



universität
wien

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

**The Glasenbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung and its Psychology of
Defeat: 1947-2005**

verfasst von/Submitted by

Anna Solovy

angestrebter akademischer Grad/In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2018 / Vienna 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 066 803

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Geschichte

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Mag. DDr. Oliver Rathkolb

Abstract

Bis heute konzentriert sich die überwiegende Forschung zur Nachkriegszeit in Deutschland und Österreich auf Fragen zu Schuld, Justiz, Bruch und Kontinuität. Mit der Absicht die Wirkungsweise von Gerichtsentscheiden und Denazifizierung beziehungsweise die Beweggründe und die Erbarmungslosigkeit zahlreicher Nationalsozialisten zu untersuchen, gingen Wissenschaftler bislang davon aus Nationalsozialisten seien in der Nachkriegszeit bestrebt gewesen, sich von ihrer Naziidentität und -vergangenheit zu distanzieren. Wie die vorliegende Masterarbeit jedoch zeigen wird, können Wissenschaftler nicht a priori annehmen, dass alle Nationalsozialisten ihre Verbindung zum Dritten Reich nach dessen Kapitulation verdrängen wollten. So identifizierten sich beispielsweise die Anhänger der Glaserbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, eine Organisation früherer Nationalsozialisten zum Gedenken und Beistand der von den Alliierten im Camp Marcus W. Orr Inhaftierten, im Zeitraum von 1957 bis 2005 auch weiterhin öffentlich als Nationalsozialisten und verfassten Schriften, welche ihren Glauben an den Fortbestand der nationalsozialistischen Ideologie bekräftigten. Mit dem Abstreiten des Scheiterns Zusammenbruchs des Dritten Reiches gelang es den Mitgliedern der Vereinigung eben jene Selbstwahrnehmung aufrechtzuerhalten, welche sie in der Zeit des Dritten Reiches gepflegt hatten und die ihren Leben eine gewisse Bedeutung und einen Sinn gab.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Introduction	4
<i>1.1: The Capitulation of the Third Reich in Imagination and Experience</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>1.2: The Glasenbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung's Formation and Development</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>1.3: Existing Work on the Glasenbachers</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>1.4: Methodologies: Empathy as a Mode of Historical Analysis</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>1.5: Summary of Chapters</i>	<i>18</i>
Chapter One: The Structure of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung and its <i>Mitteilung</i>	20
<i>2.1: Membership</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>2.2: Content.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>2.3: Authorship.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>2.4: External Publications</i>	<i>27</i>
Chapter Two: Writing Away Defeat	31
<i>3.1: Reframing the Terms of Germany's Defeat</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>3.2: Writing as a Form of Kampf.....</i>	<i>36</i>
Chapter Three: Becoming a "Somebody:" Nazi Identity After the Third Reich	49
<i>4.1: Becoming a "Somebody"</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>4.2: The Überlebenden</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>4.3: The Glasenbachers' Deaths</i>	<i>59</i>

Conclusion: “Stunde Null” and Defeat: Two Historical Concepts.....	70
<i>5.1: The Stunde Null Paradigm.....</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>5.2: The Meaning of Defeat</i>	<i>73</i>
Works Cited and Referenced.....	76

Acknowledgments

I never would have been able to complete this thesis without the support and wisdom of countless individuals, from both sides of the Atlantic. Among many others, I would like to thank: Professor Oliver Rathkolb for agreeing to advise my thesis and for offering constructive feedback at important junctures during the process; Dr. Hans Safrian for his helpful comments during our Master Workshop; Peter Eigelsberger for kindly tracking down and scanning the book *Und Jede Stunde Tropf die Lageruhr*; Florence Klauda and Lena Christoph for their camaraderie in the *Zeitgeschichte* library; Christine Hulsizer for offering invaluable feedback on the thesis' second chapter; Matthias and Johannes Herrnegger for serving as my personal German-language consultants, not to mention for making evenings after long days in the library nothing short of delightful; and Grace Bejarano for her friendship and assistance with my abstract. Above all, I am indebted to my mentors and advisors from Williams College who, long past my graduation, have helped me to become a better scholar and person.

Introduction

1.1: The Capitulation of the Third Reich in Imagination and Experience

SS doctrine preached that in the event of Germany's defeat by the Allies, surviving members should by no means consider their duty to the National-Socialist cause void. Instead, Heinrich Himmler instructed surviving SS members to confront defeat by "bind[ing] their helmets tighter;" that is, to take up the mantle of the National-Socialist cause through any means at their disposal.¹ Yet after the spring of 1945 when defeat shifted from a feared possibility to a lived reality, the vast majority of Nazi perpetrators did not take measures to "bind their helmets tighter." To the contrary, most strove to deemphasize their affiliation with National-Socialism and retreat into the obscurity of the private sphere—or as the seminal historian Christopher Browning succinctly puts it, to "forget and be forgotten."²

For the remainder of the twentieth century former NSDAP affiliates muted their National-Socialist pasts in several different ways. Famously, high-ranking Nazi officials such as Adolf Eichmann and Josef Mengele fled to Latin America, where they adopted pseudonyms in the hopes of evading justice and beginning new lives entirely detached from their National-Socialist pasts. Others pursued anonymity by immersing themselves in familial life and avoiding political or cultural engagements that might transform them into more public figures. Those perpetrators who did have to publicly account for their allegiance to the National-Socialist movement during legal proceedings denied having an affinity for the ideology, reciting the commonplace trope of having followed the regime's orders for fear of reprisal or out of an abstract sense of patriotic obligation.

¹ Hans Buchheim et. al, eds., *Anatomie des SS-Stadtes*, Band 1, (Munich: Deutsches Taschenbuch, 1984), 281.

