitled "Ein Artikel des "Bravo Lidu" über Restaurationsbestrebungen in Oesterreich und in Ungarn" from Austrian embassy (Prague) to Engelbert Dollfuss (Ministry for foreign affairs, Vienna).

[31] AdR: NPA, Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919 – 1933, Ff. 490-496, December 21, 1933, report entitled "Nachrichten über eine angebliche Anwesenheit Otto von Habsburg in Oesterreich. Bericht aus Prag 10.XII.1933" from Austrian embassy (Prague) to Engelbert Dollfuss (Ministry for foreign affairs, Vienna).

[32] AdR: NPA, Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11 – Innere Lage — 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in Österreich 1919 – 1933, Ff. 479-480, September 30, 1933, Bundeskanzleramt "Amtserinnerung" report entitled "Französische Gesandter Puaux, Bedenken hinsichtlich angeblicher. Zunahme der monarchistischen Bewegung."

Schuschnigg, during his four-year chancellorship did indeed take the first initial practical steps in this direction by forwarding the right of return for Habsburg family members on July 12th, 1935, and later the restitution of previously confiscated Habsburg family property from April 29th.[33] In the first year of his chancellorship, Schuschnigg remarked of his international visits to Paris and London that his government was –to his "sincere satisfaction"– persistently "warmly received" and wherever he went, the "question of monarchism was at this time arousing the most lively interest."[34]

The question has repeatedly arisen for historians as to whether this embrace of Legitimism on the part of the more aristocratic orientated Schuschnigg was substantive and genuine, or alternatively superficial and placatory.[35] Until the end of the VF state – such as during a January 1938 New Year's Day interview with the *Daily Telegraph* – Schuschnigg reiterated that it was official government policy to restore the monarchy in Austria and all that prevented such a move was the current international geopolitical situation.[36] While Schuschnigg moved Habsburg restoration from a possible consideration which Austria had a right to choose for herself to a positive publicly declared objective, the all-important caveat of geopolitical circumstance can likewise sceptically be viewed as a reformulation of the traditional Horthy "inopportune timing" narrative so-often heard before. Nonetheless, while analogous to the Horthy position of 1921 via-a-vis Karl von Habsburg's return to exercise the function of King of Hungary, one should ascribe good faith to Schuschnigg's interaction with Otto. *Charge d'affaires* at the Vienna US Legation Alfred W. Klieforth would conclude in 1935 that restoration "can be regarded now as a last resort measure."[37] For Otto, a return to Austria, even if legally possible as a private citizen of the *Ständestaat*, was only prudent if he would return as monarch.[38] This position

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[33] Moos, *Habsburg Post Mortem*, p. 204.
[34] Schuschnigg, *Farewell Austria*, p. 228-29.
[35] Blair Ralph Holmes, "Austrian Monarchism, 1918-1938" (PhD thesis, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1972), p. 235; Pronay, "Legitimismus," p. 62.
[36] Ibid., p. 65.
[37] NARA: 860.01/130, April 4, 1935, report no. 376 entitled "The Present Status of the Hapsburg Question." From Alfred W. Klieforth, Legation of the United States of America, Vienna to Secretary of State, Washington D.C.
[38] McGregor-Bulloch, "*The Promotion of an Austrian Identity 1918-1938,*" p. 131; Ingrid Mosser, "Der Legitimismus und die Frage der Habsburger-Restauration in der innenpolitischen Zielsetzung des autoritären Regimes in Österreich (1933–1938)" (PhD thesis, University of Vienna, Austria, 1979), p. 186; AdR: Karton 184, Liasse Österreich 2/11, Innere Lage 2/11 monarchistische Bewegungen in

would be re-evaluated in February 1938, when in the lead up to Anschluss, Otto communicated personally to Schuschnigg his willingness to accept the position of chancellor to avert annexation.[39]

Österreich 1919–1933, Ff. 405, September 2, 1931, entitled "Versammlung der Kaisertreuen Volkspartei am 25. August 1931" from Polizeidirektion Wien to Johannes Schober (Federal Chancellor's Office, Vienna).

[39] McGregor-Bulloch, "*The Promotion of an Austrian Identity 1918-1938,*" p. 131.

Chapter 6 Divided Diaspora and Competing Advocacy in Exile (1938-1943).

Chapter six will address how this incremental reactionary programme ordered towards the restoration of the Habsburg dynasty was interrupted by the abrupt invasion of NS forces during the March 1938 Anschluss. Furthermore, in efforts to realign the newly captured re-named *Ostmark* with the greater Third Reich, a new German mission would emerge as the appropriation and corruption of the historical mission of Habsburg Austria. Occupying such a central position in the mind of National Socialists, "Otto of Austria" would —despite a motley myriad of opponents— direct a campaign in exile to achieve the liberation of his ancestral homeland and attempt to position himself as a unifying force in Central European post-war reconstruction.

Going from a position of institutional privilege in Austria to a target of National Socialist persecution –with effective communication to the dynasty severed– we see a parallel campaign of grassroots Legitimists navigating German military occupation and collaboration of their former fellow Austrians. These efforts would shape the Transatlantic perception of Austria as a guiltless victim of NS aggression, separate not only from German culpability but increasingly from even German nationality. Legitimists at home and in exile alike leaned into this differentiation of Austrian victimhood and underpinned their campaign on a spearhead of Habsburg exceptionalism. Key to success in this matter would be emphasising Habsburg restoration as an antidote to totalitarianism. Promoting the notion of a multilateral Social Monarchy along Commonwealth or Scandinavian constitutional model –in contrast to existing caricatures of Central European monarchy as an inherently autocratic institution– would be indispensable to the success of Legitimist aspirations. It will be argued that the bitter pre-Anschluss domestic divisions of Austrian public life would reverberate with consequence within the diaspora community and undermine coherent advocacy for this proposition of an inclusive Habsburg monarch above the political squabbles of the day.

6.1: *Gleichschaltung* in Ostmark

Frank McDonough points to how on 22nd July 1934 at the Wagnerian Bayreuth musical festival in Bavaria, Hitler, Goebbels, Theodor Habicht (head of the Austrian NS party), and Hermann Reschny (head of Austrian SA), held a meeting during the course of which it was "clear that a coup attempt to overthrow the Austria government was discussed and endorsed by Hitler" with Goebbels' personal notes pondering: "Austrian question. Will it work? I'm sceptical."[1] A mere three days later the Austrian chancellor would be martyred when NS paramilitary forces stormed Ballhausplatz and their brief coup attempted stalled when confronted with swift military reaction. Berlin would deny all responsibility but nonetheless, Dollfuss' passing from chancellor to legend opened the door to the more aristocratic —and pro-Habsburg— Schuschnigg. Nonetheless, the new Austrian chancellor and Legitimists allies could do nothing to prevent Anschluss in March 1938.

In the wake of the and rather spontaneous and surprisingly successful National Socialist annexation of Austria, the state security apparatus of the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) and Gestapo rapidly imposed a thorough *Gleichschaltung* of the newly acquired territory to conform it Greater-Germany. This thesis argues that the post-Anschluss re-alignment of Austria —renamed *Ostermark*— would constitute a de-Habsburgification of the traditional obstacle of Prussian hegemony. Soon after crossing the frontier, the Nazi authorities immediately began undoing the recent work of the VF starting with rounding up for detention any potential high-profile persons around which resistance could rally. Schuschnigg, the former Federal Chancellor was found not fleeing the country as others had, but was confined to house arrest —denied even the possibility of attending Easter

[1] Peter Longerich, *Goebbels: A Biography* (London: Random House, 2015), p. 268. Cited in Frank McDonough, *The Hitler Years: Triumph 1933-1939* (London: Head of Zeus, 2019), p. 118.

Mass— and subsequently deported to Germany, and then in 1945 sent to Dachau concentration camp.[2]

Legitimist aspirations suddenly seemed to have had been all in vain. Cardinal Innitzer on Sunday the 13th March instructed the faithful under his charge to offer prayers of thanksgiving for adverted fratricide.[3] A subsequent 18th March a pastoral letter signed by all the bishops of Austria was read from the pulpit during the flowing Sunday's Mass to millions of their countrymen.[4] Even the reliably pro-Habsburg Bishop Sigismund Waitz signed the declaration of his brothers in the Austrian episcopate in which they:

> "Declare with the deepest conviction, and of our own free will, that we recognize with joy that the National Socialist movement has achieved and is achieving […] We are convinced that the danger of an all-destroying and Godless Bolshevism was averted by the actions of the National socialist movement."[5]

In a preamble to the pastoral, Innitzer inserted his comment that "the thousand-year-long desire of our people for belonging to a great German empire is being fulfilled."[6] This revisionism vis-à-vis German history and polemic attitude toward the recent VF regime was the source of extreme consternation amongst anti-Nazi Catholics, not least amongst the Legitimist sub-set thereof.

For them Anschluss was nothing more than the triumph of Neo-Pagan and Protestant Berlin over Supernatural and Supernational —and therefore Catholic— Vienna. This sentiment was shared internationally with Fr. Denis Fahey in Ireland writing in stark contrast to the benediction of the Austrian episcopacy:

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[2] Kurt von Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, trans. Franz von Hildebrand (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), p. 63 & 271.
[3] Cardinal Innitzer, "Aufruf des Kardinals Innitzer an die Katholiken." *Linzer Volksblatt*. March 14, 1938, p. 4.
[4] The Archbishops and Bishops of Austria, "The Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops in Austria," *Kärntner Zeitung*. March 29, 1938, p. 3.
[5] NARA: 863.00/1699, April 4, 1938, report no. 63 entitled "Sundry Developments in the union of Austria with the Reich" from Hugh R. Wilson (Embassy of the US, Berlin) to Cordell Hull (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[6] The Archbishops and Bishops of Austria, "The Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops in Austria," *Kärntner Zeitung*. March 29, 1938, p. 3.

> "From the moment Catholics in Germany and Austria leave the Church after Mass there is danger of their finding society organised against the Kingship of Christ on the principle that the pure German race is God."[7]

As with Legitimists, Anschluss, for Fr. Fahey, meant that Prussia had "ousted Austria with its brilliant capital, Vienna, from the leadership of the German-speaking peoples."[8] Indeed, Habsburg Legitimists made much of the fact that NS propaganda would undermine even the name of the previous state, derogatively writing: "Austria, that term is used today identically with Habsburg."[9] In its place would be imposed the Germanic title "*Ostmark*." This however would be no outrage for men such as Bishop Alois Hudal, who had throughout the 1930s claimed to hold the flag of Christ the King and now proactively forwarding pro-Anschluss propaganda in Vienna and Rome. [10]

Hudal and Innitzer's superiors would have little patience for such endorsements. Once summoned to Rome to explain to the Vatican Secretary of State his reasoning behind the initial statement of the Austrian bishops endorsing the March Anschluss, Innitzer was admonished and persuaded to sign an April 6th, 1938, declaration lamenting its use in NS propaganda to compel the conscience of Catholics in Austria.[11] Concerning the controversy, Pacelli was eager to reassure the United States that "the Holy See will never be ready to give its approval to any agreement of any Bishop to any Governmental action which might be in contrast with the Divine Law and the freedom and the rights of the Church."[12] "Divine Law" here was not specified. No doubt, from the Vatican's perspective, an alliance between Habsburg throne and altar had previously coincided to produce a stable Christendom in Central Europe. Whereas in the case of Italian Fascism and German National Socialism, she was publicly resigned to make the most of the neo-Pagan regimes so long as they targeted Bolshevism and not Catholicism. Nonetheless,

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[7] Denis Fahey, *The Rulers of Russia: New and Enlarged Edition October 1938* (Dublin: Dublin Printing Services, 1938), p. 30.
[8] Ibid., p. 31.
[9] Helmut Sündermann, *Die Grenzen fallen. Von der Ostmark zum Sudetenland* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1939), p. 216, cited in Arthur Werner, *Otto von Habsburg: Weg, Weltbild und Werk* (Vienna: Selbstverlag Dr. Arthur Werner, 1958), p. 137.
[10] Alois Hudal, *Der Vatikan und die modernen Staaten* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1935), p. 68-70 & 79.
[11] NARA: 863.00/1744, April 1938 memorandum by the Vatican Secretary of State (Cardinal Pacelli) to the American Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy), *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1938, General, Volume I*, p. 474-5.
[12] Ibid.

Vatican Secretary of State, Pacelli, —writing to the US ambassador in London— invoked the narrative of the Vatican and US as pursuing a common aim "in their daily struggle against all sorts of political excesses from the Bolsheviks and the new pagans."[13]

For Political Catholicism on the European Continent the fall of Austria was a decisive blow. The fact that it occurred without fratricidal war but relative tranquillity —and even isolated notorious jubilation— was aggravating in the extreme. Making sense of such a development, the forces of Political Catholicism in partitioned Ireland —as transmitted through Fahey— declared:

> "As the annexation of Austria to Prussia meant the triumph of Naturalism over the Supernatural Life of the Mystical Body of Christ, it was allowed to take place without very much opposition."[14]

For many of those who flew the flag of *Quas Primas*, the illusive enemy of freemasonry had been responsible. Further bolstering their thesis was the contrasting international community's opposition to the end of Czech sovereignty, what they referred to as the "Masonic creation of Masaryk and Benes."[15] While Schuschnigg was a defeated man in 1938, —and depicted by the international contemporary press as such—[16] Otto, was far from despondent. The *Fall Otto* trap of Hitlerite Germany had been sprung and it had not been him who gave the provocation which the very name of the military operation invoked. While the acquiescence to Anschluss did result in the lost a favourable government in Austria, the would-be monarch nonetheless remained in exile and furthermore, Hitler's bold move bolstered his credentials in the West and domestically within Austrian anti-NS circles. Otto could forthwith argue that had he hypothetically had his request granted by Schuschnigg in taking over executive power in Austria, the little Alpine state would have successfully resisted annexation.

Hitler for his part, as the leader of a new Empire, foresaw his "Third *Reich*" surpassing that of the First *Reich* of the Habsburgs or the Second *Reich* of Bismarck and the Hohenzollerns, and therefore would have to now not only "purify" Vienna and Berlin

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[13] Ibid.
[14] Fahey, *The Rulers of Russia: New and Enlarged Edition October 1938*, p. 30.
[15] Ibid., p. 31.
[16] David Lowe, "Me Too," *Daily Mail*. March 1, 1938.

but embark on a new city project under his own name. Thus, not content with annexing Austria, he wanted to transform his new acquisition, detaching it from its historical context with a calculated campaign of centralising reforms and the re-writing of history. The Berlin *Reichskanzler*, made sketches for the transformation of Linz from a provincial German-speaking Austrian city to the economic and cultural capital of Germanic culture on the Danube, supplanting the cosmopolitan "metropolis" of Imperial Vienna.[17] Personal plans included to have his own museum mausoleum crypt and a series of imposing riverbank civic buildings to achieve —in the words of his confidant Albert Speer— "his ambition to transform Linz into a German Budapest."[18] Nonetheless, the cultural influence of the Catholic Church and conservative mindset of the population necessitated an incremental approach to re-shaping his native homeland to his National Socialist ideals.

The Catholic bishops of Austria had originally been bullied into ringing bells to welcome the arrival of Hitler but soon found themselves on the receiving end of the National Socialists state apparatus' ire. NS Germany did not want to be bound by the previously agreed upon mutual concessions between the Vatican and Austrian VF.[19] This refusal to honour the 5th July 1933 concordant was a source of immense concern for the Austria ecclesial hierarchy. They had seen how, in the wake of Berlin's violation of its own 20th July 1933 concordant with the Vatican, Pope Pius XI had published the 1937 papal encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* commending the Catholics of Germany "who have persisted in their Christian duty and in the defence of God's rights in the teeth of an aggressive paganism."[20]

Reliable bastions of conservative Catholic sentiment such as the Viennese *Reichpost* —under the close direction of NS Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda— overnight abandoned pro-Habsburg feature-pieces and began printing articles proclaiming how religion teachers in Austrian schools had approved motions in which they "joyfully declared their willingness to participate in the construction of the new

[17] Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs by Albert Speer* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), p. 99.
[18] Ibid.
[19] VAA: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1949-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Germania, Pos, 775, Chiesa e Stato in Austria (1940-1941), Ff. 44-58, April 27, 1940, letter about 6th April report on meeting with Signor Kerrl of foreign affairs in State of Church in Austria.
[20] Pius XI, *Mit brennender Sorge*, 1937.

Germany."[21] National Socialist anti-Habsburgism was a multi-front endeavour. Beyond re-education of youth, key to consolidating power was refuting the one thing which, despite revolution and upheavals, remained the dynasty's most valuable asset, her legacy. This would be done by the careful cultivation of a Nazi historiography. After war broke out, this ineffable and intangible asset –of both the distant and recent historical legacy of the Habsburg dynasty– was the cultural currency in which Otto placed his hope and NS authorities sought with greater urgency to discredit.[22]

Undoing the growing cult of devotion towards Karl was a NS priority. A 1941 article series on the "Habsburg's Treason" and "Habsburg's Fight for the Lost Empire" by Artur Günther made their way into print as supplemental special edition publications of the NS *Volksblatt*. Günther concluded from his ideologically motivated post-Anschluss archival research into Otto's father: "Emperor Karl appears as the weak-willed, pliable tool of Zita, that woman with the burning ambition to move heaven and hell to secure a throne for her husband again."[23] Thus, the old Prussian Ludendorff narrative of an influenceable political neophyte as was nothing more than the French "puppet of his wife"[24] was once more resurrected. With undisputed NS military hegemony on the European continent in May 1941 Günther could write with self-confidence: "Night has finally fallen on [the name] Habsburg."[25] Nonetheless, such certainly did not mean however that Otto would not remain a phantom spectre for National Socialism in its few remaining years.

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[21] Unknown, "Die kath. Religionsprofessoren für das neue Deutschland," *Reichspost*. March 16, 1938, p. 7.
[22] Artur Günther, *Habsburgs Kampf um das verlorene Reich: Der Oster- und der Oktoberputsch im Jahre 1921; Teil 2* (Vienna: Deutsches Volksblatt, 1941), p. 1.
[23] Ibid., p. 1.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Artur Günther, *Habsburgs Kampf um das verlorene Reich: Der Oster- und der Oktoberputsch im Jahre 1921; Teil 2* (Vienna: Deutsches Volksblatt, 1941), p. 1.

6.2: Rallying point of Resistance

David F. Schmitz recounts the distinction between UK and US approaches to peace in the late 1930s, Chamberlain addressing territorial grievances in a case-by-case fashion and FDR supporting his Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles in proposing a pan-European conference. American planners hoped to tackle what they saw as the root of discontent, the question of resources and commerce which if resolved would naturally lead to disarmament. Schmitz points to the unilateral annexation of Austria as the definitive death of the Welles plan.[1] While NS authorities were able to take over Austrian embassies and consulates either side of Atlantic, it became increasingly apparent that the Anglosphere and Berlin were on the path towards eventual war and that Austrians – particularly the Legitimists– would be at the forefront of resistance behind enemy lines.

Christopher Brennan notes how to prevent capture by the Gestapo, the membership list of the pro-Habsburg *Kaiser-Karl-Gebetsliga* —numbering an estimated at twenty-five thousand in Austria and beyond— were pre-emptively destroyed.[2] Viennese professor, former VF-official, arch-Legitimist and editor of the *Gebetsliga* yearbook, Hans Karl von Zeßner-Spitzenberg, was marked for capture and liquidation before the Wehrmacht even crossed the Austrian frontier. He was murdered by tortured at Dachau, dying August 1st, 1938.[3] Along with the loss of Schuschnigg, the local Legitimist movement found itself severely de-capitated. The rapid repression of Legitimism in Austria correspondingly resulted in both a rise in the importance of Otto abroad and grassroots de-centralised popular —and increasingly religious—Legitimism domestically. With traditional lines of communication between Habsburg supporters and agents severed and their political

[1] David F. Schmitz, *The Sailor: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Transformation of American Foreign Policy* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2021), p. 81-83.
[2] Maria Habacher, *Geschichte der Gebetsliga 1895–1995* (Vienna: Selbstverlag der Gebetsliga, 1995), p. 27 & 32. Cited in Christopher Brennan, "Sinner, Saint—or Cipher?: The Austrian Republic and the Death of Emperor Karl I," in *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, ed. Paul Miller and Claire Morelon, 1st ed. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019), p. 246.
[3] Elisabeth Boeckl-Klamper et al., *The Vienna Gestapo, 1938-1945: Crimes, Perpetrators, Victims*, vol. 33, 1st ed. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2022), p. 232.

influence eliminated, isolated pockets of Legitimists were left to fend for themselves, organising into networks of resistance. Like elsewhere in Europe, this resistance ranged in its expression from the audacious to the rather subtle or mundane.

Once war came to the European continent in September 1939, it became a key objective of the Nazi security apparatus to prevent these disparate groups from unifying and intensifying their resistance.[4] Hitler, wary of the risk of alienating recently incorporated Austrian-Germans, from 1939 forbade the persecution of Austrian "separatists." Only when the risk of arousing popular dissent in Austria was seen as outweighed by an immediate state of necessity, was this order of protection rescinded in late 1943 and a backlog of interned resistance figures executed.[5]

With regards to anti-Nazi resistance in occupied Austria, Catholic traditionalism and Habsburg Monarchism went hand-in-hand and were viewed as the primary existential internal threat to National Socialism in Austria. At this time of the Summer of 1941, the Division of European Affairs of a still isolationist USA transmitted a confidential "Report from Austria" to the State Department which contained rays of hopes for Austrian resistance, and specifically the Habsburg cause:

> "The peasants, most of whom are monarchists, are extremely well organised and rather active […] One could see inscriptions on the walls in the outskirts of Vienna 'we want the Emperor, away with Hitler'." [6]

The optimistic report goes on to detail the considerable regional differences within Austria, explaining how and by whom resistance was being carried out. East-Tyrol was noted as being "100% monarchist" to the extent that "German soldiers, SS and SA have orders even during the day, to walk never less than two together, because of snipers." In Tyrol, US intel relayed information of the rural peasantry being "extremely anti-Nazi and still organised in their *Schuetzengruppen*" and so brazed to openly defy the NS occupation

[4] Ibid., p. 233.
[5] Ibid., p. 367.
[6] NARA: Box 5632, Ff. 863.00/1812, Confidential Report, "Report from Austria," stamped "Division of European Affairs," July 18, 1941.

that on "November 20th, Otto of Austria's birthday, fires were started in the mountains all over the country and black and yellow flags were flying on many churches."[7]

Reports back to Washington paint a scene of how "leading Austrians are well informed about the Austrian emigration in England and the United States" and therefore "[f]requently people have been heard to say, that Otto of Austria is the only man who can speak for Austria as he stands above all political parties."[8] The narrative of Otto as a man of the people was thus in the minds of some US officials favourably juxtaposed with niche politicised intellectuals who garnered no comparable mass support. The drafters of this report recount the domestic perception of rival SPÖ émigrés stating "[t]here is no confidence in those leaders who left Austria in 1934.[9] They call them leaders without followers." Further giving the impression of an Austria on the brink of anti-Nazi rebellion; of the army, the report concludes that the "higher ranks of officers with few exceptions are still loyal to the old imperial tradition and therefore fundamentally anti-Nazi." This optimism extended to the point of claiming that the remaining war-weary lower ranks of the "army could be won by propaganda."[10]

Alarmed at the attention Otto —at this point sentenced to death in absentia for high treason against the Third Reich— was gaining in America, National Socialist authorities in Austria relied on old anti-Habsburg motifs previously popular with the class-conscious proletariat. In continuity with SPÖ and KPÖ republican propaganda of the inter-war period, the application of the title "Mr. Habsburg" would be a common pejorative deployed in the rhetoric of the NS occupying regime both in Austria and across the *Volksdeutsch* communities of East-Central Europe.[11] In April 1940 the NS press reported the announcement of US officials that Otto would "address the Foreign Policy Committee of the American House of Representatives and deliver a speech on the foreign policy situation in Europe."[12] Challenging the credentials of Otto to represent Central Europe to the New World, they wrote:

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[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Unknown, "Nichts gelernt und nicht vergessen," *Banater Deutsche Zeitung*. April 5, 1940, p. 1-2.
[12] Ibid.