² Christopher Browning, "German Memory, Judicial Interrogation, Historical Reconstruction," in *Probing the Limits of Representation*, Saul Friedlander, ed., (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 28.

That most officials mired in the National-Socialist movement chose to suppress their affiliation to the NSDAP with the collapse of the Third Reich makes a good deal of sense in both pragmatic and ideological terms. Particularly during the immediate postwar period but also into the late twentieth century, many National-Socialists feared retroactive prosecution. The initial postwar trials targeted higher-ranking officials, however lower-ranking Nazis also worried that they would be indicted as local and global political climates shifted. Especially with a resurgence of trials and the onslaught of more frank debates about the Holocaust in the 1960s, former NSDAP members attempted to refute their allegiance to the Nazi Party in the hopes of strategically evading prosecution and preemptively making a case for their innocence.³

More significantly, the tenets and worldview espoused by the National-Socialist movement itself had impelled former constituents to “forget and be forgotten” in a post-Nazi world. National-Socialist ideology positioned Germany as engaged in a terminal fight for survival. Final victory in the war would signal the ultimate supremacy of the German race, but capitulation would mean its extermination. Defeat was thus interpreted by many Germans and Austrians as a moment of long-dreaded conversion in which they had to abandon their National-Socialist and German identities completely and live in accordance with the values, traditions, and ideologies of the occupying forces. One Viennese woman wrote in her diary as the Soviet army overtook her neighborhood on April 8, 1945: “Now we are Russian.”⁴ Germans and Austrians felt that defeat had irrevocably stripped them of their national culture and history; without

³ Katherina von Kellenbach articulates this in more complex terms in her book *The Mark of Cain: Guilt and Denial in the Postwar Lives of Nazi Perpetrators*, (Oxford University Press, 2013). See especially her chapter “From Honorable Sacrifices to Lonely Scapegoats.”

⁴ Diary, Josefine Neuwirth, File 84, *Kommission Wien 1945*, Historische Kommission, Wien Stadt- und Landesarchiv.

Nazism, that which had made them essentially German could become little more than a repressed memory.⁵

1.2: The Glasenbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung's Formation and Development

Given the widespread silence and amnesia among former Nazi officials about the Third Reich in the wake of its collapse, the members of the Glasenbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung (or “Glasenbachers,” as they referred to themselves), stand apart as uniquely committed to and outspoken about their identity as National-Socialists throughout the twentieth century and even into the twenty-first. Officially founded in 1957 in Linz, the Glasenbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung promised to serve, support, and celebrate the approximately thirty-thousand former National-Socialists imprisoned by the American military primarily between 1945 and 1947 at Camp Marcus W. Orr, or “Glasenbach,” (named after the Salzburg town in which the camp was approximately located).

Most of the incarcerated at Glasenbach were mid-ranking NSDAP members (*Ortsgruppenleiter* or above) who had been stationed in Austria during the Third Reich, but whom the Americans suspected of having held instrumental leadership positions in some capacity. The Americans designed the camp to be an important appendage of the “automatic arrest” program, a phase of the denazification process which involved detaining members of the SS, the SD, the Gestapo, or high-ranking officers in the Wehrmacht, and then retroactively sifting out the most egregious perpetrators for prosecution. When the Allies—in collaboration

⁵ A lively and longstanding scholarly debate about the culture of silence in postwar Germany and Austria persists into the present day. This debate largely revolves around the role of guilt in inducing a collective unwillingness to discuss the Third Reich in postwar Germany and Austria. Examples of scholarly work on the relationship between guilt and silence include: Sabine Behrenbeck, “Between Pain and Silence,” in Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann, eds., *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, (Washington DC: German Historical Institute, 2003), and, famously, Alexander Mitscherlich and Margarete Mitscherlich, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern: Grundlagen kollektiven Verhaltens*, (Munich: Piper, 1967)

with the three political parties newly elected into Austria's parliament: the SPÖ, the ÖVP, and the KPÖ —set out to create a denazification program for Austria, they initially hoped to castigate as many members of the NSDAP and its satellite organizations (The SS, the SA, the NS-Kraftfahrkorps, etc.) as possible on the basis of enrollment in the Party, rank within the Nazi apparatus, and activity during the war. In particular, they targeted “illegal Nazis,” or individuals who had joined the Nazi Party while it was banned by the Austrian government, prior to the Anschluss. However, interrogating and prosecuting all members of the NSDAP in Austria, as well as those party members who had been captured by the Allies within Austria's borders proved both politically inexpedient and logistically infeasible. In 1945, over 530,000 individuals living in Austria belonged to the NSDAP, and countless more were considered accomplices, if not official party members.⁶ Moreover, American forces overseeing the automatic-arrest process had difficulty determining how they could systematically distinguish between functionaries and war criminals. As a palliative measure against both obstacles, the Americans decided to use Camp Marcus W. Orr as a weigh station of sorts; they amassed as many potentially zealous National-Socialist as possible in one place, thereby giving themselves the time and space to determine who should be prosecuted, and who should merely be subjected to denazification measures.

⁶ The denazification process in Austria is well-documented. See: Hellmut Butterweck, *Verurteilt und Benadigt: Österreich und seine NS-Straftäter*, (Wien: Czernin, 2003); Sebastian Meissl, Klaus-Dieter Mulley, and Oliver Rathkolb, Eds., *Verdrängte Schuld, verfehlte Sühne: Entnazifizierung in Österreich, 1945-1955* (Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1986); Sonja Niederacher, "Die Entwicklung der Entnazifizierungsgesetzgebung," in Maria Mesner, *Entnazifizierung zwischen politischem Anspruch, Parteienkonkurrenz und Kaltem Krieg. Das Beispiel der SPÖ*, (Wien: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2005); Oliver Rathkolb, Maria Wirth, Michael Wladika, *Die 'Reichsforste' in Österreich, 1938-1945. Arsierung, Resitution, Zwangsarbeit, und Entnazifizierung*, (Wien: Böhlau, 2002); Walter Schuster and Wolfgang Weber, *Entnazifizierung im Regionalen Vergleich, (Historische Jahrbuch der Stadt Linz.)* (Linz: Archiv der Stadt Linz, 2004); Dieter Stiefel, *Entnazifizierung in Österreich*, (Wien: Europaverlag, 1981); Christian Stifter, *Zwischen geistiger Erneuerung und Restauration*, (Wien: Böhlau, 2014).

Over its entire lifespan, approximately 30,000 former or suspected National-Socialists spent some amount of time imprisoned in Camp Marcus W. Orr, with between 7,000 and 10,000 prisoners in residence at any given moment. Both men and women were imprisoned in the camp, although they were housed in separate compounds. Notably, three especially infamous National-Socialists spent time in Glasenbach: Hitler's sister Paula, Fritz Stangl, the commandant of the Treblinka death camp, and Felix Landau, who played an instrumental role in orchestrating the Einsatzgruppen's perpetrations in Galicia.⁷

Also among the Glasenbachers were individuals who would gain acclaim in the Austrian political sphere in late twentieth century, most notably: Felix Rinner, Fritz Stüber, and Prince Karl Anton Rohan. The Glasenbacher Felix Rinner was an Olympic athlete who had belonged to the *Wiking* division of the Waffen-SS, and eventually even served as Ernst Kaltenbrunner's chief of staff. Rinner was active in right-wing politics after his release from Camp Marcus W. Orr and was one of the pivotal figures in the formation of the Verband der Unabhängigen (VdU). In his biography, the Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky wrote about Rinner, his high school classmate, recalling Rinner's unyielding commitment to anti-Semitism and Nazi ideology until his death, and his participation in anti-Jewish riots at the University of Vienna. Like Rinner, the SS-officer Fritz Stüber also spent time as a prisoner in Camp Marcus W. Orr. Stüber gained notoriety after the War for his involvement in right-wing politics. He served as the Vienna *Abgeordneter* and *Obmann* for the VdU, and participated in the founding of the *Eckarbote*, a right-wing newspaper that oriented itself towards literary criticism. Finally, Camp Marcus W. Orr briefly housed Prince Karl Anton Rohan, a Bohemian Aristocrat who gained notoriety as a

⁷ On Paula Hitler's membership in the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, see *Mitteilung: Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher*, Issue 15, September, 1960. (The *Mitteilung: Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher* will hereafter be cited as "*Mitteilung*").

right-wing journalist and author. During the Weimar Republic, Rohan founded the famous *Europäischer Kulturbund*, a conservative cultural organization that included such famous affiliates as Hugo von Hofsmannsthal and Carl Schmitt. After the war Rohan, who had served as a journalist and news correspondent for the NSDAP, wrote for the right-wing newspapers *Die Aula* and *Neue Ordnung*.⁸

In addition to its concentration of prominent National-Socialists, the international make-up of Camp Marcus W. Orr's population is also noteworthy. Although the majority of the prisoners were Austrian civilians, members of the Croatian Ustasha as well as partisans from Egypt, Lithuania, Germany, Serbia, Slovenia, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Russia, and Latvia, were also imprisoned in Glasenbach.⁹ Scholars have found a collection of "Berufs-Kartei," or occupational cards, that offered insight into the demographic diversity of Glasenbach. Out of 4,897 occupational cards, (many of which did not include demographic information) 67 belonged to "stateless" individuals, 66 to ethnic Germans, 54 Romanians, 32 to Germans who had been born and raised in Germany, 32 from Hungary, 27 from the former Yugoslavia, 12 from the former Czechoslovakia, 12 from Croatia, 7 from South Tirol, 5 from Poland, four from Estonia, and two from Switzerland.¹⁰

⁸ For more on Rinner, Stüber, and Rohan, see: Jeffrey Bale, *The Darkest Side of Politics. Postwar Fascism, Covert Operations, and Terrorism*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018); Matthew Paul Berg, Ed., and Jill Lewis and Oliver Rathkolb, *The Struggle for a Democratic Austria: Bruno Kreisky on Peace and Social Justice*, (New York: Berghan Books, 2000); and Katharina Ebner, "Karl Anton Prinz Rohan und der Italienische Faschismus in Österreich," in Lucile Dreidemy et. al, *Bananen, Cola, Zeitgeschichte: Oliver Rathkolb und das Lange 20. Jahrhundert*, (Wien: Böhlau, 2015), 191-201 .

⁹ Wilhelm Svoboda cites the presence of Hungarians, Serbians, Slovenians, Croatians, Lithuanians, Estonians, and Latvians in Camp Marcus W. Orr in his article "Das Salzburger Internierungslager: Ein kritische Excurs" in *Salzburg 1945-1955, "Zerstörung und Wiederaufbau"*, (Salzburg: Salzburger Museum Carolino Augusteum, 1995), 121, (hereafter cited as *Zerstörung*), or Oskar Dohle and Peter Eigelsberger, *Camp Marcus W. Orr: "Glasenbach" als Internierungslager nach 1945*, (Linz: Oberösterreichische Landesarchiv, 2009), 86, 106-16. (Hereafter cited as "Camp Marcus W. Orr").

¹⁰ Dohle and Eigelsberger, *Camp Marcus W. Orr*, 97-99.