> "His ancestors only considered peoples as a means to increase and maintain their power, Otto wants to bring the world into motion as a means of struggle to win back the lost throne of his fathers."[13]

NS propaganda sought to highlight the contradiction between American Republicanism and their support of Otto by appealing to an image of Yankee vanity in which "many of the super-rich Americans marry off their daughters to bankrupt European princes and counts" to add social prestige to their immense wealth.[14] Thus it was declared that Otto's activism was purely self-interested, directed towards achieving America's entry in the war so that "Germany would be to be destroyed and dismembered [and] Austria to be reinstated and he [Otto] being placed on the constrained throne."[15]

National Socialist propaganda was naturally also quick to highlight the isolated support Otto received from Central European Jews. Such collaboration was alleged to confirm theories of a global anti-German conspiracy. Many Jews who identified as Legitimists did indeed feature prominently in anti-Nazi resistance in the post-Anschluss era. One such example was Robert Feix —who had been financially supporting Otto's exile in Belgium— the primary owner of the seized Hotel Metropole in Vienna which, after Anschluss, was to serve as the new regional Gestapo HQ.[16] A business partner of Feix —and fellow Legitimist—Karl Freidiger approached Karl Burian's pro-Habsburg resistance cell with the floorplan of the building and a plot was soon developed to plant explosives therein. Burian was arrested on October 13th 1938, sentenced to death in 1943 and executed in 1944.

[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Boeckl-Klamper et al., *The Vienna Gestapo, 1938-1945*, p. 50.

6.3: London Diaspora

Unlike some backbench Tory MPs –unaware and often uninterested in the complex dynamics of Central Europe, who in the parliamentary debates of 1938 had mistakenly made reference to a "Czechoslovenia,"–[1] there were government anti-appeasement politicians who had actively sought to oppose the Anschluss. In their eyes, these supposed war hawks saw themselves vindicated as the menace of Hitlerite expansionism had boiled over into a large-scale European war. One such figure was Winston Churchill, but also his backbench Tory MP son-in-law, who —along with other MPs including Harold Nicolson— went to the aristocratic Austrian ambassador Frankenstein to express their jubilation at Schuschnigg taking a hard-line stance on Nazi interference in Austria by calling for the March plebiscite which would later prompt invasion.[2] The English-language Austrian Legitimist press therefore proclaimed Churchill vindicated for having "repeatedly warned Dr. Benes against preferring Hitler in Vienna to the return of the Habsburgs there."[3]

London was historically a nodule point of print publishing and diaspora exile movements. Throughout the interwar period, and especially in the wake of the Anschluss, a series of publications were produced on the plight of Austria from an English translation of memoirs from prominent European statemen such as former Chancellor Schuschnigg (1938),[4] Count Stephan Burián (1925),[5] Georg von Franckenstein (1939).[6] Franckenstein's 1939 *Facts and Features of My Life: Austrian Minister to the Court of St. James, 1920-1938* stands out amongst these titles for bridging the gap of ignorance between Central Europe and the Anglo-sphere. It provides insights into exactly how the image of Austria was promoted and perceived in England and beyond from the days of pre-war Imperial

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[1] Peter Neville, *The British Attempt to Prevent the Second World War: The Age of Anxiety* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), p. 90.
[2] Ibid., p. 88.
[3] Franz Klein, "Churchill's Triumph," *The Voice of Austria*. August 1941, p. 2-3.
[4] Kurt von Schuschnigg, *Farewell Austria.* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1938).
[5] Stephan, Count Burián, *Austria in Dissolution: Being the Personal Recollections of Stephan, Count Burián*, trans. Brian Lunn (London: Ernst Benn Ltd., 1925).
[6] Georg von Franckenstein, *Facts and Features of My Life: Austrian Minister to the Court of St. James, 1920-1938* (London: Cassell, 1939).

splendour to post-war plight and then foreign occupation. Franckenstein sought to popularise the theory that in the power vacuum of the new Wilsonian order, with the death of traditional monarchical authority, Europe was ripe for the rise of dictatorship and racialised national politics.

Catholic and conservative writers in England at this time embarked upon a campaign of apologetics in defence of the Monarchy in general and the Habsburg dynasty specifically. One such 1938 work by Hilaire Belloc entitled *Monarchy: A Study of Louis XIV* argued that in the wake of the fall of eagles, Catholic reactionary thought could juxtapose "the empty word 'democracy'" with substantive Catholic monarchy, going so far as to conflate republicanism with anarchism.[7] Belloc noted the rise of European strong men and even saw the US presidency with its creeping executive overreach as an "Elective Monarchy." He concluded these trends to be manifestations of how in 1938 "the world is hungry for Monarchy."[8] For a Catholic former-parliamentarian like him —writing in 1938— the "Monarch incarnates the common man, in his multitude, as well as the whole society over which he himself presides."[9]

In this time period English and American Catholic intellectuals such as Christopher Dawson idealised Catholic Central European Civilisation as an anecdote to a transactional, cold, unnatural, bourgeois society of Holland, England, Scotland and North America.[10] Even if in England there was an commonly accepted Old-World appreciation for hierarchy, nominal monarchical constitutional structures, this vision of dynastic role in public life fell significantly short of Habsburg supranational and supernatural ambition. Nonetheless, another example of the Legitimist press showing no hesitation in capitalising on sympathetic remarks from notable English Catholics to attribute this supposed decline of civilisational spirit to Wilsonian modernity, was the 1941 republishing of 1936 excerpts of G.K. Chesterton:

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[7] Hilaire Belloc, *Monarchy: A Study of Louis XIV* (London: Cassell and Company, 1938), p. 3.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., p. 4.
[10] Christopher Dawson, *The Dynamics of World History* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), p. 202 & 207.

> "Men like President Wilson were brought up in a rather priggish culture, which taught them, among other things, that Kings are rather wicked; but that Emperors are even more wicked than Kings."[11]

Across the British Empire —before America had entered the war— there was much speculation on what the new Europe would look like after the guns on the continent fell silent. Veit Valentin writing in the Ottawa-published *The Voice of Austria* —comparing Hitler to a modern-day Napoleon, both in opposition to the Habsburg *Reichsidee*— foresaw:

> "Constitutional monarchy has a chance in the Europe to come. In the 19th century the princes were rather bourgeois. In this century they would have to be the first social workers of a modern community."[12]

The same publication two months later reprinted an expert of G. K. Chesterton's 1922 *What I saw in America* as an article *Kings and Presidents* in which the editors sought to highlight Chesterton's view that: "The American Republic is the last medieval monarchy" and that the great presidents of American history "have acted as democratic despots, but emphatically not as constitutional monarchs."[13]

Chesterton's interwar assertation that one "may truly say that the King presides and the President reigns" [14] is certainly rooted in the Transatlantic divide within the Anglosphere. It appeals to the notion of an American Executive enacting political policy and a British Monarch inviting a Prime Minister to form a government in his name, all the time himself observing the strictest neutrality in the political arena. The question then arouse as to which role would Otto propose he fulfil? Despite their efforts, Legitimists in the 1940s could not point to Karl as a monarch comparably passive in the affairs of state. To them Karl was both a figure rising above the mundane political strife of the *Reichsrat* and simultaneously the architect of domestic constitutional reform efforts, taking personal command of military planning, and was the protagonist in seeking an honourable peace to the war. To this, one can conclude that for the Legitimist movement there was an effort to eat their cake and have it too.

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[11] G.K. Chesterton, "The Blunders of 1919," *The Voice of Austria*. December, 1941, p. 4 & 6.
[12] Veit Valentin, "Are Republics more Peaceful?" *The Voice of Austria*. May, 1942, p. 6.
[13] G. K. Chesterton, "Kings and Presidents," *The Voice of Austria*. July, 1942, p. 4-5.
[14] Ibid.

Nonetheless, within this trend, in the period immediately subsequent to the Anschluss, one can also see a rehabilitation of Karl in the historical memory of the secular Anglosphere imagination. This efforted hinged upon making the argument that recent generations of Habsburg leaders had evolved beyond the supposed repressive and doctrinaire tendencies of their ancestors. German-born US author Bertita Harding in 1940 wrote of Karl as:

> "[T]he first Habsburg who could not be called an embodiment of autocracy […] he would have made an admirable president in some admirable republic. He was possessed of the essential qualification for democracy —distrust of leadership."[15]

Recent events had also reflected poorly on the Little Entente and served indirectly to de-legitimise the 1918 revolutions. The *raison d'être* of the successor states was called into question. Fragmented quasi-national states were found to fragile in the face of regional power struggles. Thanks to the careful cataloguing of recent events by English historians such as Robert Machray, by 1938, with the destruction of Austrian and Czechoslovakian sovereignty —soon to followed by the Axis alignment of Romania and Hungary— the deficiencies of the French logic of containment and the regional "better Hitler than Habsburg" mantra were laid bare before a wide readership in the United Kingdom.[16]

Ernst Rudiger Starhemberg —having fled Austria to serve as a fighter pilot in the Free French air force— would recount of his meetings with fellow exiled Czechoslovakian elite. The previously bold neo-Hussites would retrospectively distance themselves from the polemic political maxim "better Hitler than Habsburg" and claim to have stood for a position of "neither Hitler nor Habsburg."[17] Chesterton looking back to the ruins of 1918 from the perspective flames of 1940 lamented:

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[15] Bertita Harding, *Imperial Twilight: The Story of Karl and Zita of Hungary* (London: George G. Harrap & Company LDT., 1940), p. 154.

[16] Robert Machray, *The Struggle for the Danube: And the Little Entente, 1929-1938* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1938) p. 55-6; Lothar Höbelt, "Adel und Reichsidee in der Zwischenkriegszeit," in *Integration und Desintegration in Mitteleuropa: Pläne und Realität*, ed. Marcella Rossová (Munich: Meidenbauer, 2009), p. 152; NARA: 762.63/507, February 25, 1938, report no. 149 entitled: "Austrian-German relations; Rumanian Affairs; and the General European Situation" from Arthur Bliss Lane (US Legation, Belgrade) to Cordell Hull (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

[17] Ernst Rudiger Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rudiger Prince Starhemberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), p. 208.

> "We ought to have weakened Prussia and if anything strengthened Austria. We did in fact weaken Austria and relatively strengthen Prussia. And at this moment every man in his five wits is wishing we had done the opposite."[18]

The editors of pro-Habsburg émigré *The Voice of Austria* were keen to rely upon again on Chesterton, using his Burkean concept of the "democracy of the dead" to propose "the institution of monarchy" as "natural" and above the petty ambition of politicians.[19] A distinctly British or Scandinavian model of Monarchy was increasingly adopted as the Legitimist movement's outward aspiration, an aspiration conveniently aligned with the expectations of their anti-Nazi western allies. However, at the same time, there seems to be a serious awareness amongst Legitimists that —in their words— some within the movement "too often advocate monarchy in such a way as to suggest that it could be a romantic substitute for changes demanded by social realities."[20]

Within the Austrian émigré press there existed a great deal of polemics conducted in the German language that point to a clear internal schism. Both pro-and anti-Habsburg factions bemoaned how parallel efforts were hindering the Austrian cause, but neither were willing to cede the monopoly to the other. Canada at this time —integrated into the Commonwealth war effort— can be seen as a bridging point between the UK and US. Otto made a visit there in the Spring of 1940[21] and American intelligence kept track of the editor of *Voice of Austria*, Franz Klein, who divided his time between there and the US.[22] Otto would speak to the Canadian Institute of International Affairs in Alberta on September 24th, 1941, in which he drew a comparison of a multilingual Anglo-French Canada as analogous to a North American Austria-Hungary. Exalting how "every Canadian, whatever his mother-tongue, is first of all a Canadian," Otto concluded: "This is the spirit which we Danubians must acquire."[23] A further point of praise which Otto sought to highlight was the voluntary structure of association within the British

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[18] G.K. Chesterton, *The End of the Armistice* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1940), p. 41-42
[19] Unknown, "Expel Your King…" *The Voice of Austria*. August, 1942, p. 9.
[20] Ibid.
[21] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 279-280, April 16, 1940, report entitled: "Ottawa – Delegati Apostolico: visita di ottone d'Asburgo in Canada (1940)."
[22] CIA: Otto von Hapsburg, Kronika; Case Number: F-2011-00131, March 17, 1944. Accessed February 11, 2023: https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/0005642369.
[23] Otto von Habsburg, "The Old World and The New," *The Voice of Austria*. October 1941, p. 2-4.

Commonwealth. The 1931 Statute of Westminster –promoting "not the idea of equality within a state but in the family of nations"– was expressly pointed to as a model for Central Europe to follow.[24] Contra to previous statements of some Legitimists in Austria, beyond multilingual supranational free association of peoples, Otto emphasised the need for a rejuvenated and empowered League of Nations to resolve the disputes between states.

Taking note of Czechoslovakian success in the First World War, Otto set about concentrating his efforts on incorporating Austrian units into the American army destined to liberate Central Europe. Nonetheless, as Florian Traussnig would argue, his "Austrian Battalion" would soon become the exclusive preserve "mainly conservative, Catholic and monarchist exiles."[25] With the American entry to the war, the German-language Toronto-based Austrian émigré *Donau-Echo* proclaimed in 1942:

> "Austrians, the homeland calls! Under the Austrian flag, under our own colours of red-white-red, we are telling the enemy in a language he understands that the word of an Adolf Hitler could not make our eternal Austria die from one day to the next; that Austria lives, that Austrians are alive and bring him this message with the weapon in hand within the Austrian battalion of the American army"[26]

We can see imbedded in the émigré anti-Nazi movement the rhetoric of Legitimists pointing to an eternal Austria invoking the "A.E.I.O.U." motif and channelling the war effort towards Otto's direction. Nonetheless, the newspaper deflected from polemics and framed their advocacy of Otto's battalion as "not directed [exclusively] at monarchists, communists, Christian Socialists or Social Democrats, but directed at the Austrian, at every Austrian who is capable of bearing arms."[27]

The newspaper likewise published declarations of the New York and D.C.-based "Military Committee for the Liberation of Austria" signed off by committee members including "Otto of Austria," Walter von Schuschnigg,[28] and Guido Zernatto[29] which

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Florian Traussnig, *Militärischer Widerstand von außen: Österreicher in US-Armee und Kriegsgeheimdienst im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2016), p. 57.
[26] Unknown, "Es ruft die Heimat," *Donau-Echo (Toronto)*. December 1, 1942, p. 1.
[27] Ibid.
[28] VF diplomat and brother to former VF chancellor.
[29] Former VF federal minister.

promoted the integration of Austria as a member of the United Nations in the struggle for "democratic rights."[30] Interestingly –indicative of the bitter overlap of republican and Legitimist undercurrents within the anti-Nazi emigre movement– on the very same page of the above article, one could read the declarations of the Austrian Labour Committee. Therein they emphasised their claim to represent the majority of exiled Austrians and have the support of their sister organisation in London, denouncing Otto's activism as the "reactionary intrigues of a small monarchist clique."[31]

The London-based *Free Austrian Movement* met in 1942 with Czechoslovak Foreign Secretary in exile, Hubert Ripka. Their discussion displays an emphasis on mutual solidarity in a common struggle for liberation. However, within this common aim, a Habsburg restoration in Austria would only ever be acceptable to Prague as a local phenomenon and would —in Ripka's view— while being respected, nonetheless, constitute a permeant barrier to further supranational collaboration.[32] To appeal to Prague, any Supranationalism would have to have Socialism –or at least secular republicanism– at its foundation. Months later, in December 1942, the *Donau-Echo* —presenting itself as "The Independent Austrian Newspaper"— ran an article covering her New York-based Socialist rival's —*Austrian Labour Committee*— commemorative declaration for the anniversary of the November 1918 revolution. The workers movement in exile reaffirming their belief in the Austromarxist rallying cry; "Neither Hitler nor Habsburg!" and warned their fellow-Austria emigres:

> "Not the return of a medieval dynasty, ruling with medieval methods, but only a forward-looking revolution against Hitler, imbued with social ideals, can guarantee peace in Europe in the future."[33]

These transnational socialists wanted to internationalise the Habsburg question and co-opt fellow Central European socialists to their cause to present a united front to the US authorities.

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[30] Unknown, "Aufruf des Militärkomitees," *Donau-Echo (Toronto)*. December 1, 1942, 2.
[31] Unknown, "Die Militärdienstpflicht: Eine Erklärung des Austrian Labor Committee's," *Donau-Echo (Toronto).* December 1, 1942, p. 2.
[32] Unknown, "Mr. Ripka on Czechoslovak-Austrian Relations," *Austrian News*. April 1942, p. 2.
[33] Unknown, "Ein Resolution des Austrian Labour Committees," *Donau-Echo* (Toronto). December 1, 1942, p. 4.

Such talk of Legitimists wanting to uphold a dead "medieval dynasty" was compounded by Vatican support for Legitimists in exile. The apostolic delegate from the Holy See to the United Kingdom hosted Otto's brother, Archduke Robert von Habsburg, as a regular guest at his 54, Parkside, London, Apostolic Nunciature. From there he had the direct ear of the Vatican Secretary of State with his assessments on the international geopolitical and domestic Austrian situation forwarded directly to Cardinal Luigi Maglione's desk with the endorsement of senior officials in the UK episcopate.[34] Robert from London was keen to provide the Vatican with context on the uphill struggle of the émigré Austrian Legitimist movement attributing their setbacks to demographic factors within the Austrian refugee community. For the Habsburg archduke the problem was clear, in his reckoning, of the 16,000 Austrians residing in England, 95% were Jewish, the vast majority being practicing Jews or secular Atheists and thus "are by no means a cross-section of the Austrian population" and cannot genuinely speak on her behalf.[35]

A united Austrian diaspora front incorporating those on the Catholic Right who were willing to compromise on the Habsburg Question was the worst nightmare of the Legitimist movement. For the junior Habsburg Archduke, the *Free Austrian Movemen*t was "controlled by the communists and working in close collaboration with the Czech Government in exile." Meanwhile the *Austrian Representative Committee* was said to be controlled by "Revolutionary Socialists, the people who in Austria were called the Austro-Marxisten [sic] and fostered the *Kulturkampf*." For him, these groups were united as coalition of "pan-Germans and naturally anti-Catholic and anti-monarchist." Reassuring the Vatican of the strength of the Legitimist cause, he asserted that anti-Habsburg forces: " [have] been able to secure the collaboration of a few men whom they call conservatives, but who are really liberal Freemasons, so as to pretend that they have united all Austrian political parties."[36] Concerning within Austria, Robert informs the Vatican that resistance

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[34] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 257, January 13, 1944, letter no. 61/44 from Guglielmo [William] Godfrey (London Apostolic Delegation) to Cardinal Luigi Maglione (Vatican Secretary of State.)

[35] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 258-262, January 1944 report entitled "Austria" from Robert von Habsburg (London) to Cardinal Luigi Maglione (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[36] Ibid.

was to be found in Catholic rural settings with parish priests and women providing the backbone of the anti-Nazi efforts on the Homefront. Nonetheless, he laments what sees as the comparably less effective and smaller workers movement as getting a disproportionate amount of attention in the international press, noting in England how the "BBC in London is their main mouthpiece."[37] This narrative was appealing to Vatican, consoling them that despite short-term difficulties, there was a reasonable hope to be placed in post-Liberation Austria based on the principles of the Kingship of Christ.

[37] Ibid.

6.4: Otto's North American campaign.

Before Soviet or American entry into the war, when the United Kingdom and her commonwealth daughter-dominions stood alone against the Axis powers, the Austrian Legitimist movement lamented Westminster's conflation of Austrians as German citizens (and therefore aliens of a hostile power), They accordingly placed more hope in potential American idealism than British pragmatism describing Washington as:

> "[A] free agent in Central European affairs and as such is able to avoid the mistakes which can lead directly to a repetition of the blunders of 1919."[1]

Both Vienna and Prague had fallen to NS occupation before the outbreak of war, March 1938 and March 1939 respectively. With UK commitments to Czechoslovakian and Yugoslavian governments in exile, Austrians —particularly those on the Right claiming continuity with the VF *Staändestaat*— made an equal claim to recognition. For an America rapidly rising from the arsenal of democracy to a place of global military superpower, the domestic perception of international movements would go a long way in shaping policy decisions on how to restructure a liberated post-Axis Europe.

During the war Otto led a parallel activism in his US exile, for the most part addressing Austrian and Hungarian diaspora audiences separately. There was even renewed interest in the life of the last Emperor, Karl, with Bertita Harding's 1939 historical fiction novel *Imperial Twilight: The Story of Karl and Zita* of Hungary published in New York and reprinted in 1941. Such works, however, did not glorify the House of Habsburg but rather used a romantic Ruritanian setting to paint the caricature of a dutiful and rational Horthy speaking reason to an intransient Karl guided by the instruction of Zita.[2] The National Socialist-controlled press, particularly in Austria, carefully followed Otto's movements. In May 1940 they reported how the Archduke had returned to Europe from an "information trip" to North America. Having met with president Roosevelt and the American ambassador to Paris, Otto hosted a press conference in Paris but would —or

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[1] Franz Klein, "American Deviations," *The Voice of Austria*. March 1943, p. 2-3.
[2] Bertita Harding, *Imperial Twilight: The Story of Karl and Zita of Hungary* (London: George G. Harrap & Company LDT., 1940), p. 186.

could— not give any meaningful insight to American policy vis-à-vis the European continent and the Habsburg question beyond the general platitudes of standing for the strategically ambiguous aims of democracy and freedom.[3] A mere four days after this report of Otto's public Paris appearances, the *Wehrmacht* would commence a Blitzkrieg invasion of France through the Low Countries and Otto would have to leave for Spain, then Portugal, and finally America.

By 1942 his NS opponents in Austria sought to undermine his officially endorsed integration into the Western war effort asserting that an open-tent "US policy is by no means very choosy when it comes to selecting the personalities who are to do its political business."[4] This narrative of Otto as a tool to be encouraged now and possibility discarded later was indeed a source for concern for the Legitimist movement. In relation to the shock which Otto's warm reception at the White House and integration into the Allied war effort caused in Budapest, Tibor Frank argues that "relatively many Hungarians were legitimists — that is they favored a Habsburg king — but few in government circles." [5] Even if styling himself as "Otto of Austria," the exiled Archduke saw the Second World War as in fact a multitude of different wars, each with its own moral character. For him there was a war on the German Eastern front, another war on the German Western front and a distant almost unrelated war against Japan in the Pacific. For Legitimists, Hungary was not fighting for National Socialism, but rather against Communism. For them, Trianon was acknowledged as an injustice against the Magyar people, and now, to their misfortune, Horthy, a traitorous usurper, had delivered *Otto's* people into the hands of the neo-Pagan Hitler.