The administration of quotidian camp life was largely laissez-faire, and in fact, denazification measures were barely imposed in Glasenbach, limited to a single screening of the famous *Todesmühlen* (Death Mills) film.¹¹ Members of a music group in Salzburg were allowed to perform for the prisoners, and film screenings took place on a bi-weekly basis. Camp life for the prisoners was thus culturally vibrant, social, and even somewhat politically unrestrained. In fact, beginning in February of 1947, many inmates were granted furlough for holidays or for visits sick family members.¹² Nonetheless, the prisoners persistently and vehemently complained about the conditions and restrictions of camp-life both during their incarceration and long thereafter. They carped most intensively and consistently about having suffered from intense hunger. In reality however, the prisoners, who were guaranteed regular meals provided by the American army, fared much better than most Austrian and German civilians at the end of the war.¹³

Camp Marcus W. Orr was overseen by the U.S. General Sidney C. Wooten, who had commanded an infantry division stationed in Austria at the end of the war. As commander of the camp, Wooten was regarded by the prisoners as collegial, verging even on sympathetic.¹⁴ In fact, in 1972, Wooten sent a letter to the Glasenbachers expressing his hope that “the wounds of the past have healed well, even if the scars will remain forever.”¹⁵ He maintained correspondences with several prisoners for the remainder of his life, and the prisoners often described him as a

¹¹ Eva Maria Hoppe-Kaiser, *Hitlers Jünger und Gottes Hirten: der Einsatz der katholischen Bischöfe Österreichs für ehemaligen Nationalsozialisten nach 1945*, (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2017), 196, (Hereafter cited as *Hitler's Jünger*).

¹² Dohle and Eigelsberger, *Camp Marcus W. Orr*, 59.

¹³ Wilhelm Svoboda, “... Vorbehaltlos meine Pflicht Erfüllt.' Das Internierungslager Glasenbach (Camp „Marcus W. Orr“), *Zeitgeschichte*, Vol. 1-2, No. 22, 1995, 5, (Hereafter cited as “Meine Pflicht”)

¹⁴ For more on German-American relations during the occupation period, see Susan Carruthers, *The Good Occupation, American Soldiers and the Hazards of Peace*, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2016).

¹⁵ “Letter, Sidney C. Wooten,” in *Mitteilung: Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbachern*, Issue 62, June, 1972. (The *Mitteilung: Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbachern* will hereafter be cited as “*Mitteilung*”),

rare example of “good” and “honorable” American culture.¹⁶ Until 1946, Wooten exclusively employed American soldiers to serve as guards and other camp personnel. But in late December 1947, it was decided that the newly-minted gendarmerie of the Austrian Republic should oversee the camp’s administration and protection. This was a decision that was met with much excitement by the prisoners, who interpreted this policy-shift as a triumph of German Nationalism over American colonialism; indeed, as the changing of the guard took place, the prisoners reportedly assembled and sang the old National-Socialist anthem, “Deutschland Deutschland Über Alles.”¹⁷

With the terminal closing of the camp in January of 1948 the former inmates dispersed, some moving to different prison camps, others into the courtrooms, and the majority back into the general population. Ten years after the camp gates closed for good, Glasenbachers living in Linz decided to establish the Glasenbach Wohlfahrtsvereinigung. The organization characterized itself as a *Gemeinschaft*, or community, committed to offering members spiritual and material assistance as they weathered the trials and tribulations of the postwar world. They should form a *Gemeinschaft*, the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung explained, because “one alone is nothing, many are stronger, but best is everyone together!”¹⁸ The Wohlfahrtsvereinigung sought to assemble “everyone together” through two different platforms. First, they arranged annual meetings in Wels, Austria. There, thousands of members gathered to attend lectures and hold formal and informal discussions. Local chapters in each of the respective Austrian *Bundesländer* also held frequent reunions throughout the year.

¹⁶ Othmar Haidinger, “Festrede, Othmar Haidinger, 1980,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 94, June, 1980.

¹⁷ Svoboda, *Zerstörung*, 123.

¹⁸ *Mitteilung*, Issue 27, September, 1963.

In addition to arranging these reunions, between 1957 and 2005 the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung distributed a quarterly publication entitled *Mitteilung: Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher*. Regularly contributed to by a wide swath of Glasenbachers, the publications included regular columns, feature articles, poems, life-updates about various members, and historical and cultural analyses. The authors of the *Mitteilung* had a broad audience in mind: they refrained from referencing events or terminology unique to their shared experience in Glasenbach, but instead foregrounded topics that could be grasped by any German or Austrian reader across space and time. Some regional groups, wanting to provide more detailed commentary specific to their localized concerns, also took it upon themselves to draft and distribute their own quarterly newsletters. The Salzburg cohort, for example, printed an ancillary newspaper between 1965 and 1968.¹⁹

Many individual members of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung also took their own initiative in issuing works lauding and contextualizing the Glasenbachers' experiences. Beginning in 1950, a handful of those who identified themselves as Glasenbachers wrote memoirs and commemorative books—such as cartoon and poetry collections—about their experiences before, during, and after their imprisonment in Camp Marcus W. Orr. Most of the authors published these works independently from the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, but a select few were distributed in direct collaboration with the organization. Like the publications of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, these works exhaustively detailed their authors' experiences in Camp Marcus W. Orr while at the same time making a case for the ongoing and broadly applicable significance of the Glasenbachers.

¹⁹ *Nachrichten Glasenbacher. Mitteilungsblatt der Ortsgruppe Salzburg der Ortsgruppe Salzburg-Stadt u. Flachgau der Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher*. (Hereafter cited as "*Nachrichten Glasenbacher*").

Through these mediums the Glasenbachers wrote and published prolifically throughout the late twentieth century, producing 194 editions of its *Mitteilung*, dozens of regional newsletters, and upwards of eight external accounts of their experiences during and after their imprisonment in Camp Marcus W. Orr.²⁰ In addition to its volume, the Glasenbachers' canon of writings is striking in its uniformity. The diction and syntax invoked in the respective memoirs is almost identical, despite having been composed in different places and at different times. More markedly, although they wrote over the course of forty-eight years, the language employed by the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung in its *Mitteilung* not only mirrored that of the autobiographies, but also remained consistent across its entire lifespan. Aside from references to current events, it would be nearly impossible to date any given issue of the *Mitteilung* solely on the basis of its content, style, or structure.

Writing, then—and writing in a particular way—constituted the primary medium through which the Glasenbachers constituted their Gemeinschaft. More specifically, the Glasenbachers used writing in order to author and disseminate an imagined world in which they acted collectively and individually as agents of an unfolding historical process which had begun but did not end with Hitler's Third Reich. Writing as a collective enabled them to stave off a sense of loss and both preserve and amend the identity that National-Socialism had offered them, one which they found to be meaningful, empowering, and robust.

²⁰ These include: Joseph Hiess, *Buch einer Gefangenschaft, Glasenbach*, (Wels: Welsermühl, 1956), 20-1. (Hereafter cited as "Glasenbach"); Josef Hiess, *Wir Kommen aus Glasenbach: Buch einer Heimkehr* (Wels: Welsermühl, 1957), (Hereafter cited as "Wir Kommen"); Walter Hoffman, *So Sah ich Mich: Aufzeichn. d. PW 31G-5181013*, (Osnabrück: Munin, 1978), (Hereafter cited as "So Sah ich Mich"); Erich Kern, *Herz im Stacheldraht*, (Salzburg: Diana, 1950), (Hereafter cited as "Herz"); Franz Langoth, *Kampf um Österreich*, (Wels: Welsermühl, 1951), (Hereafter cited as "Kampf"); Lothar Rendulic, *Glasenbach-Nürnberg-Landsberg. Ein Soldatenschicksal nach dem Krieg*, (Graz: Stocker, 1953); Hans-Hadmar Meyer and the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher, *In dem Lager ist Österreich!*, (Salzburg: Rabenstein, 1957). (Hereafter cited as "Calendar"); *Und Jede Stunde Tropft die Lageruhr. Lyrik hinter Stacheldraht und Gefängnismauern*, (Linz: Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher, 1961), (Hereafter cited as "Und Jede Stunde").

1.3: Existing Work on the Glasenbachers

The term “Glasenbacher” is by no means unknown to historians of modern German and Austrian history. Over the past ten years in particular, renewed interest in the Glasenbachers has emerged in service of investigating the failures of denazification, and the inadequacies of postwar reconciliation and reintegration. In 2009, Oskar Dohle and Peter Eigelsberger published *Camp Marcus W. Orr: Glasenbach als Internierungslager nach 1945*. Their book is impressively meticulous. Using documentation from a number of different archives throughout Austria, Dohle and Eigelsberger managed to re-construct the organization, hierarchy, structure, and demography of Camp Marcus W. Orr. They also offer a guide to source materials and archives that historians might look to in undertaking further research, in addition to presenting transcripts of oral interviews that they conducted with a handful of former Glasenbachers. Their book ultimately serves as a guide to Camp Marcus W. Orr, primarily presenting facts and findings, rather than seeking to analyze and interpret the broader historical implications of Glasenbach.

While Eigelsberger and Dohle’s book represents the most comprehensive overview of the Glasenbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, Wilhelm Svoboda has most successfully placed the Glasenbachers within the broader context of postwar Austrian history. He has written two especially illuminating essays on Glasenbach: “...vorbehaltlos meine pflicht erfüllt. Das internierungslager Glasenbach (Camp Marcus W. Orr)” and “Das Salzburger Internierungslager: Ein kritische Excurs.” In both, Svoboda outlines the demography and statistical realities of the camp, before tracing the ways in which the Glasenbachers shaped the formation and propagation of parties such as the VdU, and later the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ). More importantly, Svoboda goes on to dispel the Glasenbachers’ claims of having been subjected to inhumane conditions—especially malnutrition—while imprisoned in the camp. To the contrary,

Svoboda demonstrates that between 1945 and 1947 the Glasenbachers fared much better than did the civilian population, in large part because they were guaranteed regular and relatively caloric meals.²¹

Though not primarily engaged with the Glasenbachers and their experience at Camp Marcus W. Orr, a handful of other historians have briefly invoked the Glasenbachers in crafting arguments about the denazification process in postwar Austria. In her recently-published book *Hitlers Jünger und Gottes Hirten*, Eva Maria Kaiser mentions the Glasenbachers in order to illustrate the nature of the interactions between clergy and interned National-Socialists in the aftermath of the war. She begins by discussing the relatively sparse denazification measures imposed on the Glasenbachers, before reporting on activities and associations of the Salzburg Diocese with those imprisoned in Camp Marcus W. Orr.²² In 2015, Margit Reiter also wrote about the Glasenbachers in her essay “Die ‘Ehemaligen’ nach 1945.” Therein, among other things, she explores the relationship between Glasenbach and the VdU/ FPÖ, and argues that the Glasenbachers’ experience in the camp compelled them to reconstruct their identity as heroes and victims of the war.²³

These aforementioned works collectively do much to outline the organization, political ramifications, and prisoners’ experience of Camp Marcus W. Orr. However, they constrain themselves to four topics: the organization and experience of the camp, the efficacy of denazification measures in Austria, the relationship between the Glasenbachers and the FPÖ/VdU, and the legitimacy of the Glasenbachers’ claim to victimhood. To date, no work has chronicled or analyzed the writings of the Glasenbachers; there is no systematic study of the

²¹ Svoboda, “Meine Pflicht,” 5.

²² Hoppe-Kaiser, *Hitler’s Jünger*, 195-203.

²³ Margit Reiter, “Die ‘Ehemaligen’ nach 1945,” in Lucile Dreidemy et. al, *Bananen, Cola, Zeitgeschichte: Oliver Rathkolb und das Lange 20. Jahrhundert*, (Wien: Böhlau, 2015), 575-90.