The would-be King's approach to the Magyar population is most clearly seen in his March 1944 Toledo, Ohio speech. As observed by the FBI, the exiled Archduke advocated for a fundamental distinction between Magyar people and the Budapest government in the consideration of the international community, and subsequently made an active self-aware effort to portray himself as the apolitical true leader of the Hungarian

[3] Unknown, "Ottos „Studienreise" beendet," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*. May 6, 1940, p. 3.
[4] Unknown, "Briten wegen Otto gekränkt," *Salzburger Zeitung*. December 21, 1942, p. 2.
[5] Tibor Frank, *Discussing Hitler: Advisers of U.S. Diplomacy in Central Europe, 1934-41* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003), p. 30.

people. This attempt at "exonerating the Hungarian people" was pursued also by means of drawing a distinction between Hungary and other Axis powers.[6] Otto wished for Hungary to be seen as a marginalised victim of circumstance —not unlike Finland— pushed into the hands of neo-Pagan Germany, but ultimately fighting a war against communism rather than against democracy. Meanwhile, seeing Otto's advances in the Allied camp and with the war intensifying in the East against the Soviet Union, the Magyar nationalist faction across the Atlantic pushed for a definitive resolution to the Royal Question. Miklós Horthy's firstborn son Stephan—a pilot in the Hungarian air force—was considered an ideal candidate for the establishment of a Horthy dynasty. These plans would be crushed with Stephan Horthy's death on the Eastern Front in September 1942.[7]

Proving how Otto had made the most of his previous Belgian exile, US intelligence highlighted former Hungarian Minister to Belgium Etienne de Hedrey as the heir-pretenders "aide-de-camp."[8] A network of potential allies was carefully fostered over the 1930s and now could be activated. In North America, Otto was at the disadvantage in that —according to the OSS— while he had "succeeded in winning some financial help from Hungarian-Americans," of the over 500,000 ethnic Hungarians in the US, "the number who have achieved wealth and influence is small."[9] Nonetheless, some "Hungarian magnates" provided material support to Otto, in his Belgian exile and US authorities theorised that even in the midst of war on the European continent, this support somehow continued uninterrupted.[10] While the OSS realised that most Hungarians on the Right had a deep-seated affinity for the authority inherent in the Monarchical system, nonetheless, their nationalism led them to support the native-born Magyar Horthy.[11]

In the Western camp, there was a realisation that this new World War was of a different moral order than that of 1914-18. Habsburg rule of the early twentieth century

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[6] CIA: Otto von Hapsburg, Kronika; Case Number: F-2011-00131, Publication Date: March 17, 1944. Accessed 17 February 2023: https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/0005642369.
[7] Unknown, "Stephan von Horthy an der Ostfront gefallen," *Wiener Illustrierte*. September 9, 1942, p. 2.
[8] CIA: Otto von Hapsburg, Kronika; Case Number: F-2011-00131, Publication Date: March 17, 1944. Accessed February 17, 2023: https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/0005642369.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

was compared favourably to the new NS spectre which was now casting an ever-wider shadow over the European continent. US authorities were well appraised of Central European émigré publications on American soil such as *Liberation* and *Voice of Austria*.[12] Legitimists were keen to monopolise Austrian resistance in North America but were highly hesitant to openly advertise their organisations as explicitly pro-Habsburg in nature. The OSS notes how Fred Charles Glatzer, described as an "Austrian Jewish refugee engaged in the import-export business" had been chosen to serve as the public legal face of pro-Legitimist émigré press and later "grew anxious to disassociate himself from the project" once he learnt of its true Monarchists agenda.[13] Nonetheless, some in the OSS favourably concluded in 1944 that the unrivalled weight with Austrian diaspora "was motivated in part by traditional allegiance, but more cogently by a conviction that a Habsburg solution would be best for Austria."[14]

Four years prior, Otto was portrayed by the NS press in his Austrian homeland as a puppet engaged in a "wilful plan for the dismemberment of Europe" which was "not the pipe dream of an impotent pretender to the throne, but the official programme of the Western powers."[15] The NS narrative transmitted to Austrians was that of Otto as "a gangster among the other gangsters […] going native among American Jews," embarking upon grand "lecture tours about how he imagines the 'South German Empire' promised him by the British after an Allied victory."[16] A cornerstone of this propaganda narrative was the ridiculing of Americans as ignorant and thus susceptible to the grandiose schemes of Otto:

> "The average American has no idea about Europe in general and because one could read in American newspapers […] time again and again that Budapest is located in Germany and Prague is the capital of Saxony and etc.."[17]

Even within America, Left-of-Centre press and political activists saw Otto's campaign as diametrically opposed to their interpretation of American republican democratic values,

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[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Unknown, "Die Phantasien Otto," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*. March 11, 1940, p. 2.
[16] Unknown, "Ein Ganster bei den andern Ganstern: Otto Habsburg geht bei den amerikanischen Juden treiben," *Österreichischer Beobachter*. March 1940, p. 14.
[17] Ibid.

likewise made possible only by American ignorance of European affairs. The OSS made note of *The Chicago Sun*'s 15th November 1943 editorial conflating Archduke Otto and King Carol of Romania's lobbying efforts writing:

> "Their missions are the same: Seizure of power over their hapless homes with the help of any backing they can pick up from reactionary or confused Americans."[18]

Countering such claims, Legitimists were keen to lean into the rhetoric of their American hosts and thus emphasise democratic principles deficient in the previous pre-Anschluss VF regime. March 24th, 1943, J. Edgar Hoover confidentially reported to Assistant Secretary of State Adolf A. Berle "intelligence data […] having to do with Austrian activities in the United States" concerning how the *Free Austrian Movement*'s "Military Committee for the Liberation of Austria" had adopted a clear "Program of Action" to act as "a spearhead for the political moves of Otto von Habsburg." This would entail mobilisation of Austrian refugees to form a government in exile in "preparation of measures for the restoration of democracy in Austria, for the establishment of the principals of equality of all citizens before the law […] especially for the restoration of the rights of the workers."[19]

Nonetheless, rebranding could only go so far, and the movement remained inherently Catholic and Conservative. FBI informants within a March 10th, 1943, meeting of the *Free Austrian Movement* noted the central role of Otto, receiving a standing ovation upon his arrival, accompanied by Professor Dietrich von Hildebrand[20] and German-speaking Catholic US Republican Senator from North Dakota, William Langer. Langer – comfortable addressing the meeting in both English and German– said in his speech that he "had Austrian blood in his veins and he vigorously denounced the various attacks on Otto, branding them as unwarranted."[21] Other speakers included a pro-Habsburg Jewish

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[18] CIA: "December 23, 1943 OSS report entitled Otto von Hapsburg," Case Number: F-2011-00131, accessed February 17, 2023, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/0005642370.

[19] NARA: 863.20211/3-2443, March 24, 1943 letter from J. Edgar Hoover (FBI Director) to Adolf A. Berle (Assistant Secretary of State) forwarding memorandum entitled "Austrian Activities in the United States."

[20] German Catholic refugee to Austria and then America.

[21] NARA: 863.20211/3-2443, March 24, 1943 letter from J. Edgar Hoover (FBI Director) to Adolf A. Berle (Assistant Secretary of State) forwarding memorandum entitled "Austrian Activities in the United States."

Rabbi, Dr. Arthur Bogner, who, with professor von Hildebrand together spoke on the theme of the Golden Age of Austria, juxtaposing Habsburg civilisation and "Nazi barbarism."[22] Adam Kozuchowski calls attention to how the "gloomy circumstances" and uncertainty in the early Interwar period of Austria and later Nazi occupation "fostered nostalgia for the 'good old days' of prosperity, stability and optimism – in other words, for the time when Austria-Hungary still existed."[23] This was the tone of letters of encouragement which were read to the meeting from numerous physically absent US senators.[24] These general endorsements of Austrian resistance received by law makers were used by the movement to infer specific support for Otto. The FBI was aware of this deliberate conflation and took careful note of how "[n]one of these letters contained anything which could reasonably be construed as supporting the Austrian Legitimist or Monarchist movement."[25]

This campaign of Monarchism by the back door via of taking leadership positions in the Austrian liberation movement and de-emphasising the constitutional question in public was likewise not missed on Otto's opponents. The meetings of the *Free Austrian Movement* were actively protested by the "Hungarian Austrian Trade Union Committee for Victory" who accused their co-diaspora rivals of solely engaging "a campaign for restoration of the Hapsburg dynasty in Central Europe." The more Habsburg-Sympathetic FBI warned the State Department that these claims of the Trade Union Committee were — according to their "confidential informant"— led by the of "guiding spirit" of John Roman of the *Magyar Jovo* newspaper, whom they described as "Communistically inclined."[26] This consideration from the US authorities gives insight as to how as the seeds of the emerging Cold War began to germinate, the Socialist leanings of Otto's rivals could be exploited to his advantage.

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[22] Ibid.
[23] Adam Kozuchowski, "Der Diskrete Charme Der Dekadenz Und Das Posthume Fortleben Österreich-Ungarns," in *Das Integrative Empire: Wissensproduktion Und Kulturelle Praktiken in Habsburg-Zentraleuropa*, eds. Johannes Feichtinger and Heidemarie Uhl, 1st ed. (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2023), p. 322.
[24] Including Theodore Green (Rhode Island), David Walsh (Massachusetts), and Congressmen Joseph Clark Baldwin (New York), Herman P. Eberharter (Pennslyvania), Pete Jarman (Alabama), and J. Percy Priest (Tennessee).
[25] NARA: 863.20211/3-2443, March 24, 1943 letter from J. Edgar Hoover (FBI Director) to Adolf A. Berle (Assistant Secretary of State) forwarding memorandum entitled "Austrian Activities in the United States."
[26] Ibid.

Socialists were not oblivious to this fact and just as Otto had amended his movement to adopt more outwardly Democratic rhetoric, so too were his enemies prepared to prove their mailability. The *American Federation of Austrian Democrats* (AFAD) was an umbrella founded shortly after March 1943 as a union of all anti-Habsburg émigré groups and had almost identical aims as the *Free Austrian Movement* with the notable exception of their intention to "reject the greater Austrian aims of a Black and Gold Monarchism, which carry only dissension among the Central European nations and only harm Austria's struggle for freedom." Wilhelm Ellenbogen of the *Austrian Labor Committee* —as well as the American Labor Committee— warned in a meeting of the Federation that "freedom loving Austrians constantly have to be on the alert against Hapsburg political and restoration intrigues."[27] Just as the pro-Habsburg émigrés had their friends on Capitol Hill, so too did the anti-Habsburg faction. Democratic Congressman from New York Emanuel Celler wrote to AFAD meetings, on one occasion declaring —referring to the 3rd April, 1919, anti-Habsburg laws of the Renner SPÖ government— that Karl and Zita had been "ousted from Austria by decree which remains unrepealed."[28] This claim completely ignored the abrogation of the anti-Habsburg legal statutes by the VF regime. The legal developments of VF period were for republican Socialists —on either side of the Atlantic— as null and void as the NS policies were for the Legitimists. For them the occupation of Austria did not begin with the Anschluss in 1938, but the brief February 1934 civil war.

The educational formation of Otto and his carefully cultivated supranational royal and Imperial identity once more came into the spotlight considering Celler's claim that "[m]ost of Otto's life has been spent outside of Austria. He knows practically nothing of it." Celler —while himself of German-Jewish heritage, a Zionist, and an advocate for offering asylum to refugees— rejected Otto's affiliation with his Danubian homeland. Celler went so far as to publicly call upon allied Belgium to "revoke this Pretender's passport" making the polemic claim that Otto's "attempts to restore the feudal aristocracy of the Hapsburg gives affront to all those fighting against Hitler-feudalism […] affront to

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

all liberty-loving nations fighting Prussian junkerism which is the same as Haspburg junkerism."[29] Failing diplomatic pressure on Belgium, Celler threatened "devising legislation which will prevent anyone in this country of any kind of passport, Belgian or otherwise, from attempting to conspire on our shores for the purposes of setting up a monarchy or empire in foreign climes."[30] Imbuing the tradition of American foreign policy prior to the period of recent interwar isolationism, Celler further proclaimed that the "shenanigans of Otto von Hapsburg are really insults to the memory of Woodrow Wilson and his idea of self-determination."[31]

This attempted revival of Wilsonian Idealism, along with the conflation between Prussian Junkerism and a supposed Habsburg Junkerism was the source of indescribably consternation amongst Otto's supporters. Otto's North American speaking circuit was centred on Catholic audiences. At one such meeting on 21st November 1943, his *Europe in Revolt* lecture hosted by the Charles Carroll Forum in Chicago gave Polish-Americans the opportunity to quiz him on his views as to the redrawing of Central Eastern Europe. [32] The Archduke –seeking to re-brand as a democrat and fearfully aware of the errors committed at Versailles 1919– argued against a narrow nationalist solution of map re-drawing as a path to solving Europe's woes. Instead, as expected, he argued that Habsburg supranationalism was the best cure to the poison of hereditary national strive. The OSS report further recounts how an unidentified "member of the audience" spoke with US counter-intelligence of a conversation he or she had with Otto that evening "about civil liberties and rights of minorities in a post-war Austria if he were to rule that country."[33] In the course of the conversation, Otto gave an expected conventional answer of demonstrating "proof of the Habsburg rule in the past: the freedom of minorities and the other liberties under the old Empire."[34] The utilisation of liberal-democratic rhetoric did not alleviate the concerns of the informant who proceeded to have "asked him specifically

[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] CIA: "December 23, 1943 OSS report entitled Otto von Hapsburg," Case Number: F-2011-00131, accessed February 17, 2023, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/0005642370.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

about the danger of clericalism in such a government."[35] To this question, Otto, while remaining "most cordial", would not render a response, only that it would not be expedient nor prudent to comment on such polemics.[36]

At the conclusion of the event "three men attempted to distribute an anti-Habsburg leaflet emanating from the Czechoslovak National Council of America."[37] Czechs and Austrians –former co-subjects under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and now supposed allies in the struggle against National Socialism– were thus vehemently divided on what shape post-war Europe would take and had no reservations in allowing such disagreements to manifest in the public eye. Nonetheless, despite isolated opposition, US counter-intelligence noted that the of on the occasion of the *Europe in Revolt* Chicago lecture, "2,000 or more" laypersons and clerics that attended, the "audience was enthusiastic," no doubt on account of it being "about 98 per cent Catholic."[38] During the speech, Otto praised the Moscow Conference declaration of that month on the necessity of unconditional German surrender. Nonetheless, Otto warned his American audience to be on the guard against a possible Soviet duplicity in shaping post-war Europe.[39] Mirroring the Kremlin's own anxieties, one of Otto's "greatest worries" was "that Russia would make a separate peace with Germany and allow Germany's army with its Prussian militarism to remain in power."[40] As Preston rightly observed, Churchill from early days of the Bolshevik revolution as a cabinet minister was "among the most vociferous in urging armed intervention against the Russian Revolution" deeming the enterprise "a pestilence more destructive of life than the Black Death or the Spotted Typhus."[41] FDR was —by virtue of his cooler rhetoric and New Deal reforms—a much more amenable arbitrator between London and Moscow, careful to avoid any provocation against the

[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid; The Moscow declaration gave an assurance against this, but Monarchists and Catholics on the Right-of-Centre remained ever watchful, predicting that German POWs would be radicalised and instrumentalised by Stalinists, who four years prior had been more than willing to sign the 23rd August 1939 Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact.
[41] Diana Preston, *Eight Days at Yalta: How Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin Shaped the Post-War World* (London: Picador, 2019), p. 19.

Soviet bear. Nonetheless, Otto would have to hold his tongue and work within this common anti-Nazi front, even building a personal friendship with the US President.

Chapter 7 Cold War partitioned Donauraum (1943-1955).

Chapter seven scrutinises the balance of power within the Allied camp during the latter half of the Second World War and associated competing UK, US, Soviet, and Vatican priorities in re-shaping Central Europe. The polemic anti-communist position adopted by Otto was matched by the space occupied by the Habsburg dynasty in Soviet propaganda and geopolitical calculations.

Although the inter-Allied 1943 Moscow Declaration affirmed Austria as the "first victim" of Nazi aggression, there would be no appetite to revert the Alpine land to its 1938 pre-Anschluss trajectory toward Habsburg restoration. It will be argued that the intervention against such momentum was the result of the bi-polar geopolitical order of the early Cold War in which –despite the dynasty's intransigent anti-Communism and US physical custody of the crown of St. Stephen– Otto's *Reichsidee* was not sufficiently appealing to Western planners as the optimal vehicle to limit Soviet encroachment into Central Europe. Furthermore, this thesis proposes that this Legitimist spectre was nonetheless crucial in Moscow's efforts to forward the Stalinization of Hungary to a satellite state and neutralisation of lonesome Austria. Finally, encouraged by the Great Powers, –West and East alike– the post-1945 occupation of Austria mandated a collegial form of power-sharing between former opponents on the Catholic Right and Socialist Left. Habsburg Legitimism –characterised by its unyielding adherence to *Reichsidee* principles– was the first casualty of this initial rapprochement. This predicament would precipitate a definitive abandonment of constitutional aspirations and re-direction of dynastic energy into pan-Europeanism.

7.1: Moscow Declaration

Adam Kozuchowski argues that: "With the silencing of German nationalism, the most vehement opponents of the Habsburg legacy were finally silenced."[1] While it was certainly true that with NS defeat an entire traditional camp of Austrian politics was apparently eliminated, domestic Austromarxism and its international supporters would not easily allow Habsburg contribution towards liberation to be rewarded with restoration. Once it became increasingly apparent that an Allied victory would be assured, London, Moscow and Washington DC went about conceptualising what a post-war Europe would look like. Not dissimilar to 1918, the prospect of a Habsburg Austria or Hungary at the heart of post-Second World War Central Europe was seen by many as antithetical to the goals of the victors, this time operating under the banner of the United Nations. These aims, differently understood, were a blend principles such as rule of law in defence of national sovereignty, democracy, and worker's rights. Naturally, many of these myriad interpretations were directly contradictory. Within this ambiguity, as the alliance of convenience gave way to concrete geopolitical planning, long-existing tensions between members of the alliance began to manifest with ever increasing clarity.

In the effort to successfully defeat, de-militarise and de-nazify Germany, European and American statesmen were acutely aware of the failings of their predecessors. They had seen how the previous world war had started as a struggle of patriotic geopolitical *realpolitik* and ended with high-minded claims of making the world safe for democracy. It was now abundantly apparent to them how the treaties of Versailles, St. Germain and Trianon —with their selective application of "Self-Determination"— had borne the rotten fruit of the Second World War. Nonetheless, from the dispute of London and Lublin Poles to supposedly Western-backed Habsburgs and Moscow-collaborating Socialists, once

[1] Adam Kozuchowski, "Der Diskrete Charme Der Dekadenz Und Das Posthume Fortleben Österreich-Ungarns," in *Das Integrative Empire: Wissensproduktion Und Kulturelle Praktiken in Habsburg-Zentraleuropa*, ed. Johannes Feichtinger and Heidemarie Uhl, 1st ed. (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2023), p. 334.

more would the facade of Self-Determination be displayed to cloak the bitter realities of a nascent bi-polar world order. While Wilson as the emerging hegemon in 1918 could dictate fourteen points on the re-ordering of Central Europe, a more collegial approach would need to be adopted to reach agreement in 1943. Even if three great powers were successful in having "agreed that Austria, the first free country to fall a victim to Hitlerite aggression, shall be liberated from German domination,"[2] there was no solid understanding on how a liberation would manifest, territorially nor constitutionally.

A US June 8th, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany report entitled "The Treatment of Austria," under the sub-title "Long-Range Interests and Objectives of the United States" concluded that the fact that "Austria's strategic position in Europe" had previously "been the occasion of threat to general security" made any resolution "a matter of concern to the international community and therefore to the United States."[3] Possible solutions could only be deduced by firstly acknowledging that Austria as an Interwar republic was an abject failure on the grounds of its international isolation and domestic disunity. Only from that starting position could it be asserted that Austria had been a victim to the *Realpolitik* interests of the Great Powers, in no way being given latitude to shape her own destiny. Nonetheless, after another World War, there would be no isolated consideration for Austria, her fate would once more need to take into account the regional balance of power and preferences of both nearby-by small states and their respective overbearing emerging Cold War faction leader. US planners recognised the inherent ambiguity of declaring that any consideration would be subject to Austria's "own contribution to her liberation."[4] This indirect invitation to rebellion was however not acted upon en masse and Vienna would not rise up as Warsaw would do so a mere two months after the drafting of this report.

In their words, the US State Department foresaw: "clear grounds for according Austria a different treatment from that applied to Germany and for permitting the Austrian people a voice in the determination of their future status." Nonetheless, it remained

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[2] John W. Boyer, *Austria 1867-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), p. 867.
[3] NARA: "The Treatment of Austria," Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, Stack 190, Row 01 Shelf 7, Box 7, June 8, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany report.
[4] Ibid.

understood that this "voice" would have definite demarcations. The new state would need to be democratic and explicitly anti-Nazi. Of note is how the secret report hypothesised that any political arrangement for Austria would also need to adopt a supranational nature which "presumably, might assume the character of special economic arrangements, political federation, or even a merger of sovereignties."[5] However, any such resolution would not be tolerated as the result of bi-lateral compromise but be subject to approval for the international community.[6] Supernationalism, democracy and anti-Nazism were the flags which Otto had long claimed to fly. While the June 8th, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee report did consider regional "political federation" as one acceptable envisioned possibility, as to what the ideological spirit of such a proposed solution would have was yet to be determined.

For US planners, in order to "achieve Austrian revival" it would be critical that the "government support all appropriate means of fostering the growth of a more pronounced Austrian national feeling along democratic lines" and ensure "effective protection through inter-divisional organization or otherwise against external encroachments."[7] This desire for a clear democratic Austrian identity and mitigating "external encroachments"[8] can safely be presumed to be an allusion to the emerging –not yet universally recognised– Cold War tension between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union as early as June 1944. This report, coming a mere two days after the US, UK, French and Canadian D-Day landings at Normandy demonstrates that military activity on the European Continent precipitated an acceleration of planning for the post-war order.

"Austrian national feeling" was nowhere stronger felt than in the supporters of the former ruling VF behind enemy lines and specifically pro-Habsburg legitimists in exile. Nonetheless, the June 8th, 1944, secret report concluded that it was "[i]n the further interest of tranquillity" that the US "oppose the restoration of the House of Hapsburg in Austria."[9] Such a recommendation was made on account of the threat which the supposed

[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] NARA: "The Treatment of Austria," Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, Stack 190, Row 01 Shelf 7, Box 7, June 8, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany report.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

"imperialist tradition of the dynasty" presented to regional stability.[10] The State Departments use of the *Realpolitik* reasoning can be understood as a direct reference to a desire to not unnecessarily aggravate the Soviet Union, the Austrian domestic Left-of-Centre and neighbouring liberated former-Successor States. To associate liberation with Habsburg restoration ran the risk of sending the more moderate amongst the Austromarxists, Czechs and Hungarian Left into the arms of Stalin. While not mentioning the Soviet Union directly but solely the "neighboring states," US foreign policy in 1944, despite courting and endorsing Habsburg aid in her war effort, now, when considering the new composition of Europe, once more took the line that Habsburg rule was incompatible with 20th Century democracy.

Even as early as December 1941, the Irish-American Archbishop of Baltimore and Washington, Michael Joseph Curley, warned: "[W]e of the United States are fighting side by side with Stalin, the greatest murder of men the world has ever known." He further cautioned the American public that Stalin was as likely to turn against the US, aided by the "Reds and pinks" amongst them in Hollywood and the universities.[11] Following the line of the Atlantic Charter, the 1945 Yalta Conference Joint Declaration on Liberated Europe is described by historians –such as Diana Preston– as a "page-and-a-half-long statement of high-flown ideals" for liberated states to achieve "democratic institutions of their own choice."[12] Preston notes how the ambiguous terminology allowed Stalin to feign magnanimity to the West and simultaneously alleviate the concerns of Molotov regarding

[10] Ibid. This reference to "imperialist tradition" can additionally be seen as a subtle reference to the Tsarist tendencies of the USSR in its Russo-centric power projection into the heart of Central Europe. This view of continuity between Tsarism and Stalinism have been extensively argued by recent historians such as Geoffrey Roberts, Sean McMeekin, and Dominic Lieven. Furthermore, such similarities where not missed on contemporary writers such as E. H. Carr. See: Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939–1953* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Sean McMeekin, *Stalin's War: A New History of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2021); Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000); E. H. Carr, *The Soviet Impact on the Western World* (New York: Macmillan, 1946); E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923* (London: Macmillan, 1950).

[11] Catholic News Service, "Stalin, Hitler may yet unite to fight democracies, Archbishop Curley Warns," *Catholic News Service—Newsfeeds*, December 2, 1941, p. 5-6.

[12] Diana Preston, *Eight Days at Yalta: How Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin Shaped the Post-War World* (London: Picador, 2019), p. 218.

the promises of a "democratic" liberation by reassuring his foreign minister that "We can deal with it in our own way later."[13]

The convenient ambiguity of the resolutions agreed to by the UK, US and USSR is further seen in what James Jay Carafano argues was Otto's encouragement on account of the agreement's interpretation from FDR, who he considered a personal friend.[14] Furthermore, contained within the Moscow Declaration was a nullification of all legal acts of the NS regime after March 1938. The Anschluss was never officially recognised by the US, UK, USSR and France. Austrians stranded abroad during the war were not universally considered as "enemy aliens" and unless they ascribed to National Socialism, emigres were normally grated refugee status and encouraged to support the Allied war effort. Nonetheless, while the re-establishment of an Austrian state seemed a certainty, there was little appetite in the Allied camp —especially in the Soviet Union— to revert back to the constitutional structure of March 11th, 1938. Crucially for Legitimists, the May 1934 constitution was free from the republican anti-Habsburgism of its 1919 SPÖ-inspired revolutionary forerunner. The "third-way" VF system with its "authoritarian" and "corporate" foundations, rooted into natural law and Catholic social principles was seen as antithetical to both 20th-century Liberal Democracy and Stalinist Marxism.

One month after the Moscow Declaration, the importance of this constitutional polemic was at the forefront of concerns for Social Democrats across Europe. Swedish Social Democrats collaborated in a cultural event with their exiled Austrian counterparts in a "Celebration of Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Austrian Republic." In attendance were the SPÖ Bruno Kraisky, the mayor of Stockholm, Czech emigres and even a Mr. Hinks of the British Legation. Demonstrative of European fragmentation, while Otto could expect support from the Swedish royal household, so too could anti-Habsburg forces could rely on the support of Swedish left-wing fellow travellers. Much to the consternation of some present, the speech of ethnically Jewish SPÖ refugee, Bruno Kreisky, was the only address brave enough to explicitly mention the Habsburg question by name. US officials in Sweden identified a "young generation [who] were almost without exception radical

[13] Ibid.
[14] James Jay Carafano, *Waltzing into the Cold War: The Struggle for Occupied Austria* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), p. 25.

socialists" and contrasted this to an older generation at the event which among them "were quite a few royalists" who critiqued the Austrian Socialists' forthright republican tone. One Swedish Social Democrat commented to a US diplomatic official that "if the Habsburgians had stayed, no Hitler would ever have come up."[15]

In February 1945 —immediately after the fall of Budapest to Soviet forces— Otto wrote to Vatican Monsignor Magyary that the Yalta conference "passage about the liberated territories must raise grave concerns." The exiled pretender to the throne prophesied:

> "It is now to be feared […] that it is Russia that will freely claim the right to intervene […] All this is very dangerous. Drastic measures must be taken to counter this danger."[16]

While Otto's suggestion concerning the shunning of communist occupation in favour of Western powers was a conventional request which was in accordance with Vatican *modus operandi*; his proposal to the Holy Father that "the hierarchy in Austria should already now have an organisation prepared by Catholic laymen to mobilise Catholic forces in secret action for all contingencies" was likely to stir anxiety.[17] It is difficult to imagine that Pope Pius XII could give his blessing nor facilitate an armed anti-communist underground resistance contrary to the combined plans of the Superpowers to partition Europe into spheres of influence after the war's conclusion.

The four-way partition model for German and Berlin was likewise adopted for Austria and Vienna. In the de-Nazification process within Austria there was a societal incitive for the individual to disassociate from the previous occupying NS regime and emphasise their Austrian-ness in contrast to a discredited German-ness. Nonetheless, the KPÖ and SPÖ would certainly not facilitate the return of Schuschnigg to Vienna for their genuine fear of him making a claim to legal continuity as chancellor of Austria. It was presumed that if given license, Schuschnigg would not hesitate to revive the *Ständestaat*

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[15] NARA: 863.407/4, November 17, 1943, report "Celebration of Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Austrian Republic" from R. P. Polturak to G. Knox.
[16] VAA: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 124-133, report "Lettera dell'arciduca Ottone di Asburgo a Mons. Magyary (1945)."
[17] Ibid.

structure and attempt to accomplish now what had been his ultimate aim, Habsburg restoration. Schuschnigg recounted in 1946 how Otto had in the final days of Austrian statehood of 1938 written to Vienna, in the former-Chancellor's words: "imploring me by my old oath of allegiance as a former officer of the Austrian Army to appoint him to the post of Chancellor, if such a step would in any way save Austria."[18] Should Schuschnigg resume office as chancellor it was reasonably theorised by socialists that Otto would have no reservation in claiming a similar state of necessity as had existed in 1938, this time aimed against Soviet Communism.

The position of the US State Department Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany was that: "A freely elected constituent assembly should determine the character of Austria's future government and internal structure, without interference by the allied powers."[19] While maintaining that this process should be conducted "without interference," the 21st June, 1944, summary report went on to recommend that the Vienna "Government should oppose the restoration of the House of Hapsburg in Austria."[20] Therefore, regarding the constitutional question for new Austria, the old 1934-1938 VF structure was seen by the US as of a "Fascist character."[21] This attitude of the US as seeing the fascism of Italy, Germany and Austria as equivocal was outrageously unjust in the eyes of the pro-Austrian Catholic Right. Faced with this new geopolitical environment, Political Catholicism in Austria would have to adapt to survive.

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[18] Kurt von Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, trans. Franz von Hildebrand (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), p. 35.
[19] NARA: "The Treatment of Austria: Policy Recommendations," Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, Stack 190, Row 01 Shelf 7, Box 7, June 21, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany summary report.
[20] NARA: Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, Stack 190, Row 01 Shelf 7, Box 7, June 21, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany summary report "The Treatment of Austria: Policy Recommendations."
[21] NARA: Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, Stack 190, Row 01 Shelf 7, Box 7, June 8, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany report, "The Treatment of Austria."

7.2: Vatican Post-War Vision

For the Vatican, the 1939-1945 war was "the misery of the greatest world fire of all time."[1] While an understanding of the irreconcilability of Soviet Communism with a traditional conceptualisation of the Western World was only truly understood in Washington DC in 1947 and London a couple years before, the Vatican and Austrian Catholic Right had realised and highlighted this perceived threat for decades. Karl von Habsburg as Emperor had protested German plans to destabilise Tsarist Russia with Marxist agitators such as Lenin, and the Church had denounced the ideology as early as 1878.[2] For the Church in general, Communism was viewed as the greatest evil of the interwar period, its atheistic materialism seen as more pernicious than the neo-paganism of Fascism.

Reports reached the Vatican in January 1944 on how Austrian refugees in England were divided into various divergent movements for Austrian independence and this division was mirrored internationally between the Great Powers, in the differing attitudes of the UK and Russia towards the future post-war Austria.[3] Habsburg advocates stressed to the Holy See: "The only ones who can truthfully speak for a section of the [Austrian] population are the monarchists as the Emperor is living in the free world."[4] Furthermore, they highlighted how they as "Austrian monarchists have only one aim and that is to restore the independence of Austria from any foreign yoke."[5] For the exiled Habsburgs, the UK "policy of non-commitment" was not proactively malicious but rather born of a genuine "ignorance of the real situation in Europe." Therefore, they argued that this led to

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[1] VAA Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 3, report "Leiden des grossten Weltenbrandes aller Zeiten."

[2] Leo XIII, *Quod Apostolici Muneris* (1878).

[3] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 258-262, January 1944 report entitled "Austria" from Robert von Habsburg (London) to Cardinal Luigi Maglione (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

a failing "to realise that the totalitarianism be it now Nazism Fascism or Communism is in the last analyses a product of anti-Christian tendencies."[6] In this Legitimist narrative transmitted to the Vatican, the naïve timidity of the non-Catholic supposedly anti-communist Liberal West produced a "fear of upsetting Russian post-war plans."[7]

Echoing the rhetorical style of Churchill, any failure to support a Catholic monarchy in Vienna was argued by the Habsburg family to be a course of "appeasement" in the face of "Russian imperialism."[8] While the Habsburg brothers would be eager in North America to display their democratic credentials, when writing to the Vatican a starkly different tone finds its resonance. Uniting the Habsburg struggle with the mission of the Church, a conspiracy of the traditional enemies of the kingship of Christ was alleged:

> "[T]hey will do everything to stop a Catholic peace and a religious revival in Europe. These people though they are behind the scenes influence a great many politicians. They are the Freemasons, the Zionists, the Christian Scientist, the Fighting Atheists and other less well-known societies. Austria being a cornerstone of Catholicism in Europe is not to have a say at the peace conference. The Habsburgs must not regain power. Benes, Count Bethlen, Sforza and Titos are to be the coming people. [9]

These Habsburg arguments from London were reinforced by reports from the nuncio in Washington DC which detailed Otto's apparent failure of gaining a critical mass of support amongst Austrian exiles, most publicly demonstrated in the dissolution of the Austrian Battalion project within the US Army.[10] Nonetheless, going from 1943 to 1944 the warning cry of Soviet expansion grew more explicit with reports reaching the Vatican from the US nuncio cautioning of the "danger of communist domination in Austria."[11]

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[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Vatican Apostolic Archive: Fodo: Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 268-275, July 27 1943 report "scioglimento del battaglione austrico fondato dall'arciduca Ottone di Asburgo Lorena."; Ibid., Ff. 276-278, April 16, 1940 report entitled "visita di ottone d'Asburgo in Canada."
[11] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 226-236, June 1944 report

This ringing of Cold War alarm bells predates the famous July 1947 George Kennan essay –the so-called "Long Telegram"– which warned American officials of the USSR's *modus operandi* synthesis of Marxist-Leninist and Russian Tsarist expansionism which held a perpetual anxiety of invasion from Central Europe.

The Vatican was often the recipient of countless petitions from Catholics across Europe seeking the exertion of soft power diplomacy in their favour. The Lienz-Osttirol Austrian People's Party organised a pro-Habsburg petition and wrote to Pope Pius XII 17th August 1945 calling for Papal intervention to secure "the restoration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy under the legitimate ruler Otto von Habsburg" and the return of South Tyrol to Austria.[12] Legitimists argued that the intention and trajectory of the VF from 1933-1938 had been Habsburg restoration and that the Nazi occupation should not be allowed to derail this will of the Austrian people. Otto's activism in exile had created high expectations amongst his supporters in occupied Austria. Regardless of whether Tyrolean hopes in FDR were well-founded or not, Otto was keen to establish a rapport with his successor, the new occupant of the Oval Office, President Truman. Unfortunately for the Legitimist cause, the new commander-in-chief forwarded the letter to Secretary of State, James Byrnes, to handle remarking: "I am attaching letter from Otto of Austria. I don't care to start any correspondence with him but thought you might like to see the letter."[13] In this regard, Truman was for the Legitimist movement one such example of the Freemasonic conspirators against Catholic Europe, a Wilson re-born.

"Memorandum sur la question d'Autriche" from Apostolic Delegation (Washington D.C.) to Luigi Maglione (Secretary of State, Vatican).

[12] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 102-103, August 17, 1945, "Petizione del capo dell „Osterreoichische Volkspartei" affinchè la Santa Sede intervenga in favoure della restaurazione asburgica e per il ritorno dell'Alto Adige all'Austria."

[13] NARA: NAID 205714489, Collection HST-PSF: President's Secretary's Files (Truman Administration) Series: Subject File Unit: Foreign Affairs File, 1940-1953: Austria and Czechoslovakia — March 19, 1946, Memorandum from President Harry S. Truman to Secretary of State James Byrnes, attaching a letter from Otto von Habsburg.

Nonetheless, the Tyrolean Catholic Right urged Pius XII to not allow himself to be excluded from the coming peace settlement as had been the case in 1919.[14] To their mind, the immediate interest of the Church required:

> "[I]f the work of the reconstruction of Europe is to succeed, a state must be established in Central Europe that is built on a Catholic foundation and led by a Catholic monarch […] the son and Legitimate successor of Emperor Karl, Otto von Habsburg."[15]

The Vatican did indeed wish to exert an influence on the post-1945 spiritual and material reconstruction of Europe. Towards this objective, Otto's credentials were to them impeccable. The only question was whether, even with Vatican support, a "third-way" state in Central Europe was viable in a new age of geopolitical bi-polarity between the Liberal Capitalist West and Communist East. For the Tyrolean element of the Catholic Right, seeing their lauded legitimate sovereign exiled and their fellow Tyroleans partitioned across the Italian frontier, their struggle was as much against Italian nationalism as Austrian republicanism or Socialism. In this light they urged Pius XII that "injustice remains injustice and should not and must not be sanctioned a second time."[16] If Otto could not lead a supranational "third-way" Empire, he would then have to ascribe himself to one Superpower camp and contend himself with leading a neutral small national state as Monarch.

Simultaneous to this petitioning of forces loyal to Otto, with the decisive defeat of the Axis powers, former opponents of Legitimists sought to disassociate themselves from the NS and Fascist regimes they once supported on alleged grounds of pragmatism. Two such prominent cases which intersect with the Habsburg Question were the personal petitions for rehabilitation received from Franz von Papen and Bishop Alois Hudal. The latter, as an Austrian bishop and rector of Vatican-based *Collegio Teutonico*, was a proponent of Pan-Germanism under NS leadership. After Axis defeat he now sought to rebrand himself from a pragmatic reluctant supporter of Italian Fascism and German

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[14]AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 102-103, August 17, 1945, "Petizione del capo dell „Osterreoichische Volkspartei" affinchè la Santa Sede intervenga in favoure della restaurazione asburgica e per il ritorno dell'Alto Adige all'Austria."

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

Nazism —in direct opposition to Austrian sovereignty and the Habsburg cause—to a supporter of an "Austro-Bavarian" union and/or Danubian Federation.[17] While some of the titular bishop's published works contained condemned pro-Nazi opinions, they did indeed actually manage to receive an *imprimatur* approval of the Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Theodor Innitzer.[18] Nonetheless, as the war advanced, an attempt to synthesise National Socialism and Catholicism became increasingly untenable in ecclesiastical circles and brought disrepute upon the Vatican in the eyes of the secular world.

One thing which this Vatican-envisaged Austrian "rebirth" did certainly not entail was a revival of a Weimar-style Liberal Democracy. The Vatican had, in recent memory, supported "third way" political movements in Austria such as the endeavours of Dollfuß and Schuschnigg. The victory of the Allies over the neo-Paganism of National Socialism while warmly welcome, was not the absolute ideal conclusion to the "world fire" of recent years. For the Vatican, the image of an Austria as "a strong barricade" against the enemies of the Church in post-war Central Europe persisted and therefore deserved special consideration from the Curia.[19]

However, ecclesial authorities in eternal Rome and throughout the Catholic world —in addition to the reactionaries associated with Political Catholicism in Central Europe— were not just concerned with the increased sphere of influence of USSR but also the Western Allies. Vatican correspondence highlighted that "with the allied troops, undesirable elements also entered Austria: Freemasons (Rotary Club, Schlarafia etc.), extreme left-wing socialists etc., supported by Jews."[20] Western Liberalism –castigated as a fundamentally Jewish and freemasonic construct– was not considered an acceptable alternative to Communism. To mitigate this influence, Hudal –like Schuschnigg– highlighted the central role of shaping the next generation, urging a concentrated effort to

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[17] AAEESS: Fodo: Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 43.
[18] Alois Hudal, *Die Grundlagen des Nationalsozialismus: Eine ideengeschichtliche Untersuchung von katholischer Warte* (Vienna: Günther, 1937), p. III.
[19] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 44.
[20] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 42; With Jews specifically described as "born opportunists and profiteers."

achieve "the re-education in the Catholic religion of the Austrian youth led astray by the Nazis" with the reestablishment of Catholic schools, Catholic University in Salzburg and Catholic Scouting Movement, previously suppressed after the 1938 Anschluss.[21]

Building on logic clearly demonstrated in Karl von Habsburg early 1920s Quadripartite schema for the re-structuring of Central Europe,[22] a December 1943 report sent to the Vatican by a Dr. P.W. Anton from Turin[23] entitled "Reordering and Reconstruction" argued for the priority of Supranational thinking in the Vatican post-war planning. A possible Danubian Federation was proposed to overcome the bi-polar geopolitical order in which millions of Catholics caught between Liberal West and Communist East. Such proposals concluded with the war cry popular amongst Austrian Legitimists, "*Austria Erit In Orbe Ultima*!!" ("Austria will last till the end of the earth").[24]

Furthermore, no doubt moved by his years of resistance to persecution by National Socialists, the US State Department in June 1945 sought to cooperate with the Vatican to aid former Austrian chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg after his liberation in Southern Germany.[25] Schuschnigg was eager to present his own proposals "on the future of Austria" to the Vatican.[26] In turn the Secretary of State facilitated the former chancellor's travel to the US to take up employment as a Political Science professor at Saint Louis University.

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[21] Ibid.

[22] AOS: Tom. I, Index 53, Karl von Habsburg. *Verfassungsentwurf, Streng Geheim* (December 1921 to March 1922) found in Elisabeth Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?: Band 2: Politische*

[23] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 2-25, 1943 report entitled "Neuordung und Wiederaufbau" from P.W. Anton (Turin); Anton's recommendations went so far as to provide detailed concrete proposals for this new hypothetical Central European Federation in line with the constitutional structure of Switzerland containing an internal structure guided by the principle of subsidiarity and foreign policy guided "by a strictly impartial and friendly attitude towards all countries" with the direction of international relations being "entrusted to a standing committee composed of members of each of the federal states and chaired annually by a different one of the federal partners."

[24] AA.EE.SS: Fodo: Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 23.

[25] CHA: B.44.33.Au.HX, November, 16, 1945 report "Kurt von Schuschnigg, alt Bundeskanzler Österreich. Einreise in die Schweiz (Dossiers)."

[26] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 34-35; These proposals were presented not as official correspondence but rather as "as a suggestion and request from a private citizen informed from earlier times from his former professional sphere."

Schuschnigg's "brief document" was delivered by Myron C. Taylor, the "Personal Representative of the President of the United States of America to His Holiness the Pope," June 11th, 1945. Written the week before, it contained Schuschnigg's personal assessment on post-war Central Europe entitled "On the Austrian Question."[27]

Schuschnigg's assessment acknowledged that the future shape and constitution of his fatherland "is in principle a question decided by the Great Powers, which for this reason alone is no longer open to discussion." He further expounded how Austria can once more serve the redemption of the German-speaking world from the recent scrouge of Nazism and secure a prosperous peace in Central Europe:

> "From a purely historical point of view, Austria is the German-speaking antithesis of the Pan-German idea […] hence no political motives should interfere with this consideration."[28]

Drawing on his recent experience Schuschnigg argued that after the "radical elimination of any principle of violence for the realisation of internal political purposes," a "fundamental reconstruction" of the education system, a "depoliticising" of recent Church-State antagonism. Furthermore, and a return to the "far-reaching autonomy of the regional authorities"[29] would be needed to undo the recent centralising integration which National Socialism had brought to Austrian soil.

Not only equating and condemning all manifestations of nationalism, Schuschnigg also likewise held firmly to the old VF line of simultaneously equating and condemning all forms of socialism, whether national or international, joining Otto in warning:

> "It should not be overlooked that every crisis feeds political radicalism and thus methods of violence, and that it is likely that large sections of the former SS and SA members will try to shift to communism." [30]

In this rhetoric Schuschnigg consciously repeats the *Quadragesima Anno* narrative that the rise of Communism needed to be addressed by removing the conditions which incubate it.

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[27] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 34-39.
[28] Ibid.
[29] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 37.
[30] Ibid.

Furthermore, reference to a pernicious "nationalist idea" was a means to equate the nationalism of Berlin, with that of Belgrade, Prague and Rome. Schuschnigg, by calling for "the methodical and radical elimination of all forms of national chauvinism on the continent"[31] juxtaposed the defeated Axis with the supernatural Catholic supranationalism of Austrian conservativism which he, as chancellor of Austria in the 1930s, had sought to formulate in a *Reichsidee* ideology for a new reactionary state. In this effort to mitigate the "uncontrolled excesses"[32] of nationalism, he could rely upon the solidarity —if not practical assistance— of a Vatican concerned with the recent supplanting of religious identity with national identity across the various populations of Europe.[33]

The weary former chancellor still held to the line that Austria represented the true Germany, "in its best, most valid and enduring manifestation," and that without "German cultural heritage and cultural creativity […] Europe would remain inconceivable."[34] Defending the merit of an Austria acting as a cultural bridge at the heart of Europe, the report to the Vatican warns of the need for a "prevention of the former small and medium-sized state autarchy tendencies and isolated experiments."[35] Arguing that the solution was the "organisation of a unified economic area covering as much of Europe as possible, with a currency convention, uniform or coordinated customs legislation," Schuschnigg's thinking was typical of contemporary Christian Democrats in his arguing for the "first step towards the future development of a comprehensive European confederation."[36] This "U.S. of Europe"[37] would be a "Federal State." Should that be too difficult under current circumstances, a "confederate association of states," could be conceivable as a transitory measure, and "due to its geopolitical position and its ideology, Austria would be a particularly suitable bridge for the realisation of the concept."[38] Here once again we see

[31] Ibid.
[32] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 36.
[33] Pius XI, *Mit Brennender Sorge*, (1937).
[34] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 36.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Schuschnigg while writing in German, uses an English title for this new proposed Federation.
[38] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 37.

continuity in Schuschnigg's thinking in the pre-1938 and post-1945 historical mission of Austrian-ness.