Glasenbachers' experience, motives, and identities, as a collective, after 1947, nor of the content and structure of their prolific *Mitteilung*. The afterlife of the Glasenbachers is a story that has yet to be told.

More significantly, scholars of modern German and Austrian history have not yet concertededly explored the connection between writing and the identity and postwar experience of former National-Socialists, a practice that was not only taken on by the Glasenbachers, but among many organizations of former National-Socialists throughout the late twentieth century: Kameradschaft IV, the Sozialfriedenswerk, and the Kameradschaft Aktiv, to name only a few. The following analysis, thus, represents a first attempt at examining how and why some former National-Socialists turned to writing—and narrative more broadly—after the war, in order to grapple with their hopes and anxieties about their pasts, presents, and futures.

1.4: Methodologies: Empathy as a Mode of Historical Analysis

The vast majority scholarship engaging with National-Socialists after the Holocaust has arranged itself around an investigation of guilt. Historians have sought to understand how and why former National-Socialist's attempted to mitigate feelings of guilt, and the extent to which they felt a retrospective sense of wrongdoing for having participated in the Nazi regime's genocidal project. The profligate writing about guilt is useful and illuminating and has inspired a number of paradigm-shifting works on National-Socialism, most notably: Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Adorno's *Guilt and Defense*, Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men*, and Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, among many others.²⁴

²⁴ See: Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, (New York: Viking Press, 1964); Theodor Adorno, *Guilt and Defense, On the Legacies of National-Socialism in Postwar Germany*, Trans. by Jeffrey Olick and Andrew J. Perrin, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), (hereafter cited

But in my mind, the ubiquitous fixation on guilt is also the product of the contemporary historian's desire to establish distance between contemporary society and that of the Nazi regime; or to prove that we are not like "them," and they are not like "us." To be sure, condemnation has its place, and constitutes an important task of the Holocaust historian, especially given that until the 1980s the genocidal dimensions of World War II were given meagre attention or even (especially in the 1950s) elided completely by scholars. However, condemnation can sometimes come at the expense of a more nuanced, profound, and indeed, even truthful historical analysis. When our central anxiety is to distance ourselves from historical actors and events, we are less able to understand how these historical actors understood themselves and the world around them, and why they came to adopt a particular worldview.

Moreover, in attempting to engage with historical actors empathically, or to try and present their world and experience, historians do not implicitly commend their deeds nor their ideologies. As the historian Alon Confino eloquently points out:

To understand the things that happened in German history, we must also interpret the recognizably human and moral in the Nazi world as many Germans viewed it by exploring mentalities, motivations, and ethics. Mais est-il vrai que tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner? To my mind this is a non sequitur-one can understand without forgiving and forgive without understanding.²⁵

I have sought to employ Confino's empathic approach to history in reading the Glasenbacher's *Mitteilung*. More specifically, I used an empathic approach in order to "[think my] way inside" the Glasenbachers' "unique historical circumstances," in order to discern how they regarded themselves and the world around them, both consciously and unconsciously, between 1947 and

as Ordinary Men); Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, (New York: Alfred. A. Knopf, 1996).

²⁵ Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2006), 10.

2005.²⁶ To do so, I did not begin with the oft-posed question: How did these former National-Socialists seek to retain their moral authority, mitigate the guilt that they felt for the crimes that they had committed, and justify the violent and genocidal deeds that they had condoned? Rather, I combed the texts for answers to the following questions: What were the Glasenbachers' experiences of defeat? How did they seek to present themselves? To what extent did they seek to embed their own experience within broader historical narratives? Why did they write so prolifically, and for whom did they write? How did they feel about themselves and the world and time in which they lived, and how did these sensibilities shift or ossify over the course of the late twentieth century?

In reading through the Glasenbachers' *Mitteilung*, I invoked techniques and methods that would enable me to see the world through the eyes of the authors, and to understand why they saw the world in that way. Semantic analysis proved especially fruitful in this regard; By looking carefully at the language that the Glasenbachers used both collectively and individually—or by examining not only what the Glasenbachers said, but how they said it, and what they implied or connoted in doing so—I was able to reconstruct not only the experience and of the Glasenbachers themselves, but also, to place their experience within the broader context of the postwar moment in Germany and Austria.

1.5: Summary of Chapters

The following chapters are organized thematically and seek to provide commentary not only on the Glasenbachers' activities in the postwar period, but also to position their case within the context of postwar German and Austrian history and historiography. In the first chapter, I

²⁶ Thomas A. Kohut, *A German Generation: An Experiential History of the Twentieth Century*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 17, (Hereafter cited as “*Generation*”).

offer a short overview of the Wohlfahrtvereinigung's structure, as well as that of the *Mitteilung*. More specifically, I outline who wrote for the *Mitteilung*, how the *Mitteilung* was formulated, and both continuities and transformations in terms of the magazine's style and organization. In the second chapter, I go on to demonstrate how the Glasenbachers used writing in order to assert that Germany and Austria had not been defeated in 1945. They sought instead to reanimate and reform the National-Socialist movement through re-ingraining certain discursive structures introduced during the Third Reich. In the third and final chapter, I ask the question: why did the Glasenbachers want to reanimate and reform the National-Socialist movement, throughout the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first? I illustrate that the postwar engendered a crisis of identity for the Glasenbachers. Wanting to retain a sense of significance and relevance to the present and future, they used their *Mitteilung* in order to advance a narrative of themselves as consequential historical actors, who had and would continue to exert immense influence on world history. In conclusion, I offer a historiographical overview of postwar Austria and Germany, as it pertains to and is complicated by the Glasenbachers' case. Taken together, these chapters explore the psychology and experience of one group of former National-Socialists, among many others, who attempted to "bind their helmets tighter" after the Third Reich's collapse.