Austria, annexed in 1938, —unlike Czechoslovakia, Poland, France and Yugoslavia— had no formal government in exile. Attempts to that end in North America, England and on the Continent failed comprehensively. Such foundering was not due to lack of trying. Schuschnigg, writing to the Vatican in 1945, urged the need for reparation for two former colleagues of his, former Austrian foreign minister and ambassador to Rome, Baron Egon Berger-Waldenegg and former private secretary within the Austrian federal Chancellery, Baron Viktor Froelichsthal, who were "discharged from the civil service without a pension." Both men —of obvious aristocratic lineage — fled to Italy with their wives and children due to persecution and there, later in liberated Rome, at Via Mercadante since 15th June 1944 they operated a so-called "Austrian Office" collaborating the Western-Allies. Baron Viktor von Froelichsthal had been a fellow high school pupil with Schuschnigg at Stella Matutina, and, as Sheridon notes, "his birth naturally inclined him to monarchist views and he seemed to be a zealous supporter of the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg Austria."[39] The US journalist in 1942 however, also, claimed without evidence that Froelichsthal had been an informant of von Papen and later received a prominent position within the NS occupation.[40] It is difficult to imagine what could have inspired such false 1942 allegations. At this time Froelichsthal had long since fled across to Italy, found refuge in the Vatican and then later there positioned himself in the vanguard of an unrecognised Austrian government in exile. For this work he was praised not only in Schuschnigg's private correspondence but publicly in his 1946 book *Austrian Requiem*.[41] American writers like Sheridon seem to display the desire for a grand plot of betrayal to explain Austria's apparently passive acquiescence to NS invasion rather than a lack of willingness on the part of VF leadership and society at large to resist an annexation which they had fatalistically grown to see as inevitable.

With National Socialist defeat, new wind powered the sails of Political Catholicism in Austria and Germany. Schuschnigg in a 2nd July 1945 with Mgr. Giuseppe Di Meglio

[39] R.K. Sheridon, *Kurt von Schuschnigg: A Tribute* (London: English Universities Press, 1942), p. 178.
[40] Ibid., p. 179.
[41] Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, p. 52-53.

expounded that in the post-1945 era, "German Catholicism has perhaps never had such a favourable opportunity to penetrate the Protestant soul."[42] The collaboration of Lutheran and other smaller sects with National Socialism –formalised in the state *Reichskirche* with its innate Prussian spirit– had discredited Protestantism in the eyes of many. Schuschnigg in 1945 still held to a *Reichsidee* ideal for Central Europe. He argued that the "German people, after the sad experience of the consequences of national socialism, i.e., materialism, strongly feel the importance, the necessity of the highest values of the spirit."[43] In this narrative, the recent war had vindicated the Austrian spirit over the Prussian. Prussia had been so tightly associated with the political system of National Socialism that the very name of the centuries old kingdom would soon cease to exist on the political map in 1947. Incapable of offering resistance to the "materialism" of the Nazis, Schuschnigg concluded:

> "Protestantism today is not able to satisfy this intimate and profound need of the Germanic soul."[44]

Schuschnigg relays to the Vatican that the only identifiable leader of German Protestantism not stained with NS association was Pastor Niemöller but, nonetheless, "he has made a veritable profession of anti-Germanism, praising the Americans as the promoters of freedom and civilisation, and calling for the full and complete punishment of Germany."[45]

In his personal assessment to the Vatican, it was clear for the Austrian former chancellor that —despite being grateful for Liberation— a broad Western Liberalism or specifically Americanism was no viable substitute for the *Reichsidee*. Schuschnigg furthermore contrasts the Western-orientated attitude of Niemöller with the patriotically German –yet supranational– disposition of Bishop of Münster, Clemens August Graf von Galen:

> "Who, after having heroically fought for the cause of truth and justice, has now closed himself in silence, declaring only that he cannot but regard the Anglo-

[42] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 112-119, " Colloquio fra il dott. Kurt von Schuschnigg e Mons Giuseppe Di Meglio."
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

> Americans as an occupying enemy power. This is a new reason for prestige for the Catholic Church, whose fidelity to the homeland in the present grave hour is highlighted."[46]

Schuschnigg was prepared to view his American liberators a possible pragmatic ally of Austria, but one nonetheless imbued with a freemasonic protestant character. The former Chancellor even lamented the flaws of his own May 1934 VF constitution, calling for Church-State relations in the new Austria to be also free from an "old Josephinism" in which the Church forfeited some of her rights to the secular State authorities. In its stead —as a matter of prudence, not principle— he called for the establishment of "a free [independent] Church system" which, in his words, would be "preferable to Masonic liberalism" and would simultaneously not suffer from the hard separation of Church and State "in the sense in the United States of America."[47] The former chancellor found justification in his thinking on account of how the previous system had allowed the Church's passive dependence on the state which had made possible an efficient consolidation of NS power.[48] In his mind the Church needed to be able to freely choose her own bishops and not be subordinated to state power as protestants were.

At this time Schuschnigg continued to hold a prominent position in Catholic North American consciousness where he was described as "former Chancellor of Austria and Adolf Hitler's No. 1 prisoner."[49] From this place of honour, now in 1947, as a refugee in North America, he argued "that the Austrian people, victims of Nazi conquest, be freed of the burden of Germany's defeat" and called for a removal of all occupation forces.[50] This concern on account of the advance of materialism was not shared by reactionaries and Legitimists alone. Former diplomatic envoy of Austria —and in December 1944 a professor in Georgetown University— George M. von Alexich, was in contact with the US State Department to provide what he termed "seriously constructive suggestion to the problems in Central and South Eastern Europe."[51] In a tone strikingly similar to reports

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[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Catholic News Service. "Schuschnigg says Isolationism by US by the U.S. would Doom Europe." *Catholic News Service—Newsfeeds*. March 11, 1947, p. 9.
[50] Ibid.
[51] NARA: 863.50/12-1944, letter George M. von Alexich to Edward R. Stettinius Jr. December 19, 1944.

which made their way to the Vatican, George M. von Alexich noted that the "independence of Austria in 1919 was negative" but nonetheless praised the Seipel/Dollfuss regime in realising "that material reconstruction was not enough, that it had to be accompanied by the reconstruction of men's souls." George M. von Alexich concludes his remarks by surmising:

> "The nations of Europe rejected the entire complex of materialism extended to them. They crave also for the spiritual solution of all their problems […] Indeed, without Austria, spiritual reconstruction, the reconstruction of souls, is impossible." [52]

While supernatural supranationalism was to the forefront of post-war thinking on the Catholic Right, again no mention is made as to the possible role that the Habsburgs could play in this "spiritual reconstruction."

Legitimists adopted a two-fold diplomatic assault vis-à-vis the Vatican. Firstly, lobby the Cardinal Secretary of State to make diplomatic representations on behalf of the interests of the Habsburg family. Secondly, lobby to have the cause of canonisation of Karl von Habsburgs further forwarded. By 11th December 1952 the latter —more so under the unilateral control of the Church— was already making steady progress.[53] Canonization would pertain strictly to the moral character and spiritual life of the former young Emperor but could implicitly serve to legitimise the Habsburg struggle and shore up moderate Catholic conservatives hitherto uncommitted to the Legitimist cause. Nonetheless, Otto in the early 1950s was warned that it was an "error common to all those people who do not know the workings of the Vatican intimately is to consider it as a monolithic organization, in which a full unity of the spirit rules."[54] It was noticed that Pope Pius XII, an ally to the Habsburgs since his time a papal nuncio in Munich, was "beginning to show his age" and "no longer able to impose his unifying view" which had left a power vacuum in the Secretariate of State.[55]

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[52] Ibid.
[53] VAA: Fodo: Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1949-1958)], Parte Seconda (1949-1958), Austria, Pos, 977, Vienna – Nunzio Apostolio: Parroco della Casa Imperiale, 1951-1952, Ff. 14.
[54] HOAL: I-7-a, "The Vatican Angle," Külpolitikai helyzetjelentések/Dispatches, June 1952 report.
[55] Ibid.

Influenced by the émigré movement, the Moscow declaration and a desire to detach occupied Austria from the NS rule, US planning was "premised on the view that Austria is a victim of Nazi aggression rather than an integral part of Germany and should be dealt with on a different basis."[56] Conversely, for Moscow, a conflation of the VF and NSDAP —aided by SPÖ and KPÖ allies— would be highly advantageous. In the construction of this new narrative, Austria would be considered to have suffered from a 1933-1945 occupation, first from Political Catholicism —pejoratively termed Austro-Fascism— and then National Socialism. In this effort, Soviet propagandist, Melnikov, attacked Vatican diplomacy as an obstacle to the USSR's denazification agenda. In the context of the early Cold War such polemic accusations were not taken seriously in the Western camp. British diplomat, Osborne, notes, however, that the term "'Reactionary' in the Moscow sense cannot be equated with pro-German or pro-Nazi, it can, however, be equated with anti-Communist —which is no doubt what Melnikov means."[57]

On the ground in Austria, Otto had significant support amongst lay Catholics and clerics of various ranks alike. The Church in Austria, particularly Vienna had long contended with the socialist SPÖ and struggled to penetrate a class-conscious working class. The occupation of the Red Army and mandated KPÖ participation in governance complicated any awaited Catholic spiritual rebirth. In this light, with the suspicious destruction of the iconic multi-coloured tiled roof —featuring Habsburg double-headed eagle— of St. Stephan's Cathedral in Vienna well after the street-fighting between *Wehrmacht* and Soviet forces, the Archdiocese had a dilemma to solve. Should the reconstruction of the cathedral feature a new up-dated heraldry to reflect its new situational circumstance; restore as was antebellum; or create a compromise design acknowledging both past and present political orders. Paid for with donations from the residents of the city, the third option of compromise was decided upon. The 1831 doubled-headed Habsburg eagle of the last of the Holy Roman emperors Francis II/I was restored on the south roof of the sanctuary. On the north roof, a tile design of the coat of arms of

[56] NARA: Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, Stack 190, Row 01 Shelf 7, Box 7, June 8, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany report, "The Treatment of Austria."
[57] PRO FO: 371/50060-0030, Conditions & Politics in Occupied Western Europe, 1940-1945, Part 6B, July 23, 1945, "Intensification Of Soviet Press Campaign Against The Vatican Examined, With Reference To Summary Of Grievances In 'New Times' And 'Osservatore Romano' Response To Melnikov."

the Austrian First republic and new Vienna republican city heraldry was chosen with the year of its completion (1950) inscribed underneath.[58] This dual approach of honouring Habsburg tradition while not needlessly antagonising current political sensibilities is emblematic of the local hierarchy's approach to the Habsburg Question in the post-1945 period.

[58] Dragan Damjanović, "Polychrome Roof Tiles and National Style in Nineteenth-Century Croatia," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 70, no. 4 (2011): p. 488.

7.3: Occupation and Intrigue

Unlike after the First World War, in post-war deliberations Legitimists had the advantageous position of Otto's clear slate. Untarnished by governing, his impeccable life-long anti-Nazi credentials worked in his favour. However, this was complicated by the novel factor of Soviet influence in Central Europe. From the White House, FDR was reluctant to delegate foreign policy making to Truman and even refrained from consulting the vice-president. As Preston notes, upon assuming the office of the presidency, "sixty-year-old Truman had only been abroad once when he fought for seven months as an artillery officer in France in the First World War."[1] He was to many an unknown entity, but from previous statements as a Missouri senator it was clear that he bore no sympathy for the Soviet Union and the days of pragmatic toleration of "Uncle Joe" in Moscow would rapidly come to an end. While the intensification of the Cold War would see the USSR increasing its role in determining the Habsburg Question, it did conversely mean more opportunity to find a receptive ear in the US as North American detractors of the Habsburgs running the risk of being conflated with pro-Soviet socialists.

While not yet universally apparent on the international stage, from even before Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and Moscow Agreement, Legitimists were ever wary of what they saw as a Soviet Union unceasingly plotting to extend its sphere of influence as deep into the heart of Europe –and away from its own borders which were devoid of natural boundaries. The establishment of friendly communist satellite regimes in areas of Soviet military occupation throughout the late 1940s seemed to vindicate their warnings. Nonetheless, for the Western Allies, particularly the United Kingdom and France —having fought from 1939— the initial war aims which served as the *casus belli* rational for war could not now in the closing stages of the war be disregarded without political repercussions. While Otto was supposedly integrated into the Allied war effort, his activism targeting Austrians and Hungarians within the US was nonetheless under the

[1] Preston, *Eight Days at Yalta,* p. 291.

watchful eyes of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the FBI. A February 18th 1944, OSS Foreign Nationalities Branch memo to the FBI notes that Otto's establishment of a Hungarian language propaganda publication was "believed to signal a definite shifting, at least for the time being, of Otto's hopes for the future from Austria to Hungary."[2] The result of this surveillance was the conclusion that Otto had wounded pride by his failure to galvanise Austrian resistance abroad into a cohesive anti-Nazi force as had the Czechoslovakians and Poles. US intelligence was perturbed that despite the collapse of Otto's dream of an Austrian battalion integrated into the US army to liberate his homeland, he nevertheless "appears to be incapable of patient waiting and must engage always in positive action of some kind."[3]

The OSS suspected that "[w]hile NS Austria is impenetrable, Hungary, with slightly more autonomy, seems more of viable target for Habsburg influence."[4] Otto, traditionally leading parallel campaigns centred on a restoration of power in both Vienna and Budapest, was known to habitually fluctuate on concatenating his efforts between the two objectives. While Austria was formally annexed into the Reich, —despite the Moscow Declaration's refutation of this as a legal reality— Hungary nominally remained a sovereign state allied to Berlin. Could Budapest —confronted with an ever-closer pending occupation by the Red Army— extract herself from the Axis alliance, Otto could have a realistic chance of seizing power and add Hungary to the list of Western Allies with Italy and Romania.

Such an adventurous manoeuvre —much more audacious than that of his father in October 1921— was not beyond the imagination of Berlin. Already in August 1944 King Michael of Romania had removed his kingdom from the Axis in a palace coup against the pro-German Antonescu government. Miklós Horthy was not seen as much more reliable than King Michael. Finding himself in a position not dissimilar to the young emperor whose trust he violated after the first world war, he now sought to secretly sound out peace terms from Moscow and the Western Allies. Should the war cross the Carpathian

[2] CIA: Otto von Hapsburg, Kronika; Case Number: F-2011-00131, Publication Date: March 17, 1944. Accessed February 17, 2023: https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/0005642369.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

Mountains, it was envisaged that he would choose a chance at fighting with the Western Allies over assured Communist occupation. Thus, in March 1944 the German Wehrmacht were tasked with executing Operation Margarethe the invasion and occupation of their Magyar ally. Later in October German special forces conducted Operation Panzerfaust, consolidating their control by taking Horthy's son hostage and installing the pro-Nazi Hungarian Arrow Cross Party into power. With the Red Army soon to encircle Budapest and occupy the Magyar plains, no Habsburg immediate effort to seize the throne was initiated. Otto had seen the result of the Warsaw Uprising in August of 1944 and knew that Soviet regime would not aid nor tolerate a declared anti-communist force in leading the vanguard in liberating themselves from German occupation.

Otto was keenly aware that the future post-Liberation condition of Austria would be partly decided by conditions on the ground once the Third Reich surrendered. With this forward-looking view in mind, he once again petitioned FDR from Paris in February 1945 to match alleged Soviet behind enemy lines supply drops to Socialist resistance fighters in Austria.[5] Further proposals included sending his brother Archduke Felix "to proceed at once in great secrecy to" POWs camps in Arkansas, Mississippi and Kentucky to recruit and re-arm pro-Austrian *Wehrmacht* soldiers detained there.[6] Oliver Rathkolb notes that in "1945 political observers both in Austria and abroad had their eyes fixed on members of the house of Habsburg, whose every move was noted."[7] Nonetheless, he clearly presents his view that "the Habsburg Question" as a "non-starter."[8] While US America embassy officials in Paris and the French foreign Office discussed Otto's assessment of Monarchist appetite in Austria,[9] the provisional government in Vienna for their part declared:

> "[S]trictest orders to provincial governors in Tyrol and Vorarlberg that if any of the Habsburgs appear in their territory they should at once be arrested and expelled

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[5] Letter dated Paris, February 19, 1945, from "Otto of Austria" to President Roosevelt, Washington D.C.. Found in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, Volume III, European Advisory Commission, Austria, Germany* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 560-62.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Oliver Rathkolb, *The Paradoxical Republic: Austria, 1945-2005*, trans. Otmar Binder (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), p. 264.
[8] Ibid.
[9] NARA: 863.0011/12-745, December 7, 1945, telegram from Caffery (Paris) to James F. Byrnes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

from Austria. Any officials conniving at their presence in Austria will be summarily dismissed."[10]

While by the end of 1945 Western Powers did see how Stalin had "violated the spirit of the Moscow agreement" by "unilateral establishment […] of an Austrian government," they nonetheless regarded Karl Renner as "a right-wing Socialist, [who] consistently attempted to steer a middle course between an orientation toward the U.S.S.R. and an orientation toward the western democracies."[11] This was contrasted to Otto and his supporters —described as "certain clerical, fascist and monarchist groups"— which were foreseen as "forces inside Austria so bitterly anti-Soviet that they would willingly jeopardize the success of the future Austrian state and make Austria a center of international intrigue in order to foment a break between the Western Allies and the U.S.S.R.."[12]

Months later it was further warned by US counter-intelligence that Soviet permission for Otto's return to Austria and Hungary —considered to be imminent— was likely a Soviet trap to root out non-communist opposition, "enabling a coup d'état to be effected by radical Left elements."[13] By 1946 it seemed that all was lost for the Habsburg cause. Otto wrote to the White House displaying his incredulity as US cooperation with the expansion of Soviet influence into Austria.[14] The Archduke's letter to President Truman dated February 28th, 1946[15] took issue with the "Interallied Council for Austria" which had reportedly "banned all monarchist activities in Austria, with the allegation […]

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[10] NARA: 863.0011/2-846, February 8, 1946, telegram from Erhardt (Vienna) to James F. Byrnes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[11] NARA: Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff RG 218 Stack 190 Row 01 Shelf 7 Box 7, December 12, 1945 Joint Intelligence Committee report entitled "Trend of the Government in Austria" by Secretary Peter Vischer.
[12] Ibid.
[13] NARA: Records of the Army Staff (Record Group 319) Investigative Records Repository (IRR) Personal Name Files, 1939- 1976 — Box 264 HAPSBURG Otto XE137058, October 28, 1946 report entitled: "Archduke Otto von Hapsburg" from Lt-Colonel Dale M. Garvey (970th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment, United States Forces, European Theatre).
[14] NARA: NAID 205714489, Collection HST-PSF: President's Secretary's Files (Truman Administration) Series: Subject File Unit: Foreign Affairs File, 1940-1953: Austria and Czechoslovakia — March 19, 1946, Memorandum from President Harry S. Truman to Secretary of State James Byrnes, attaching a letter from Otto von Habsburg.
[15] Featuring the Rudolf's Crown as the letter header as a clear reference to his persistent claim to Imperial legitimacy.

that the movement is 'inconsistent with democracy.'"[16] Otto while noting that it was "obvious that this move was dictated by Russia," expressed his disapproval that such Russian demands had "been signed by America" and brought "the name, the reputation and the responsibility" of the United States into ill-repute.[17]

As late as May 1950, American intelligence agents reported regarding Legitimism that "it is in the interest of France to install as many monarchist movements in Germany and Austria, as possible."[18] US officials recounted in detail how in occupied Austria, Habsburg brothers, Karl Ludwig and Rudolf, were in French occupied Tyrol sector of Austria serving in French military uniform, with direct access to local military government authorities. SPÖ representatives of the installed government in Vienna formally requested that the French transfer the Habsburgs out of Austrian territory.[19] Tyrol coincidentally was a district which was the power base of Monarchism in Austria. French embassy official in Vienna, Raymond Poussard, promptly responded that it was the position of Paris "that Habsburg question was one for Austrian authorities."[20] Having learnt from the repeated attempts of Karl in 1921 and confronted with Habsburg brothers arriving on Austrian soil in military uniform, most spectators in early 1946 were fearing an imminent arrival of Otto himself. US officials in Austria were concerned about these "persistent reports received here that Otto is in Monastery at Feldkirch, Vorarlberg." The response of the appointed provisional government authorities was the confiscation of property belonging to the monarchist *Bund der Oesterreicher* in Tyrol."[21]

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[16] NARA: NAID 205714489, Collection HST-PSF: President's Secretary's Files (Truman Administration) Series: Subject File Unit: Foreign Affairs File, 1940-1953: Austria and Czechoslovakia — February 28, 1946, letter from Otto von Habsburg to President Harry S. Truman.
[17] Ibid.
[18] NARA: Records of the Army Staff (Record Group 319) Investigative Records Repository (IRR) Personal Name Files, 1939-1976 — Box 264 HAPSBURG Otto XE137058.
[19] NARA: 860.0011/1-1846, January 18, 1946, telegram from Gray (Vienna) to James F. Byrnes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[20] Ibid; Poussard would be later identified by Soviet occupying forces as an obstacle to their interests, going so far in 1948 as to detain and transport the French diplomat against his will at gunpoint till the intervention of British military police forces. See: Unknown, "British Provosts Prevent Red Grab," *The Daily News* (Perth, Australia), October 1, 1948, p. 8.
[21] NARA: 860.0011/1-1846, January 31, 1946, telegram Auspolad (Vienna) to James F. Byrnes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

Once more the question of theory and praxis vis-à-vis the on the ground occupation of Austria would gain acknowledged importance. Bishop Hudal —while his image was largely discredited— demonstrates a view of the Allies popular with Legitimists and other politically active Catholics, writing to his superiors that:

> "In the interest of the Church I hope and wish that among the allied troops also strong French contingents, with a Catholic general and interested in the revival of a strong and Catholic Austria, will take part in the military occupation of Austria."[22]

An 18th January 1946 secret telegram to State Department in DC relayed with concern the tension between Habsburg family and Austrian socialists which was constituting an emerging flashpoint between the Western powers and the Soviet Union. To avoid an unnecessary provocation, in June 1946 the US State Department warned embassies scattered throughout Europe against creating a diplomatic *faux pas* by conferring diplomatic protocol upon Habsburg family members, thus bestowing de facto recognition of their claims to legitimacy.[23] The US State Department went on to stress the need to:

> "Make clear in discussions with Austrians and your French colleagues that US considers monarchist activity and presence of Habsburgs in Austria is not (repeat not) conducive to amicable Four Power relations in Austria."[24]

Nevertheless, the ultimate contradictions of the Great Powers between nominal political indifference to —and practical opposition to— Habsburg intervention was decried by Legitimists, tolerated by Conservatives, and welcomed with relief by Socialists. The US State Department recommended that the "pre-1938 laws which are unobjectionable from a political standpoint, however, should be continued or revived at the discretion of the occupation authorities."[25] This "political standpoint" of the "military government" would be to impose an interim civil order based upon the 1920 constitution and its amendments, "[p]ending the promulgation of a new Constitution by a constituent assembly

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[22] AAEESS: Fodo Perido V [Pontificato di Pio XII (1939-1958)], Parte Prima (1939-1948), Austria, Pos, 923, La Casa d'Asburgo e l'Austria. Progetti per il dopoguerra, 1943-1956, Ff. 44.
[23] NARA: 860.0011/6-646, June 10, 1946, telegram Amlegation (Stockholm) to James F. Byrnes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[24] NARA: 860.0011/1-1846, January 31, 1946, telegram Auspolad (Vienna) to James F. Byrnes (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[25] NARA: Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, Stack 190, Row 01 Shelf 7, Box 7, June 8, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany report, "The Treatment of Austria."

elected by the Austrian people."[26] US State Department planners further proposed the maintenance the pre-war, post-Versailles frontiers, with the sole notable exception of the Austro-Italian border, calling for this previous 1919 annexation to "be rectified by the cession of the Italian providence of Bolzano subject to minor adjustments."[27] This "retrocession" of South Tyrol was theorised by the US as potentially forwarding "political and economic reconstruction of an Austrian state."[28] There was therefore appetite in US diplomatic circles to give Austria some favourable terms on the territorial question but not the constitutional question.

The Soviet occupation of Lower-Austria, Burgenland, and a portion of Upper-Austria was the justification for the additional extended occupation of Hungary on the grounds of the Magyar plains constituting a key logistical link to Red Army forces there. However, US State Department officials did not anticipate a Cold War stalemate leading to the long-term four-way partition and occupation of Austria.[29] Their prognostic envisaged a collegial common vision between Moscow and Washington, one based on mutual aims. Before George Kennan's February 22, 1946, so-called "Long-Telegram" from Moscow to Secretary of State in D.C., such retrospectively hopes were certainly commonplace. The following month saw a much more open warning in the form of Winston Churchill's March 5th, 1946, Iron Curtain speech at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri. Therein, he declared Vienna and Budapest to be two of "the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe" to have fallen behind new the "iron curtain" of Soviet domination.[30] This sentiment accords with Kennan's drawing attention to how "Moscow has no abstract devotion to UNO [UN] ideals. Its attitude to that organization will remain essentially pragmatic and tactical."[31] It is in this light that the October 1943 multilateral Moscow Declaration on a post-War ordering of Europe must be understood.

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[26] Ibid.
[27] NARA: Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, Stack 190, Row 01 Shelf 7, Box 7, June 21, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany summary report "The Treatment of Austria: Policy Recommendations."
[28] Ibid.
[29] NARA: Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, Stack 190, Row 01 Shelf 7, Box 7, June 8, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany report, "The Treatment of Austria."
[30] PRO FO: 371/51624, March 5, 1946, British Information Services transcript of Winston Churchill speech at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri.
[31] NARA: 861.00/2 - 2246: Telegram, George Kennan (Moscow) to James F. Byrnes Secretary of State, February 22, 1946.

George Kennan argued that in the Soviet campaign for total control over its sphere of influence, any cultural group not susceptible to infiltration and subversion would be declared public enemy and targeted for destruction:

> "Thus, all forms of international organization not amenable to Communist penetration and control, whether it be the Catholic [sic.] international economic concerns, or the international fraternity of royalty and aristocracy, must expect to find themselves under fire […]."[32]

In this mould, a 1947 "special report" article of the prominent Soviet-backed *Österreichische Zeitung* began with the title: "Otto Habsburg – the protégé of American reaction: the background to monarchist activity in Austria."[33] In Moscow's propaganda the Habsburg question was presented as a "card in reserve […] to be used for the American plan of turning Austria into a second Greece."[34] In such a manner the Habsburgs were the enemy of the proletariat, engaging in "wild, unbridled agitation against the Soviet Union."[35]

In striking continuity between NS and Soviet propaganda, Moscow emphasised how Otto would freely switch between Austrian and Hungarian identities depending on audience. Communist messaging further sought to paint Otto's exile as one of lavish comfort and even decadence, only attaching himself to the war effort after the Winter of 1943 when Allied victory became foreseeable[36] The tone and intensity of anti-Habsburg propaganda can be seen as either a genuine fear of potential Legitimist advances or indicative of its perceived utility to discredit the moderate Centre-Right. Soviet authorities took great exception to Otto's plan for a Danube Federation and engaged in polemic apologetics for their own re-drawing of the map of Central and Eastern Europe. For them,

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[32] Ibid.
[33] F.B., "Otto Habsburg — der Schützling der amerikanischen Reaktion: Die Hintergrund der monarchistischen Aktivität in Oesterreich," *Österreichische Zeitung*, October 26, 1947, p. 3.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] This propaganda narrative runs directly counter to historical fact, even known at the time. Otto had renounced Nazism from before its rise to power and as early as March 1938 he had tried to prevent Anschluss by demanding to be allowed to return to Austria and lead a military defense of his fatherland, a known and previously published fact even in Communist propaganda. See: Unknown, "Schuschnigg verhandelte mit Otto Habsburg," *Neues Österreich*. March 25, 1947, p. 3.

Otto had merely "named the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy with a new name: 'Danubia'."[37] Pro-Western exiled leaders of central European nations were termed "the reactionary dregs of Europe that had settled in America" where the exiled communists of Central Europe hosted by Moscow were the "democratic representatives abroad [who] wanted nothing to do with Mr. Habsburg or his plans."[38]

In Budapest there was initial widespread violent persecution of the Church by the conquering Soviet Red Army, culminating even with the shooting of the archbishop of Györ. The death of Cardinal primate Serédi and the Soviet expulsion of Papal Nuncio to Budapest, Msgr. Angelo Rotta, in March 1945 left a significant power vacuum which Soviet opportunism was quick to exploit. Pius XII therefore made a statement by choosing József Mindszenty for the first post-war high-ranking appointment in Central Europe in October 1945. Historians such as Kent view the new Cardinal Primate as "a Habsburg loyalist who was anti-republican, anti-democratic, and anti-communist" who carried with him "a reputation as a difficult and intransigent individual."[39] The Vatican Secretariate of State in considering potential candidates for this prestigious office were presented with a report from Fr. Töhötöm Nagy S.J. —reinforced by an August 14th, 1945, private audience with Pius XII— which came to the "Conclusion: all the virtues and defects of the most excellent statesmen are to be found in József Mindszenty."[40] However, in this assessment, Nagy noted in the negative list of arguments for Mindszenty's candidateship:

> "His is known for his royalism. A permanent fixture in his room was a portrait of Otto von Habsburg, heir-to-the-throne; each year, on the anniversary of the death of Charles IV, the last King of Hungary, he held a solemn funeral mass."[41]

It was clear that Mindszenty as "a consequential and determined man who does not shrink from difficulties" would be useful in standing up to Communist infringement on the rights of the Church, however, likewise, his potential willingness to provoke the ire of

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[37] F.B., "Otto Habsburg — der Schützling der amerikanischen Reaktion: Die Hintergrund der monarchistischen Aktivität in Oesterreich," *Österreichische Zeitung*, October 26, 1947, p. 3.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Peter C. Kent. *Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII: The Roman Catholic Church and the Division of Europe, 1943-1950* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), p. 98.
[40] Nagy Töhötöm, *Jezsuiták és szabadkőművesek* (Buenos Aires: Danubio, 1965), p. 198–200, cited in Margit Balogh, *Victim of History: Cardinal Mindszenty, a Biography* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2021), p. 154.
[41] Ibid.

Communists was a source of concern.[42] Nagy would make his concerns known to Mindszenty, communicating the results of a further October 23rd, 1945, papal audience in which Pius XII concluded:

> "A Habsburg restoration would be very salutary for a Catholic block in central Europe, but who will do this now? We are very far from this today."[43]

Just as Catholics in Central Europe —with the support of the Vatican— attempted to conflate the international Socialism with National Socialism, so too did the Moscow attempt to conflate anti-Marxist conservatives as reactionary fascists. Key to de-legitimising anti-communism would be the co-opting of interwar tensions to exploit national and class prejudices by reviving the Habsburg Question as a wedge to marginalise and divide anti-communist political resistance. By 21st December 1944, Marshall Voroshilov —as the Soviet chairman of the Allied Control Commission for Hungary— established a provisional assembly with himself deciding on the proportional representation of the various non-Fascist groups.[44] Like in Austria, in line with the Red Army's selective enforcement of martial law, freedom of movement was only granted to political agents of the Hungarian Left; Communist provisional authorities installed loyal Marxist Hungarians in the state bureaucracy and then "declared the old officials undemocratic and purged them."[45] The Soviet authorities however refused to allow the participation of any Catholic party —not to mind an explicitly Monarchist party— and using a form of executive prerogative, mandated coalition collaboration between the Centre, Centre-left and Communist party. For the Smallholder party —with an absolute majority of the vote— "cooperation became a total submission to Communists."[46]

With Soviet help, the original Kingdom of Hungary was proclaimed to be abolished on February 1st, 1946, the new Hungarian republican constitution would later be

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[42] Ibid.
[43] Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (OSZK, National Széchényi Library) Kt. 216. f. 19. ő. e. 301–302. fol. and 48. ő. e. 3. fol., Töhötöm Nagy's report for József Mindszenty, October 23, 1945, cited in Margit Balogh, *Victim of History*, p. 161.
[44] Peter C. Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII: The Roman Catholic Church and the Division of Europe, 1943–1950* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), p. 113.
[45] Stephen D. Kertesz, "The Methods of Communist Conquest: Hungary 1944–1947," *World Politics* 3, no. 1 (1950): p. 20–54, https://doi.org/10.2307/2009010, p. 26, 30 & 36.
[46] Ibid., p. 46.

proclaimed on August 20th 1946, a date which added insult to the injury incurred by Monarchist of all stripes on account that that day being the liturgical feast of St. Stephan.[47] In this transitional constitutional structure between Kingdom and sovietised People's Republic, the Kossuth inspired 1848 inspired coat of arms was adopted as new interim state iconography. Such a move was not a telos but a means for Moscow. Having fractured the anti-Communist forces of the new Hungary, moderate democrats would be temporarily tolerated while Magyar nationalist and Habsburg Supranationalist factions would be politically marginalised. Such an exclusion would not be tolerated by Mindszenty, who could not be creditably accused of being associated with the previously fascist order, having been imprisoned by the 1944 Hungarian Arrow Cross regime. Therefore, he stated publicly that he was no believer in a republican democratic form of government. Peter Kent asserts that Mindszenty's supranational Legitimism was linked to "the principles of state autocracy."[48] Nonetheless, while it is true that Mindszenty, like many Catholic clerics, not only had sympathy for the plight of Karl and maintained links with the dynasty in exile —and would gladly facilitate a return of Habsburg power should such a prospect prove feasible— it does not necessarily follow that he was of an autocratic persuasion. Otto was undertaking a concentrated effort to re-brand the Habsburg image as one rooted in the principles of constitutional restraint and democratic collegiality. This campaign was most conducive to the case of Hungary, not only to juxtapose his political philosophy with that of the Horthy and Arrow Cross regimes but also to lean into the traditional mindset of the Magyar nobility and peasantry which saw the crown of St. Stephan as a *Magna Carta*-like safeguard of rights.

Mindszenty as Prince-Primate believed that his office as archbishop of Esztergom[49] made the stewardship of the crown of St. Stephen incumbent upon him personally until such time that a rightful —necessarily Catholic— king could take up office. In this way

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[47] Tadeusz Kopyś, "The Crown of St. Stephen as a Symbol of Legal Continuity and Hungarian Constitutionalism (Historical Background)," *Cracow Studies of Constitutional & Legal History* 15, no. 3 (July 2022): p. 382.

[48] Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII*, p. 113.

[49] See *Mindszenty Memoirs*, p. 36, cited in Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII*, p. 114; The sovereignty of Esztergom —as the highest ecclesial office within Hungary— from the Middle Ages having served the role as mediator between Empire and Pope had not suddenly become obsolete in the post-1945 period. It was in this vein that one of the first acts of office, Mindszenty transmitted a telegram to the Soviet-appointed provisional government polemically declaring: "The highest constitutional authority of the country stands ready to serve his native land."

the crown as a supernatural and legal entity —in addition to the social contract derived from it— could not be revoked by mere human degree and therefore the cardinal saw himself as a sort of regent.[50] Upon taking up his office, Mindszenty addressed the Catholic faithful from the pulpit:

> "Many a constitutional bastion lies still in ruins, but the Primate is here […] as your Archbishop and Primate [I] shall take my place in the reconstruction and promotion of our constitutional life."[51]

Claiming to not only to be a stakeholder in the affairs of state but to uphold the traditional St. Stephen theory and the prerogative of the Church to ensure the common good in the public life of the nation, Mindszenty was on a direct collision course with the Stalinist agenda in Hungary.

Soviet occupation forces in December 1945 gave permission for a new nuncio to Budapest, Peter Kent suspects such approval to be part of a divide and conquer strategy of Moscow to dilute and marginalise Mindszenty's influence.[52] To send a nuncio to Budapest in the midst of Stalinisation ran the risk of constituting a de facto endorsement on the part of the Vatican. November that year Mindszenty went to Rome to report to Pius XII and plead his case. His absence coincided with Prime Minster Zoltán Tildy's announcement of a republican constitutional transition. For the cardinal this was a personal betrayal by the party he had publicly endorsed.[53] Tildy was a Calvinist clergyman and his role in precluding a Habsburg restoration was seen by his Catholic counterparts as another sectarian undermining of the sacred Hungarian constitution. The British representative in Budapest, Alvary Gascoigne, reported back to London how he urged caution and patience to Mindszenty, recommending that a Nuncio appointment be expeditated. The Tildy-brand of republicanism was acceptable to the Western powers when compared to an alternative Sovietisation.[54] For the cardinal, the mere existence of communists in the collation government —in addition to the Red Army occupation— made Stalinist subjugation

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[50] Sabrina P. Ramet, *East Central Europe and Communism: Politics, Culture, and Society, 1943–1991* (Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2023), p. 64.
[51] *Hungarian Courier*, October 8, 1945, cited in Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII*, p. 114.
[52] Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII*, p. 116.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Gascoigne (Budapest) to Bevin, January 7, 1946, FO, R856/2567/21, cited in Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII*, p. 117.

inevitable. Both Pius XII and Mindszenty had seen Marxist revolution first-hand and both men saw supranational Catholic monarchy —no matter how unlikely to be achieved—as the corresponding ideal solution.

John Flourney Montgomery, an American diplomat who had served in Budapest from 1933, reflected after Hungarian liberation: "I am not of the opinion that the Austro-Hungarian Empire was a political monstrosity. Everything I have learned since I have been here convinces me to the contrary."[55] Such views amongst isolated high-ranking Western representatives was a cause of great concern for Moscow. In contrast to relative protestant passivity, Mindszenty excommunicated Catholic members of the national assembly that voted for the infringing on the Church's rights in the field of education in June 1948.[56] At this juncture, the Communist authorities made the calculation it was more expedient to suffer the fallout of silencing his vocal dissent that tolerate his continued opposition. In January 1949 the Soviet propaganda machine across Europe pushed the narrative that the Hungarian "treacherous cardinal" Mindszenty had betrayed his nation by having "negotiated with Otto" for a monarchist coup in Budapest.[57] Biographer of Cardinal Mindszenty, Margit Balogh, correctly argues that "Mindszenty's daydreaming concerning a change of regime" was not concrete plot. While working to have the crown of St. Stephen transferred to the Vatican for safekeeping may have aroused suspicion, any actual liturgical rite of coronation conferred upon Otto from exile would have been counterproductive to the immediate interests of the Church in Hungary.[58]

Cardinal Mindszenty had indeed long been in contact with the Habsburg family, having visited young Otto and his mother Zita in their early 1920s Lequeitio exile.[59] Now as a potential rallying point of resistance against a Communist consolidation of power, the

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[55] John Flournoy Montgomery to Homer M. Byington, September 14, 1939, Folder 1, Box 3, John Flournoy Montgomery Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, USA, cited in Zoltán Peterecz, "George F. Kennan and Hungary: A Cold War Visionary and a 'Remarkable People with Rich Civilizational Qualities,'" *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)* 30, no. 1 (2024): p. 184.
[56] Ramet, *East Central Europe and Communism*, p. 64.
[57] E.B., "Mindszenthy verhandelte mit Otto: Neues Material über die hochverräterische Kardinals veröffentlicht," *Neue Zeit*, January 7, 1949, p. 1.
[58] Margit Balogh, *Victim of History*, p. 350.
[59] Stephan Baier and Eva Demmerle, *Otto von Habsburg: Die Autorisierte Biografie* (Vienna: Amalthea-Signum-Verl., 2002), p. 67–68.

leader of the Catholic Church in Hungary was arrested and formally accused of plotting to steal the Crown of St. Stephen for an illicit coronation of Otto to provide a *casus belli* for American invasion.[60] On "The Habsburg Issue," *The Irish Press* noted on the arrest of Mindszenty that "at present there are very slim prospects that he [Otto] will become a king."[61] Previously, in June 1947, Otto did in fact meet with Mindszenty —then Bishop of Veszprém— in Chicago where they discussed the possibility to re-new US wartime interest in "a Habsburg-led Catholic federation in Central Europe."[62] Furthermore, the two men had agreed —having learnt from the lessons of Interwar Hungary— that the best *modus operandi* to forward Political Catholicism would not be the establishment of a separate Legitimist party, but to "seek representation in existing suitable parties, take up jobs, and seek to sustain the legitimist ideal by way of social contacts."[63]

After hours of interrogation, Mindszenty was issued with a pre-written confession to sign. The alleged incriminating acts were five-fold. Firstly, a protest against the foundation of a people's republic. Secondly, maintaining "contacts with and meeting with Otto von Habsburg in the United States in the summer of 1947." Thirdly, drafting a "cabinet list for the future kingdom of Hungary." Fourthly, collaborating with the American embassy to incite a Third World War. Finally, conspiring to prevent the crown of St. Stephan being handed to Communist authorities in Budapest so as to be able "crown Otto von Habsburg when the proper time came."[64] Mindszenty retrospectively recounted responding to his interrogator that these allegations were "full of falsehoods and misinterpretations" and the result of a regime merely desiring to retaliate against "a person justifiably [who] criticized the methods and the despotism of the Communists."[65]

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[60] The Crown had been smuggled out of Hungary by the Royal Hungarian Crown Guard on March 27th, 1945. Until January 5, 1978, it would be held outside Magyar territory, up until 1970 held in Fort Knox, Kentucky, —alongside the US gold bullion depository —without the consent nor knowledge of Budapest.

[61] Unknown, "The Habsburg Issue," *The Irish Press*, December 30, 1948, p. 1 & 9.

[62] Margit Balogh, *Victim of History*, p. 262.

[63] Prímási Levéltár [Primatial Archives] Processus, V–700/1. 75–76. fol., Interrogation record of Mindszenty, January 5, 1949, "With verifier's signature," found in Margit Balogh, *Victim of History*, p. 262.

[64] József Cardinal Mindszenty, *Memoirs*, trans. Richard Winston, Clara Winston, and Jan van Heurck (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974), p. 100.

[65] Ibid.

Mindszenty sought to point out the obvious self-contradictions of Stalinist Hungary arguing with the secret police under his interrogation:

> "It is true I warned against the proposed law making our country a republic […] [e]ven today anyone, assuming that we live under a democratic government, is legally entitled to found a party that aims at restoring the monarchy."[66]

The archbishop recounted his interrogation as a "well rehearsal ritual: refusal of my signature, return to cell, a beating, and at dawn another brief interview in the interrogation room."[67] It is an obvious fact that had Otto returned to Budapest in 1945/46 he would receive a worse fate beyond the detention and exile his father had encountered. If there is anything to be learnt from the Mindszenty affair it is that the Communist officials in Moscow would not tolerate even potential anti-communist agitation within their new buffer zone of satellite states.

Even though King Michael I of Romania was the key factor in his county's mid-war re-orientation from Axis to Allied camp, he was nonetheless forced to abdicate by the Soviet occupying forces on 30th December 1947 and Sovietisation followed subsequently.[68] If such a fate was to befall a pro-Allied monarch with a communist government willing to align his country to Soviet geopolitical interest, it signalled that within Moscow's aspirational sphere of interest, total —not partial— Stalinisation would be mandated. The communist *Homo Sovieticus* could not be subordinated to a king of hereditary right. Furthermore, US intelligence reported on a 1948 Red Army political manual issued to occupying soldiers in Austria which characterised the newly founded ÖVP as "an irreconcilable enemy of the Soviet Union […] the vicious enemy of all progress, of all democratic reforms and transformation […] sabotaging the work of de-nazification."[69] Such a narrative conveniently made room for the justification of a prolonged imposed occupation.

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[66] Ibid., p. 101.
[67] Ibid., p. 103.
[68] Imre-József Balázs, "Creating the 'New Man': Propaganda and its Alternatives in Hungarian Literature from Romania 1948–65," in *War of Words: Culture and the Mass Media in the Making of the Cold War in Europe*, ed. Judith Devlin and Christoph Hendrik Müller (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013), p. 180.
[69] CIA: CIA-RDP80-00810A004400680006-6, July 13, 1954, report entitled: "Excerpt from Soviet Political Manual on Austria."

7.4: Coalition and Compromise

In a 1947 lecture at the University of Edinburgh Christopher Dawson noted of traditional sacred symbols such as crown and sceptre in a modern post-war world: "No doubt these things to-day have a vestigial and antiquarian character and no longer represent living forces in either the political or the religious sphere."[1] The US State Department proposed that while America "never having accorded de jure recognition to the union of Austria with the *Reich*, [and] should favor the prompt restoration of Austria as an independent state" the viability of any Austrian state would "depend on a solution of its internal problems and an adjustment of its political and economic relations with its neighbors."[2] This concern with the "viability" gave not only the two Cold War blocs but regional small states a say in the shape, territorially and constitutionally, of the revived Austria.

Swiss authorities were themselves content to offer refuge to the Schuschnigg family provided that they did not undertake politically destabilising activities. This was put to the test when Schuschnigg gave a 5th April 1946 "closed-door" lecture in Basel, Switzerland, for *The Association for Christian Culture* entitled "Austria's Tragedy."[3] The head of the Swiss Federal Finance and Customs department and Social Democrat member of the Federal Council, Ernst Nobs, petitioned the head of Justice and Police department to prevent such a lecture going ahead on account of Schuschnigg having been a "dictator of a Christian-Social nature."[4] In contrast, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* condemned what they saw as the "undemocratic intolerance" of the political Left which "threaten to riot" to prevent

[1] Christopher Dawson, *Religion and Culture* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1948), p. 109.
[2] NARA: Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, Stack 190, Row 01 Shelf 7, Box 7, June 8, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany report, "The Treatment of Austria."
[3] CHA: B.44.33.Au.HX, November, 16, 1945 report "Kurt von Schuschnigg, alt Bundeskanzler Österreich. Einreise in die Schweiz (Dossiers)"; CHA: Dr. Kurt von Schuschnigg, alt Bundeskanzler Österreich. Einreise in die Schweiz (Dossiers), C.16.6039/D/ro., March 26, 1946, letter from Swiss police (Bern) to Ed von Steiger.
[4] CHA: Dr. Kurt von Schuschnigg, alt Bundeskanzler Österreich. Einreise in die Schweiz (Dossiers), March 27, 1946, letter no. D.2024/ES from Ernst Nobs to von Steiger.

Schuschnigg from speaking.[5] The lecture was envisaged by the co-organisers to be of a "cultural-historical manner" and promised Swiss authorities that Schuschnigg "would scrupulously avoid any current politics in his lectures."[6] Such mirroring of Austrian political divides in Switzerland finds strong continuity with Karl's initial Swiss exile more than twenty years prior.