Chapter One

The Structure of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung and its *Mitteilung*.

2.1. Membership:

While the Glasenbachers wrote hundreds of articles for their *Mitteilung*, leaving us with ample insight into their agendas, opinions, hopes, and anxieties, relatively little external documentation exists about the Glasenbachers and their publication. Specifically, neither the Glasenbachers nor any other institution left records quantifying the distribution of their magazine. Additionally, historians have been unable to track down how many members joined the organization, and who those members were. When the organization was founded in 1957, the newspaper the *Österreichische Volksstimme* reported that the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung was comprised of approximately 4,000 members. The Wohlfahrtsvereinigung itself, by contrast, claimed that in 1957 the organization had 5,000 members, and by 1958 had grown to 8,000 members.¹ In 1959, they reported that 3,000 members attended their reunion event in Wels.² In the last five years of the Wohlfahrtvereinigung's activity, they did report regularly on how many members attended local chapter meetings.³ However, given the discrepancies in reporting and the dearth of yearly census figures, it is nigh impossible to say with any certainty how many individuals were in the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung between 1957 and 2005, nor how widely-read the *Mitteilung* was.

We are faced with a similar problem in trying to reconstruct the demographic configuration of Camp Marcus W. Orr. The National Archives and Research Association in College Park, Maryland mysteriously lacks robust—or even minimal—documentation of Camp

¹ Dohle and Eigelsberger, *Camp Marcus W. Orr*, 93.

² Erna Stärker, "Ich war in Wels dabei," *Mitteilung*, Issue 12, December, 1959.

³

Marcus W. Orr. Equally mysteriously, the Americans never seemed to have given a critical mass of files to the Austrian authorities about the administrative history of the camp. Oskar Dohle and Peter Eigelsberger did manage to reconstruct the number of prisoners in Glasenbach from month to month between April 1946 and July 1947, using vaccination reports.⁴ However these reports did not track the number of prisoners entering and exiting the camp from year to year, nor for how long a prisoner tended to stay in the camp.

Because of these various statistical limitations, we cannot pinpoint the percentage of former prisoners in Glasenbach who then participated in the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung. We do know, however, that the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung was comprised of many individuals who had not spent time in Glasenbach, but who were imprisoned in other Allied camps around Austria and Germany. Specifically, the Glasenbach Wohlfahrtsvereinigung took special measure to include individuals who had resided in British Camp 373, or the “Wolfsberg Lager,” at the end of the war.⁵ Indeed, in 1958, the Wolfsbergers—many of whom had already been meeting in order to commemorate their imprisonment—officially merged with the Glasenbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, thereby affirming the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung as Austria’s umbrella organization for formerly imprisoned National-Socialists.

In addition to former inmates of Camp 373, many new members—who had not been imprisoned at all by the Allies—joined the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung over the course of its lifetime. The Glasenbachers did not track the number of enrollments per year, or at least they did not leave behind any records indicating that they had done so. However, we do know that the

⁴ Dohle and Eigelsberger, *Camp Marcus W. Orr*, 92-4.

⁵ The Wolfsberg Lager was the British equivalent of Camp Marcus W. Orr. Located in Carinthia, the camp held fewer prisoners than did Glasenbach. Many prisoners, in fact, were eventually transferred to Glasenbach. For more on the Wolfsberg Camp and its organization, as well as the British occupation of Carinthia see: Nadja Danglmaier and Werner Koroschitz, *National Sozialismus in Kärnten: Opfer, Täter, Gegner*, Vol. 7, (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2015). See also Florentine Kastner, *373 Camp Wolfsberg*, Diplomarbeit, advised by Oliver Rathkolb, (Vienna: Universität Wien, 2011).

organization recruited members with some regularity, as newly-enrolled members often wrote to the magazine in order to profess their loyalty, explain the impetus for their joining, and thank the organization for their inclusivity.

Many of the new members consisted of former National-Socialists who had served sentences in smaller camps around Austria and Germany. The former SS officer Leopold Steinwendtner, for example, wrote to the magazine in 1962: "I am not a Glasenbacher, but I served a sentence in other prisons because I was a member of the Waffen SS. Therefore, I am especially happy that there are still comrades for whom the concept 'loyalty' means something. If somehow in the course of our merciless fate I can be of service, I will always be there for you."⁶ Some members of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung also managed to enroll their friends who had never been imprisoned by the Allies, but who nonetheless shared the organization's ideals and values. The Glasenbacher Franz Laimer wrote to the magazine: "In March of this year I became a member of the Glasenbachers, and immediately had the pleasure of enrolling two of my former classmates, who also were legionaries."⁷

Most often, however, new membership enrollment came from the offspring and family members of formerly imprisoned National-Socialists. The organization readily considered the children of their members—many of whom attended reunions and local meetings—to be Glasenbachers. But especially in later years, both the widows and offspring of deceased Glasenbachers joined the organization, in order to commemorate their late fathers or husbands. In explaining why she joined the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung in 1977, one widow wrote: "One really

⁶ Leopold Steinwendtner, "Was uns Kameraden Schreiben," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 22, June, 1962.

⁷ Franz Laimer, "Was uns Kameraden Schreiben," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 49, March, 1969.

feels like a family when we are together....the period in which my late husband (it has been almost thirty years) was in Glasenbach, is so far gone and yet so alive for me.”⁸

2.2. Content

The *Mitteilung* had a consistent format throughout the course of its lifetime and did not differ substantially in style and structure from other contemporaneous non-commercial magazines. Each issue of the *Mitteilung* averaged about fifty pages in length and included contributions from a wide swath of the organization’s population. Notably, in addition to articles, the magazine also included between two and four pages of advertisements. These advertisements did not come from external sponsors, but rather were issued by those members who owned shops, restaurants, and other service-providing businesses, and who would often offer discounts to members of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung. The cover of the magazine usually displayed announcements of upcoming events, inspirational quotations, or art created by members of the organization.