The US State Department in 1944 recommended that: "As soon as military conditions permit, political activity should be permitted to those groups demonstrably seeking to establish democratic political life."[7] Once again, what would be deemed to constitute acceptable "democratic political life" was not defined and therefore open to pragmatic interpretation. In the post-war context, Legitimists did not wish to publicly associate themselves with the neo-absolutism of Habsburgs in generations past nor the recent authoritarian VF regime. In line with the current geopolitical environment, their proposed constitutional monarchism was largely modelled off the example of the UK and Scandinavian states. In such a pivot, Otto sought to align his Legitimism with the anti-Tyrant foreign policy of the United States. However, such a reconciling of the principles of the US founding fathers and Habsburg-style Catholic Monarchism was a herculean task. Otto made the following appeal to Truman:

> "I challenge anyone to find in the program or the past actions of the Austrian Monarchists anything in contradiction with democracy. I ask: is it really such a crime against democracy to work for a fair plebiscite on the question, whether our people want the Republic or the Monarchy?"[8]

Otto informed the White House that it was for him "unbelievable" that a movement which "2,317 of its members died fighting against the Nazis and that at least 6,456 of its members were sent to German prisons or concentration camps" should now —in an

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[5] Unknown, "Freiheitsrechte — je nachdem," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. April 2, 1946.
[6] CHA: Dr. Kurt von Schuschnigg, alt Bundeskanzler Österreich. Einreise in die Schweiz (Dossiers), Apirl 9, 1946, letter no. 9.1840/1B. Prof. Dr. Joh. Bapt. Villiger of *Der Geschellschaft für christliche Kultur Luzern* to von Steiger.
[7] NARA: Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, Stack 190, Row 01 Shelf 7, Box 7, June 21, 1944, Inter-Divisional Committee on Germany summary report "The Treatment of Austria: Policy Recommendations."
[8] NARA: NAID 205714489, Collection HST-PSF: President's Secretary's Files (Truman Administration) Series: Subject File Unit: Foreign Affairs File, 1940-1953: Austria and Czechoslovakia — March 19, 1946, Memorandum from President Harry S. Truman to Secretary of State James Byrnes, attaching a letter from Otto von Habsburg.

apparently liberated Austria— be cast in the same light as that force they so vehemently struggled against for years. Just as Wilsonian Self-Determination had limits, so too did the US vision for democracy in liberated Europe. As stated in the Moscow Declaration, Austria would be treated as a liberated state, but importantly, that she would have a special status of partial culpability for her part in facilitating German war crimes. Within this polemic, the so-called *Opferthese* (Victimhood Thesis) would be key to the success of the Habsburg cause.

Prominent historians such as Richard Evans put support for Anschluss in 1938 Vienna at between 25% and 33% of the population.[9] For Otto, such a conflation was so intolerable that he was willing to warn Truman of Communism: "After all, people did not die in order to replace one dictatorship by another."[10] Even in November 1952, Churchill – in his personal correspondence with Otto– stated he had "the freedom and independence of Austria very much at heart" and demonstrated that he was more than willing to address Otto as "His Imperial Highness, The Archduke Otto of Austria."[11] Furthermore, after many Habsburg-sympathetic interventions in the House of Commons throughout the 1930s, Duncan Sandys in 1947 founded the *United Europe Movement*. Matching the thinking of Winston Churchill —Sandys' father-in-law— he called for European unity in the face of Soviet expansionism and was eager to encourage Central European solidarity. Later in December, Otto and three of his brothers arrived in London as guests of British royal family for the wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Philip Mountbatten with it being noted that "Queen Mother Mary [was] stated to have shown and to be showing sympathetic interest in Otto."[12] Subsequently, Otto and his brother Robert met in May

[9] Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power: How the Nazis Won Over the Hearts and Minds of a Nation* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), p. 655.
[10] NARA: NAID 205714489, Collection HST-PSF: President's Secretary's Files (Truman Administration) Series: Subject File Unit: Foreign Affairs File, 1940-1953: Austria and Czechoslovakia — March 19, 1946, Memorandum from President Harry S. Truman to Secretary of State James Byrnes, attaching a letter from Otto von Habsburg.
[11] HOAL: Letter (Churchill to Otto), November 12, 1952; Conducted with official 10 Downing Street Prime Minister paper.
[12] NARA: 863.0011/12-2447, December 29, 1947, airgram, US State Department (London) to George C. Marshall (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

1950 with Francisco Franco for lengthy discussions in El Pardo palace.[13] Nonetheless, despite sympathetic consideration from Catholic and aristocratic circles, it was becoming clear that Otto –having the possibility of restoration denied to him– was re-branding as an anti-communist Cold War European citizen-statesman in the Christian Democratic tradition.

At a Mariazell[14] meeting in May 1952, 300 Catholic leaders —lay and clerical— met to map out the reimagining of Church-State relations in the new Austria which was to be presented to the September Catholic Congress in Vienna.[15] Similar to concurrent efforts to seek reconciliation within Germany between Catholics and Lutherans, and between Conservatives and Social Democrats; Austrian Catholics wanted to move beyond the polemics of *Heimwehr* and *Schutzbund*. Later in 1952 the *Salzburger Nachrichten* ran an article for the occasion of Otto's 40th birthday. The writer of this article, Alfons Dalma, juxtaposed his value as "being an independent journalist" to those —presumably communists— who "conceal what politicians would rather do in secret."[16] Noting Otto's public activities, the Dalma wrote:

> "One can easily come across Otto von Habsburg while travelling in Europe […] This young man, who speaks English, French and Spanish as fluently as he does without an accent, is so obviously Austrian. […] His manner and kindness are those of an Austrian aristocrat, but his abhorrence of all forms of dilettantism and his modern thinking, utterly detached from the nostalgia of the past, clearly distinguish him from the average type of the Austrian high-aristocracy."[17]

The author of the article notes how —consistent with the constitutional uncertainly in which occupied Austria found herself— Otto politely accepted divergent forms of salutation from Austrians he met with abroad "who are not quite sure how to behave towards the head of the House of Habsburg and are already wrestling with the problem of

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[13] Baier and Demmerle, *Otto von Habsburg*, p. 203; The Palace was now in 1950 the official residence of the Spanish dictator, but in 1922 it had been the temporary residence of the Habsburg family in exile under the protection of Alfonso XIII.
[14] Catholic pilgrimage site in Austria dedicated to the Virgin Mary.
[15] Boyer, *Austria 1867-1955*, p. 936.
[16] Alfons Dalma, "Dr. Otto Habsburg: Zum 40. Geburtstag des Chefs des Hauses Österreichs," *Salzburger Nachrichten.* November 19, 1952, p. 3.
[17] Ibid.

how to address him."[18] The conservative journalist further bemoaned the "Jacobins" of the political Left –described as "those eternally anxious Republicans"– who "probably can't imagine anything other than Legitimist conspiracies when it comes to their attention that some politician has met with Otto von Habsburg."[19] He urged the Left to engage with Otto personally rather than adopt what he saw as a disproven caricature of the exiled Archduke. Notwithstanding, for Austromarxists, this treatment of Otto as an apolitical erudite celebrity was open Legitimist propaganda disguised as a harmless journalism.

Even if the new ÖVP —as a de facto successor to the CSP— and SPÖ could set aside the ghosts of their interwar paramilitary past, Otto von Habsburg was one spectre which loomed large in the political discourse of the nascent Second Republic. Otto, like the Sudeten-Germans of Czechoslovakia, –of which he was an ardent advocate—was a displaced person on account of his lineage and political claims derived thereof. Maximilian Graf outlines the various studies examining Austria as Cold War refuge, arguing "that the Austrian state's treatment varied depending on the respective ethnicities of those stranded on the country's territory after World War II."[20] In this existence of hierarchies of hospitality extended to those from abroad who considered liberated Austria their home, the Sudeten-Germans would be welcomed into the new Austria. However, Austria was no Cold War refuge for Otto and his immediate family.

In the assessment of historians such as Michael Kraus, for Moscow, the Austrian question was a means to undermine future German geopolitical strength rather than a strategic priority itself.[21] The KPÖ were traditionally a marginal force in Austrian politics on account of the SPÖ's interwar success in capturing a near monopoly of the working-class urban vote, particularly in so-called Red Vienna. Through the materialist class-conscious lens of the Kremlin, the differences of Berlin and Vienna were the product of a historic process of carefully fostered arbitrary religious prejudices by the Habsburg and Hohenzollern dynasties. Moscow, on pragmatic grounds, certainly didn't want a united

[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Maximilian Graf, "Austria as a Cold War Refuge: Reassessing the Historiography," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 71, no. 4 (December 1, 2022): p. 642.
[21] Michael Kraus, "Kultura". Der Einfluss der sowjetischen Besatzung auf die österreichische Kultur 1945–1955, PhD University of Vienna, Vienna, 2008, p. 6.

Germany with Austria. Nonetheless, she —like the KPÖ and SPÖ in the early interwar period— failed to articulate a positive rationale for Austrian statehood. Michael Kraus notes how the Politburo now struggled to uphold a distinction between Prussian-ness and Austrian-ness in the post-1945 era.[22]

In practical terms, Austria remained at the centre of the Cold War years after her apparent liberation. As Dieter Bacher argues, Austria in 1950, was considered by MI5 as "the only highway from the West into the Satellite countries" and the frontline target of Eastern intelligence efforts.[23] Nonetheless, Tony Judt sees Vienna's geographical position on the western side of the Iron Curtain and recognition in the Moscow declaration as the "first victim" of Hitlerite aggression as constituting a "double stroke of luck which gave Vienna the chance to cast off its past."[24] Birgit Johler and Magdalena Puchberger note that in the wake of the ÖVP November 1945 electoral success in the first free elections of the new —still occupied— Austria:

> "Those circles that had set the tone in the 1930s and especially in the first Austrian dictatorship (the Austrofascist corporate state) again took the lead in state and cultural policy."[25]

How this new political success could be translated into cultural momentum and how this would manifest in the development of the nascent state's emerging civic identity would remain to be seen.

The VF regime had placed tremendous importance on the concept of cultivating Austrian and regional identity in an effort to distinguish a viable Austrian-ness. Johler and Puchberger agree that these efforts of Seipel, Dollfuss, and Schuschnigg "provided the basis for the renewed commitment to an independent, sovereign Austria after 1945."[26] This "Austria ideology" would highlight resistance to National Socialism and trivialise

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[22] Ibid.
[23] NARA, RG 319, Box 118, Vienna Espionage Ring, Exhibit I—Translation of Statement made by Rudolf Vala, August 1, 1951, p. 6, cited in Dieter Bacher, "Rudolf Vala: Czechoslovakian Intelligence in Austria 1949–1951," *International Journal of Intelligence & Counterintelligence* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2024): p. 79.
[24] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*. (New York: Penguin, 2005), p. 16, cited in Moser, Gotz, and Ege, *Zur Situation der Volkskunde*, p. 205.
[25] Ibid., p. 208.
[26] Ibid.

collaboration with the National Socialism. Nonetheless, without Western support for a *Quadragesimo anno* inspired state at the heart of Europe, article one of the 27th April Austrian independence declaration read: "The democratic republic of Austria is restored and established in the spirit of the constitution of 1920."[27] Karl Renner and Adolf Schärf signed for the SPÖ, for the KPÖ, J. Koplenig, and for the re-branded CSP, now ÖVP, Leopold Kunschak. The lattermost representative had been a prominent party figure in the CSP and the VF, heading the First Republic Vienna CSP and was a member of the VF state council from 1934-38. Importantly however, he was not a supporter of the *Heimwehr* nor Dollfuss and thus occupied the rare role of moderate of the interwar Right. Nevertheless, a young Leopold Kunschak had advocated for the culpability and internment of Jews in 1917 for undermining the Habsburg's Monarchy's war effort[28] and by 1920 the US had described him as a man of humble non-aristocratic lineage who's "political horizon seems narrow and his views commonplace and without originality."[29] As chairman of the CSP, Kunschak, throughout Interwar Austria, had appealed to workers with anti-Semitism rhetoric seeking to win them from the SPÖ and NS camp.[30] By 1937, the US reported of confidential informants alleging that Kunschak had desired to secure "assurances that a more democratic form of government would return to Austria with restoration" instead of the "rather vague statements" from his fellow-VF Schuschnigg that Otto's restoration would bring with a "Social Monarchy."[31] Now as president of the National Council, a 73 year-old Kunschak was viable proof of not only continuity between

[27] Karl Renner, Adolf Schärf, Leopold Kunschak, Johann Koplenig, "Proklamtion," *Neues Österreich*. April 28, 1945, p. 1.
[28] Patrick J. Houlihan, "Was There an Austrian Stab-in-the-Back Myth?: Interwar Military Interpretations of Defeat," in *From Empire to Republic: Post-World War I Austria*, ed. Günter Bischof, Fritz Plasser, and Peter Berger (University of New Orleans Press, 2010), p. 67–89.
[29] NARA: 863.00/336, June 24, 1920, report no. 451 entitled "Interview with Leopold Kunschak, Christian Socialist Leader" from Halerbard (American Mission in Vienna, Austria) to Bainbridge Colby (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[30] Florian Wenninger, "Eine krankhafte Erscheinung […] im Programm der sonst so tüchtigen und vortrefflichen Christlichsozialen Partei." Antisemitismus im Politischen Katholizismus vom Fin de Siècle bis zum Austrofaschismus," in *Antisemitische und rechte Netzwerke in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, ed. Linda Erker and Michael Rosecker (Vienna, 2023), p. 76.
[31] NARA: 863.00/1335, February 23, 1937, report no. 1063 entitled "Developments in the Austrian Internal and External Situation" from George S. Messersmith (American Mission in Vienna) to Cordell Hull (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).

the CSP of old and the new ÖVP but also of self-declared anti-Semitism within Political Catholicism.[32]

Seeming to confirm the theories of Viennese anti-Semites, across the border in Hungary, the secular Jewish Mátyás Rákosi as the new leader of Soviet Hungary gave a May 17, 1946, speech to the Hungarian Communist Party's Central Committee. Therein, he opened by denouncing the West Powers declaring:

> "The Anglo-Saxon powers want to use the peace negotiations to ensure for themselves the greatest possible spoils and to stem as much as possible the democratic tide that has been appearing all across Europe with the collapse of fascism."[33]

Rákosi warned the party meeting that the "British will still pursue these peace negotiations in the spirit of the old reactionary, Eden-type foreign policy."[34] The Communists had previously suffered a crushing defeat in the November 4th, 1945, elections with less than 17% of the vote and now sought to form a coalition and conquer with a "salami tactics" strategy.[35] For Rákosi in 1946 the risk of Habsburg "royalist restoration" allowed him to justify the Communist undermining of electoral democracy on the grounds that it had been used to facilitate "restorationist-legitimist intrigues."[36]

Traditionally the crown of St. Stephan not only "externally symbolizes the sovereignty and international independence of the Hungarian state" but additionally "embodies a power rooted in the nation, belonging to the king and the people together."[37] This ran contrary to the Marxist materialist conceptualisation of democracy and political authority in which the *demos* were considered to be the proletariat which exercised *krátos* (political power) in their name as a dictatorship. Stephen D. Kertesz in 1950, cataloguing

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[32] Thomas Berger, *War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 96.
[33] "Report of Mátyás Rákosi at the Meeting of the HCP Central Committee May 17, 1946" found in Csaba Békés, László Borhi, Peter Ruggenthaler, and Ottmar Trasca, *Soviet Occupation of Romania, Hungary, and Austria 1944/45–1948/49* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2015), p. 188.
[34] Ibid., p. 190.
[35] Ibid., p. 186.
[36] Ibid., p. 191.
[37] Ákos Timon, *Magyar alkotmány – és jogtörténet különös tekintettel a nyugati államok jogfejlődésére* (Budapest: Hornyanszky Viktor Cs. És Kir. Udvari Könyvnyomda, 1902), p. 103–4. Cited in Tadeusz Kopyś, "The Crown of St. Stephen," p. 369.

the Communist coup in Budapest, noted that in 1945 Hungary was in the worst geopolitical situation of any European country. He argues that the Magyar state "did not enjoy much sympathy in the West, and was positively disliked by the Russians" with the conquering liberators finding before them a "devastated country an almost complete vacuum of political power."[38] Despite this unenviable position, Hungary and Czechoslovakia were areas of former NS occupation in which free and fair elections occurred as promised by the Yalta Agreement and, therefore, constitute poignant case studies of "Communist penetration tactics" in the subsequent subversion of democracy.[39] A 1949 periodical article —written in Esperanto— to mark the centenary of Kossuth's Republic declared the occasion served to reaffirm the Hungarian people's resolve:

> "To oppose the efforts aimed at the enthronement and restored rule of the Habsburgs —and their allies the landowners— to defend our people's democracy, evolving towards socialism."[40]

To win the battle within the international-minded domestic audience, Stalinist Hungarian propaganda emphasised a new supranationalism to supplant that of the old Habsburg order. The regime narrative was that Budapest could assert that "with the Soviet Union and the people's democracies [satellite states] we have an invincible force, and that strength can now halt the dying imperialists."[41]

In contrast, within Austria, the US State Department were enacting a "Psychological Offensive" and felt secure at the strength of local anti-Communism. To them, the little Central European Alpine land could serve as a forward operation post for influencing occupied peoples behind the Iron curtain which had historically looked to Vienna for leadership in the Danube region.[42] Demonstrating what Günter Bischof terms "the leverage of the weak," she was capable of playing the two camps off one another, simultaneously exploiting US containment theory and Soviet concerns regarding the

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[38] Kertesz, "The Methods of Communist Conquest," p. 20.
[39] Ibid.
[40] And Raŝi, "Centjara datreveno de Daklaracio pri hungara sendependeco," *Hungara Esperantisto*, April–May 1949, vol. 2, p. 1–2.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War*, trans. Diana M. Wolf (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 77.

vulnerability of the Hungarian plains.[43] The post-Stalinist Soviet withdraw was only possible after securing Austrian neutrality. Likewise, the acquiescence to Austrian sovereignty was also only made possible by the completion of Sovietisation in Hungary. For Legitimists, however, imposed republican neutrality in Austria and Sovietisation in Hungary was not the product of "leverage of the weak" but rather weakness leveraged upon.

Nevertheless, a favourable consensus on Austria's recent historical legacy and modern reform would need to be achieved before any withdrawal of occupation would be permitted. There was apparent international reservation on the part of some western diplomats to the validity of the *Opferthese*. UK ambassador to Austria — Sir Harold Caccia— reported back to Eden in 1951 how:

> "It should be remembered that Austria yielded with so little opposition and afterwards accepted her violator with such enthusiasm that it was legitimate to wonder whether it was a case of rape or seduction."[44]

Post-1945 ÖVP leader, Federal Chancellor Leopold Figl, sought to uphold the *Opferthese*, countering with the argument:

> "The complete absence of military reaction on the part of the Great Powers and the weakness of their diplomatic reaction was discouraging for the Austrians."[45]

Figl addressing a London foreign ministers conference on 30th January 1947 that a supranational existence not isolationism should be the basis for the new Central European political order:

> "The Austrian loves his beautiful homeland and is well aware of his historically based Austrian culture, which arose from the coming together of numerous peoples."[46]

Figl was of common mind with Schuschnigg and even international Catholic voices such as Christopher Dawson that rather than the unilateral imposition of Anglo-Saxon or Soviet ideals upon German-speaking Central Europe; "somehow or other the elements of a new

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[43] Günter Bischof, *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945–44* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999), p. 5.
[44] Caccia to Eden, November 16, 1951, FO 371/93597, PRO, cited in Bischof, *Austria in the First Cold War*, p. 10.
[45] Leopold Figl, *Österreich kämpft um den Staatsvertrag!* (Vienna: Albrecht Dürer, 1947), p. 2.
[46] Ibid., p. 1.

political order must be found in the German tradition itself."[47] For the US occupation of Germany the solution of democratic "re-education" would be applied to the problem of "fascist behaviour patterns and autocratic attitudes that had been diagnosed as a result of fascist brainwashing."[48] Austria was to receive a supposedly "softer approach" referred to as "reorientation."[49]

In what, Oliver Rathkolb would term the "Paradoxical Republic" of early Cold War Austria, "political observers both in Austria and abroad had their eyes fixed on members of the house of Habsburg, whose every move was noted."[50] The Leftist, Moscow-directed, press in Austria construed the narrative of "monarchist ghosts" such as Otto were subservient to "overseas masters" and therefore had rightly "been stripped of his citizenship by the Hungarian people's democracy" but due to Bourgeois reactionary influence in Austria, still retained Austrian citizenship.[51] Key to securing the future of the still exiled Dynasty would be the Otto's marriage to Princess Regina of Saxe-Meiningen with a 1951 wedding in Nancy, France, the traditional capital of Lorraine.[52] The Austrian conservative and staunchly anti-communist *Salzburger Nachrichten*[53] reported positively of an "invasion of Austrians, Hungarians, Bohemians, Croats and Slovaks" descending upon the city and granted full titles to "Otto of Austria," "Princess Regina," and "the Empress Zita."[54] Taking great satisfaction in the "splendour" of the wedding, the newspaper declared:

> "The French side left no stone unturned in making a festival out of the wedding of the eldest son of the last Emperor of Austria-Hungary, which, for a moment, made one forget that Otto of Habsburg is a prince in exile, that Nancy is not Vienna or Budapest."[55]

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[47] Christopher Dawson, *Understanding Europe* (New York: Image Books, 1960), p. 68.
[48] Wagnleitner, *Coca-colonization and the Cold War*, p. 67.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Wagnleitner, *Coca-colonization and the Cold War*, p. 90; Oliver Rathkolb, *The Paradoxical Republic: Austria 1945–2005* (New York: Berghahn, 2010), p. 264
[51] Unknown, "Ihr Kollege— 'Seine Hoheit,'" *Österreichische Zeitung*, April 25, 1951, p. 3
[52] The official dynastic house title being that of "Habsburg-Lorraine" even since Maria Theresa's marriage to Francis III, Duke of Lorraine and Bar, in 1736, the new title arising out of the prohibition in Salic law against female monarchs ascending to the throne of Holy Roman Emperor.
[53] Rathkolb, *The Paradoxical Republic*, p. 25 & 87–89.
[54] Dr. T.-D., "Die Hochzeit von Nancy," *Salzburger Nachrichten*, May 12, 1951, p. 1 & 3–4.
[55] Ibid.

International representatives of the governments of France, Spain, Belgium, and Luxembourg –in addition to a telegram from Pope Pius XII– gave the impression of the wedding as a public, imperial, affair and not a matter of private persons.

As a form of protest at their exile, for the occasion, flowers from Schönbrunn palace and the devotional image of Our Lady of Mariazell was loaned by the Bishop of Seckau, Ferdinand Pawlikowski, to be placed upon the main altar. Furthermore, Austrian soil contained in cushions had been gifted for the wedding couple to knee upon.[56] Such gestures, combined with claims of between 80,000 and 100,000 attending the procession, [57] were red cloth to the bull of Soviet-backed press in Austria and Hungary. Listing ÖVP politicians in attendance, *Die Neue Zeit* speculated such profiteers "will undoubtedly have made a handsome profit in the highly feudal atmosphere."[58] The Socialist press sought to link the wedding to the upcoming second ballot for the election of Austrian president between former VF —now ÖVP— Heinrich Gleißner and the SPÖ's Theodor Körner, speculating with polemic election-time rhetoric:

> "Such dishonest hearts these gentlemen have. To greet a monarch, they travel through three countries. And in the villages of their homeland, they persuade their own people to elect a president of the republic. Did Otto von Habsburg give them permission?"[59]

Rebuffs also came in the form of the Soviet-backed *Österreichische Zeitung* which boldly declared Otto to be "the unemployed pretender to a non-existent Austrian throne."[60] Further proof of Otto being a US vassal was argued based on the attendance of US diplomats at the Nancy wedding and the unsubstantiated allegation that the entire event "was financed by the Americans."[61] Waiting till after the second round of the May Austrian presidential election to cover the wedding in detail, the *Österreichische Zeitung*

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[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Unknown, "Hochzeit im Hause Habsburg Die illustren Gäste aus Kärnten bei den Feierlichkeiten in Nancy," *Die neue Zeit*, May 11, 1951, p. 2.
[59] Ibid.
[60] G. Dadianz, "Hochzeit m Nancy," *Österreichische Zeitung*. June 28, 1951, p. 6.
[61] Ibid.

claimed that the American plot to install the "fascist candidate Gleißner" had failed and they rejoiced:

> "However hard the American millionaires and billionaires try to resurrect the old reactionary garbage, however hard they try to push Europe back into the Middle Ages, they will not succeed. The old days are over."[62]

These so-call "old days" —even if not looked to for political schema— were however a source of romantic nostalgia seen to have the utility to shore up a precarious Austrian identity. Part of Austria's "reorientation" would be a re-discovery of pre-NS Austrian culture in the depoliticised format of a *Heimat* film genre. This would culminate in 1955 with the first instalment of Ernst Marischka's *Sissi* trilogy on the life of Franz Josef and his wife Empress Elisabeth with its emphasis on idealised rural landscape and Imperial splendour.[63]

Washington D.C.'s view of Austria —despite not officially incorporated into the NATO alliance— was that once she was a free and democratic state with her own identity, the domino theory was upheld. For Moscow, Austria in her entirety could not be aligned to her sphere of influence and a partitioned Austria would be a micro-state, even less viable than East Germany. Furthermore, the prospect of withdrawal offered the new Khrushchev regime a chance to assert its break from his Stalinist predecessor, saving face in the process by means of having left a neutral republican Austria in their wake. In line with Günter Bischof's theory of "leverage of the weak," domestically to moderates, Leopold Figl could also paint the 1955 State Treaty as a stunning success of courageous little Austria asserting itself on the international stage; a supposed victory of principle over the mere *fiat* of Superpower intimidation. Furthermore, he could likewise sell the deal to his own party as being the chancellor who expelled the red Soviet menace, even if Legitimism was a collateral casualty.

The reception of the Austrian State treaty in the London House of Commons was somewhat mixed. While there was a certain tone of relief at the final conclusion of a ten-

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[62] Ibid.

[63] Aili Zheng, "Contested Identities and Public Spaces in Recent Austrian Film," *Modern Austrian Literature* 34, no. 1/2 (March 2001): p. 54; O. G. Florek, *The Celebrity Monarch: Empress Elisabeth and the Modern Female Portrait* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2023), p. 13 & 19.

year occupation and apparent show of goodwill on the part of new Soviet regime, Conservative MP, William Teeling, did comment that his fellow parliamentarians should not lose sight that:

> "It is felt by many people in this country and in America, and also, I believe, throughout the world, that it is a little unfair that all their [Habsburg] goods and property should be confiscated and that none of them should be allowed back."[64]

Teeling —as an Irish-born Catholic— pointed to the example of the family members of French Bourbon Legitimist pretenders not being subject to the same restrictions in their native homeland. Such a claim of injustice was based on the newly codified Convention on Human Rights and the "very hard and tragic life up to the present time" which the Imperial family had to endure.[65] As almost a voice from the wilderness, Teeling argued that the Soviet Union had yielded on several aspects regarding the new Austrian constitution and —in not expressly advocating restitution for the Habsburg family— saw a weak-willed West having failed to stand by its values, exclaiming of the negotiations: "What a pity this was left out!"[66]

For parliamentarians like Teeling, the Habsburgs were —if nothing more—"very definitely, friends of the West."[67] No so for his colleague across the aisle, the Labour Party MP from Fulham, Michael Stewart, who immediately retorted that the Habsburg dynasty was —for many— irredeemably associated with "tyrannical rule in that country itself and imperial ambitions beyond its borders."[68] In making his argument Stewart invoked the memory of interwar Red Vienna poetically exclaiming:

> "The name Austria connotes many different things to different people; to some the splendours of the Imperial Court, to others music and gaiety, but to many it brings to mind the splendid progressive Government which was to be found in Vienna

[64] House of Commons debate on Austrian State Treaty Bill, June 29, 1955, found in House of Commons, *The Parliamentary Debates: Official Report, volume 543* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1955), p. 403-29.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.

> […] What happened in 1934, when Austria lost her democracy illustrates how important it is to Europe that she should be a democratic country."[69]

For many, even if some fruits of the Old Empire were desirable and worthy of preservation, the dynastic vine from which they sprouted was to be held anathema. The repeated implicit juxtaposition between democracy and Habsburg restoration —from a parliamentarian himself exercising political power in a constitutional Monarchy— is demonstrative of how the dynasty had failed to win over the international Centre-Left during the recent common anti-Nazi war effort. The legacy of Otto's association with reactionary Political Catholicism would not be soon forgotten.

The SPÖ too had reason to celebrate. Austria would not be a forward frontier of NATO and the republican form of government was irrevocably established on the international stage. This is not to say that the party grew complacent. Even with no direct threat of Monarchist restoration, every inch of encroachment by Legitimists on the Habsburg Question would be loudly decried. The Habsburg family would not see compensation for their lost lands and members of the direct family wouldn't see Austrian soil as long as the SPÖ had their way.

[69] Ibid.

Conclusion

The Habsburg dynasty transcended the fall of their Empire and continued to dominate Central European discourse deep into the middle of the 20th-Century. This thesis has examined in detail the Habsburg Legitimist movement and international reaction thereof. It provides a meaningful case study of supranational-minded Political Catholicism in simultaneous rigid opposition to both Wilsonian Liberalism and International Socialism. The dynasty as natural protagonists of this 20th-Century crusade persevered throughout the upheavals of industrial warfare, exile, and paramilitary violence; all the time standing by a *Reichsidee* dynastic principle of Catholic supranationalism. Despite isolated sympathetic "feelings of consanguinity,"[1] this continuity of Habsburg mission distinguished fundamentally the House of Austria from their Romanov, Hohenzollern, Bourbon, Savoy and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (Windsor) counterparts.

The American ambassador to Vienna, Frederic Courtland Penfield, remarked in early December 1916 of the young emperor Karl: "[W]hat his political views may be none outside his confidence can know."[2] Soon it would become rapidly apparent that his reign was one of persistent adherence to seeking idealistic reform rooted in this *Reichsidee* concept to resurrect a political order modelled on an Old-World Christendom with only moderate modern adaptations. Having failed to secure a multilateral peace and quell domestic revolution, Karl, in his September 1920 personal notes from Swiss exile, would bemoan how had the press supported him:

> "How easy it would have been at that time to win over the peace-loving people for my actions by pointing to my love of peace, despite the Siegfried-madness of the intelligentsia and politicians."[3]

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[1] AOS, Tom. I, Index 600, August 22, 1919, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) to King Alfonso XIII (Madrid, Spain), found in Elisabeth Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 535–36.
[2] NARA: 863.001785/27, December 3, 1916, report no. 2259 from Frederic Courtland Penfield (American ambassador, Vienna) to Robert Lansing (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[3] AOS: Tom. II. Index 694, September 8, 1920 Personal Reflections of Karl von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 615.

Recent experience granting him a pessismetic view of popular sovereignty from below, the exiled Emperor-King would –in paternalistic and Anti-Semitic sectarian fashion– privately conclude that "the people believe everything they are told" and that he should rather rest the justification of his cause in higher-authority:

> "Incidentally, one can rest assured that popularity is like a soap bubble: no sooner than a ruler has been idolised by his people, has he then done something that does not suit the short-sighted public opinion influenced by Jewish scoundrels and other rabble, then this 'love of the people' evaporates, no matter how much that action may be for the good of the people. In fateful decisions, there is only one thing for a ruler to do: he must act as he can, answering only to God."[4]

It was with a broken heart as much as broken lungs that he would die less than two years later after having failed twice to regain his throne in Budapest. Inspired by the sincerely-perceived saintly martyrdom of Karl, his wife, Zita would carry on this Habsburg spirit, instillng an unshakable Old Austrian charism in their Imperial heirs.

The international historiography of Austria-Hungary during the 1930s sought to carry out a post-mortem on the empire. In a similar fashion as studies on the fall of Ancient Rome, these works often drew teleological conclusions to justify the rise of respective successor states.[5] The Habsburgs were associated with neo-absolutist autocracy, an archaic remnant of Medieval Europe contrary to the supposed unstoppable forces of history, out of step with the progress of modernity and their destruction both justified and inevitable. It is in this context that the question arose, what were Austrian conservatives conserving? What were Christian Social values? Were they compatible with the values of a republic founded on the pillars of Secularism, Liberal Democracy, and Nationalism? The interwar Catholic reconciliation movement and Pan-European idealism could only achieve so much in laying the foundation for a desired spiritual and civilizational renewal which would see the Habsburgs invited to return from exile and lead Central Europe once more. Juxtaposing the espoused virtues of supernatural and supranational monarchy with the condemned errors of modern secular republics, from exile Otto entreated his aristocratic supporters:

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Adam Kozuchowski, *The Afterlife of Austria-Hungary: The Image of the Habsburg Monarchy in Interwar Europe* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), p. 15.

"In spiritual and moral independence from the perverted and mostly fleeting currents of the times, you will find strength in maintaining your tradition."[6]

In this effort he would be joined by a new chancellor, the aristocratic Kurt von Schuschnigg who would declare of the First Republic: "Out of the age of revolution there grew slowly and surely, in the course of fifteen stern years, the age of despair."[7] The one hope which could cure this despair was proposed to be Habsburg restoration and he would set about the "renewal of Austria," serving as much more a Regent for the Habsburgs than Horthy —who bore the title in Hungary— had ever been.

With the transition from Anschluss to Second World War –despite initially favourable support from Washington D.C.– Otto failed to mobilise the Austrian and Hungarian diaspora behind him. In a Cold War bi-polar political order, Otto, as an exiled Archduke, would eventually go about accepting his status as private citizen and European statesman but would never relinquish his advocacy for a truly Habsburg *Reichsidee*. This continuity and persistence mark out the Habsburg case as so vastly distinct from other exiles and ruling European royals. Otto would distinguish his Habsburg mission as in opposition to both the "pagan ideas" of 1789 and likewise Bourbon "royal absolutism" –as encapsulated in what he denounced as the decadent "spirit of Versailles" of the French court.[8] Even late into the 1950s Otto would argue —in principle and practice— that Monarchy as a "form of government is better able to serve the common good under the conditions of the future than any other." He further warned against making the principle of popular sovereignty from below the "source of all law and justice," arguing that to do so would "deprive them of their objective, enduring and transcendental character."[9] Nonetheless, not wanting himself to be cast in the light of being anti-democratic, Otto —alleging that the post-State Treaty Austrian "members of parliament no longer represent the people"— clarified that elected representatives "must be *tribuni plebis*, and not agents

[6] ACdS: Ministero della Cultura Populare Busta no.15, Propaganda presso glI Stati esteri 1930-1943, 17th December 1936 Report no. 4488-A73 entitled "Legittimismo in Austria" from Italian Legation (Vienna) to Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Royal Ministry for Press and Propaganda (Rome).
[7] Kurt von Schuschnigg, *Farewell Austria.* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1938), p. 47.
[8] Otto von Habsburg, *The Social Order of Tomorrow: State and Society in the Atomic Age*, trans. Ivo Jarosy (London: Oswald Wolff., 1958), p. 35.
[9] Ibid., p. 128 & 130.

of disguised groupings of sectional interests."[10] He pointed to the corresponding solution as a softer VF-style guild corporatism in an Upper-House to balance the excesses of the Lower.[11]

Habsburgs styled themselves simultaneously as defenders of the Catholic faith and unifying paternal guardians to religious minorities. The blame for the dynasty's repeated failure to maintain their rule –and later to achieve restoration– was not merely attributed to external forces such as Wilson or Stalin, but also to the alleged secretive machinations of Jews and Freemasons. This thesis has shown the centrality of this obvious fixation on questions of perceived Jewish subversion and freemasonic infiltration as the primary enemies recounted within Vatican and Habsburg confidential correspondence. The secret nature of Freemasonry makes it difficult to assess who was indeed associated with the movement and what tangible influence it may have had on the political activity of its adherents. While undoubtably arduous to disentangle reality from suspicion, it nonetheless remained a topic of preoccupation for proponents of Habsburg restoration, serving to both motivate and justify Legitimist agitation.

Otto would paint a narrative of his awareness of these apparent enemies of Christendom to a contrasting general lamentable naivete on the part of what he would refer to as an "Anglo-Saxon blindness" which —he reasoned to be dulled by a legacy of Protestant schism— only sought out "material reasons for communism" rather than understanding it as a spiritual disease.[12] For the Habsburgs of the first half of the twentieth-century, the exercise of power was proclaimed not an end in itself, but rather a means to fulfilling a supernatural and supranational mission at the heart of Europe. It must be honestly considered that there were occasions where if pragmatic *realpolitik* reconciliation vis-à-vis modernity had prevailed over the principle of the *Reichsidee,* temporary restoration might well have been possible as in the case of the House of Glücksburg in 1935 Greece. In the final assessment, this thesis concludes that such acquiescence was not within the Habsburg lexicon.

[10] Ibid., p. 132-3.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., p. 139.

Nonetheless, for Central Europe, unresolved legacies of Imperial patrimony rendered persistent pertinence to the Habsburg Question. For Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, it was both mirror and blueprint for the construction of a what Pieter Judson refers to as their own novel "little empires."[13] For the Catholic Right of Rump-Austria it was a familiar reactionary refuge of certainty in a time of incalculable discombobulation. For Red Vienna it was a *nom de guerre* for tyrannical suppression of a would-be workers utopia. For the Magyar Free-Elector faction it was a foreign imposed national humiliation and threat to feudal privilege. John W. Boyer thus correctly argues:

> "The history of late Imperial politics thus ended not in November 1918 but in April 1945, and perhaps more fundamentally in May 1955, when the final State Treaty was signed in the Belvedere."[14]

This thesis has argued that Habsburg attempts to adapt to geopolitical circumstance were hindered by the irreconcilability of their *Reichsidee* with forces of national popular sovereignty. Karl and Otto's democracy was that of Aristotle, Burke, and Tocqueville; a vision which they simultaneously lauded as expressly anti-totalitarian and anti-Liberal. They contrasted this with the rule of the *demos* as articulated by either Voltaire, Marx or Wilson. This latter ideal was regarded by Legitimists as ochlocracy in which political authority was fleeting and the false-god of progress always one further revolution away. Karl regretted having trusted in the goodwill of supposed allies and he lamented his own lack of decisive action to combat opponents whom he mistakenly thought he could win over through dialogue and reforms. This scepticism of the ability to reconcile the *Reichsidee* with the grievances of potential enemies was passed down to Otto. As inheritor of this dynastic burden, Otto –in the process of opposing both National and International Socialism– knew not to place too much trust in the benevolence of the same Western Liberalism which had to his mind facilitated the death of his father and the disintegration of his family's empire.

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[13] Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (London: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 388.

[14] John W. Boyer, *Culture and political crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 459.

This thesis has repeatedly presented evidence of how Otto, like his father before him, had been confronted with third parties –purporting to be allies– presenting a positive resolution to the Habsburg Question as momentarily "inopportune," "not actual," or "not yet ripe,"[15] counselling him to remain ever patient. Throughout seven chapters, this work has demonstrated how, faced with the dilemma to either take action or "continue to passively look on,"[16] both Karl and Otto were prepared to fire their arrow when the opportunity presented itself. However, whether in 1918, 1921 or 1945, they would not knowingly instigate civil war to return to the throne as an imposed conqueror. Otto would have certainly travelled to Vienna and assumed control between February and March 1938 had Schuschnigg not resigned himself to a fate of defeat. Thus, geopolitical circumstance and internal indifference had stifled restoration. If the international community as well as domestic allies had failed the Habsburgs, so too did the local episcopal hierarchy. NS coup attempts and intensification of pressure for Anschluss were rewarded with even the Austrian episcopate folding by declaring that NS reforms in occupied Austria would receive "the blessings of the bishops, who will exhort the faithful in this direction."[17]

As Maria Pronay insightfully argues, a coherent understating of the nature of historical Legitimism is of profound importance to our contemporary present and has occupied the minds of historians studying Interwar Central Europe in recent years.[18] Authoritarian VF Austria –imbued with what Elke Seefried terms "a Christian and occidental spirit"–[19] sought to promote what Adam Kozuchowski labels a "*mission*

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[15] NARA: 860.01/130, April 4, 1935, report no. 376 entitled "The Present Status of the Hapsburg Question" from Alfred W. Klieforth (Legation of the United States of America, Vienna) to Cordell Hull (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[16] AOS: Tom. II, Index 1575. January 04, 1921, letter from Karl von Habsburg (Disentis, Switzelrand) to Zita von Habsburg (Prangins, Switzerland) found in Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?*, p. 713-15.
[17] NARA: 863.00/1699, April 4, 1938, report no. 63 entitled "Sundry Developments in the union of Austria with the Reich" from Hugh R. Wilson (Embassy of the US, Berlin) to Cordell Hull (Secretary of State, Washington D.C.).
[18] Maria Pronay, "Legitimismus," in *Habsburgischer Adel: Zwischen Nation - Nationalismus - Nationalsozialismus (1870-1938/1945)*, eds. Marija Wakounig, Václav Horčička, and Jan Županič (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2021), p. 53.
[19] Elke Seefried, "«Reich» und «Ständestaat» als Antithesen zum Nationalsozialismus: Die katholische Zeitschrift Der Christliche Ständestaat," in *Das katholische Intellektuellenmilieu in Deutschland, seine Presse und seine Netzwerke (1871–1963)*, ed. Michel Grunewald (Vienna: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 435.

civilisatrice."[20] For a complex multitude of reasons from pragmatic domestic stability to ideological conviction, the Catholic Right in Austria envisioned the re-incorporation of the house of Austria at the vanguard of this effort. Public support for a Habsburg restoration —despite contemporary optimistic US assessments— is tremendously difficult to calculate. By means of close examination of a diverse range of institutional correspondence, this thesis concludes that internal Catholic assessments such as the Vatican diagnoses of wide-spread indifferentism is most convincing. Resurgent reactionism and common objectives of collective security failed to yield tangible results for the cause of Habsburg Legitimism. Never again would such favourable intersecting conditions of international solidarity and domestic sympathy present themselves to a Habsburg pretender. The hopeful patience and presumed good will of 1933-1938 Legitimism would soon give way once more to active resistance and direct confrontation in an age of occupation and diaspora exile.

The heart and head of the Legitimist movement was undoubtedly the Imperial family of Karl, Zita and then Otto. Looking to them, Legitimism survived through Socialist revolutions, Magyar consolidation, National Socialist occupation, Stalinist centralisation, Americanisation and finally Europeanism. However, this thesis has argued that each passing political order away from Habsburg monarchy further marginalised the dynasty from their goal of restoration. Both Karl and Otto had many Regents —both *de facto* and *de jure*– in the form of Horthy, Zita, Seipel, Schuschnigg, and Mindszenty. Over these regimes, as the distance of years from their reign grew and loyal memory faded, the project of Habsburg monarchism became increasingly an object of nostalgia and niche anti-establishment dissent.

Shaping this assessment has been the work of historian of interwar Austria, Lothar Höbelt, in pointing to the constitutional instability of the First Republic.[21] Even the continued use of the Imperial-invoking title "Austria" for the new German-speaking republic centred on Vienna was a point of contention. For Austrian communists it was a

[20] Adam Kozuchowski, *The Afterlife of Austria-Hungary: The Image of the Habsburg Monarchy in Interwar Europe* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), p. 14.
[21] Lothar Höbelt, "Almost a Record – Six Constitutions in Two Decades: Austria 1918–1938." in *Constitutional Order in Post-Versailles Central and Eastern Europe 1919–1939/1941*, ed. Dariusz Makiłła, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2024), p. 57.

"Habsburg-Republic,"[22] and for their milder Austromarxist SPÖ rivals it was a "bourgeois Republic."[23] In 1948 Karl Renner would describe the First Republic as "a land without a name."[24] Within this instability we see a Catholic Right undergo a series of evolutions attempting to make the most of their current republican predicament in the hope of obtaining good fruits from the bad tree of popular sovereignty. In pessimistic words which conflict with our current understanding of Central Europe, Schuschnigg in 1946 —recently liberated from NS concentration camp—would reflect on his legacy:

> "[Austria was] despite everything —from a purely ideological point of view— to a large extent a fiction; although there was a House of Austria and a State of Austria, there was in fact no actual Austrian race. The nation-building project to create an Austrian people failed."[25]

This thesis has arrived at the conclusion that, for Schuschnigg, the Habsburg dynasty was the epitome of Austria. The failure to secure a limited restoration meant the failure of his Austrian project. Nonetheless, Boyer notes how for "conservative university historians" in the 1950s and beyond —such as Hugo Hantsch, Leo Santifaller, and Adam Wandruzska— the Habsburg Empire could continue to be viewed from the perspective of a small post-Imperial Austria as a "culture bearer" at the heart of Europe bridging Germanic culture with Central and Eastern Europe. Their scholarly efforts would therefore work towards the "conserving and protecting the memory of the Empire's history after 1945."[26]

Otto as a proponent of supranationalism would point to the examples of Belgium and Switzerland –but notably, to his convenience, not Czechoslovakia– to prove the ahistoricity of assuming monolingual nationalism as foundation for the political ordering of state.[27] It is therefore not entirely surprising that despite Otto's anti-communism,[28] the 1956 anti-Soviet Budapest uprising looked not to Otto but to the 1848 anti-Habsburg

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[22] Unknown, "Habsburgerrepublik" *Die Rote Fahne*. September 3, 1915, p. 5.
[23] Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution* (trans. H. J. Stenning) (London: L. Parsons, 1925), p. 278.
[24] Karl Renner, "Austria: Key for War and Peace," *Foreign Affairs* 26, no. 4 (1948): p. 595, cited in Natasha Wheatley, *The Life and Death of States: Central Europe and the Transformation of Modern Sovereignty* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2023), p. 194.
[25] Kurt Schuschnigg, *Österreich, eine historische Schau* (Sarnen: Thomas Morus-Verlag, 1946), p. 23–24.
[26] Boyer, *Austria 1867–1955*, p. 27, referencing Johannes Holeschofsky, "Hugo Hantsch: Eine biographische Studie," PhD thesis, University of Vienna, 2012, p. 215–20.
[27] Otto von Habsburg, "The Old World and The New," *The Voice of Austria*. October 1941, p. 2-4.
[28] Otto Hörn, "Nach Starhemberg 'Kaiser'Otto?: Einreise des Habsburgers nach Österreich verletzt den Staatsvertrag," *Berliner Zeitung,* January 18, 1956, p. 1.

legacy of Kossuth to inspire their rebellion. Such indifference so shortly after the Austrian State Treaty put a definitive end to Habsburg aspirations at restoration and precipitated a definitive shift to Europeanism as a vehicle to carry what could be salvaged from the *Reichsidee* into the second half of the 20th-Century.

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