The masthead of the magazine always consisted of the group’s symbol, an Edelweiß flower constructed out of barbed wire. The Edelweiß symbol, the Glasenbachers, explained was apt because “it should bind us all together. So that each one of us knows when we encounter one another again: we were given the same lot, that they also resided in the Salzburg lager.”⁹ Adopting the Edelweiß symbol served not only to forge a connection between members, but also to endow the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung with a certain historical authority, significance, and continuity. In 1907, Kaiser Franz Joseph named the Edelweiß as the official symbol of the Austro-Hungarian army’s alpine division (the *Tiroler Landescschützen*). Patches with Edelweiß

⁸ Emma Ritter, "Was uns Kameraden Schreiben," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 82, June, 1977.

⁹ Cover of *Mitteilung*, Issue 38, June, 1966.

insignia were given to members of this division, who in turn attached those patches onto their collar. In the aftermath of World War I, members of the Oberland Freikorps—many of whom would later join the SA and the SS—also distinguished themselves with the Edelweiß, thereby forging the first connection between (proto) fascism and the Edelweiß symbol. Indeed, during the Third Reich, members of the Austrian and German mountain divisions donned the Edelweiß, as a means of differentiation and identification.¹⁰ In appropriating the Edelweiß, then, the Glasenbachers placed themselves within a longer tradition of Austrian and German militarism.

The content of the Glasenbachers' magazine varied from issue to issue in terms of how many feature articles were included, the topics of those articles, and their lengths. Usually the magazine would begin with an article about a political topic, a reflection on a historical concept or phenomenon, or an analysis of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung's activity and significance. In the months following a reunion in Wels, the magazine would print the keynote address, given by a member at the reunion. Thereafter, in addition to a range of secondary feature articles, the magazine included a large number of recurring columns: The "One and the Other," which criticized and lauded various works of art, the "Era of the Humanity" examining contemporary discussions of and commentary on the Third Reich, "And Again One of Us" which profiled the lives and achievements of various members of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, a "Look in the Times" column reporting on current events, "From the Local Groups," which included reports from the regional chapters of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung about their recent activities and meetings, "Encounters in Glasenbach," which purportedly recapitulated signature experiences in Camp Marcus W. Orr, and "What Our Comrades Write to Us," which re-printed the letters sent into the organization by various Glasenbachers from all over the world. The Glasenbachers always

¹⁰ For a history of the Edelweiß as a symbol in Austria and Germany, see; Peter Diem, *Die Symbole Österreichs, Zeit und Geschichte in Zeichen*, (Wien: Verlag Kremayr & Scheriau, 1995), 402.

concluded their *Mitteilung* with a column entitled “Our Book Table,” dedicated to recommending recently published books that they found to be relevant to the Glasenbachers’ cause.

In both their columns and their secondary feature articles, the *Mitteilung* reprinted or summarized articles from other newspapers that they regarded as aligned with its values. Although some articles were derived from mainstream newspapers like the *Wiener Zeitung* or the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, most of the reprinted articles came from magazines produced by organizations not unlike the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung; organizations designed to advance National-Socialism and support National-Socialists in the postwar world. Similarly, the Glasenbachers frequently reprinted a number of poems and cartoons written and drawn by members either during their imprisonment or thereafter. By the mid-1990s many of the regular-contributing authors had passed away, and so the editors of the *Mitteilung* shortened the length of each issue and excerpted an increasing number of articles from other newspapers. They also filled their pages by re-printing a high volume of articles published in previous issues or external sources. Nonetheless, until 2005 when the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung formally disbanded, the Glasenbachers continued to write their own original articles and poems, and to use the *Mitteilung* as a medium for disseminating their thoughts, feelings, and opinions.

2.3. Authorship

Although it is hard to assess the readership of the *Mitteilung*, much easier to identify is how widespread authorship was. Who contributed to the *Mitteilung*? Where did these individuals live? And how accessible was authorship to members of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung?

A critical mass of feature articles in the *Mitteilung* were published anonymously, or only under the authors' initials. However, many regularly contributing authors—mostly those who held a leadership position within the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung— did publish under their own name. Among others, these were: Dr. Felix Rinner, Matthäus Mittermaier, Peter Futterer, Rudolf Nowotny, Hans Lukesch, Heinrich Rumboldt, Fritz Stüber, Hansjakob Stehle, Otto Puchta Dr. Werner Delpin, Dr. Hans Menze, Josef Holzer, Sepp Geyrhofer, Prince Karl Anton Rohan, Otto Erlach, and then in later years, Othmar Christ, Hermann Ingramm, Franz Pattener, and Hermann Buchner. Although most regular contributors were male, two females also wrote consistently for the *Mitteilung*. Especially in the beginning years of the *Mitteilung's* publication, Erna Stärker often contributed poems, thought pieces, and reflections on the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung's reunions. In addition, an Egyptian woman who referred to herself (and was referred to) as Princess Saida contributed regularly to the *Mitteilung*. Born in Iraq in 1902, Saida Handan had served in the “muselmanische Waffen SS” (the Muslim SS), and was celebrated as a “feminine example of how one should behave towards niggers and the Jewish race, a German friend in times of danger and emergency, and a worldly and proud Arab.”¹¹ Beginning in the 1970s, she wrote a column entitled “An Egyptian Mother Speaks with her Child.” Therein, she outlined her experience in Glasenbach and after her release from prison, in 1967, when she returned to Egypt, as well as her ongoing commitment to comradeship, Gemeinschaft, and fascist ideology.¹² Saida also stood apart as she was one of the few individuals living outside of Germany and Austria who contributed with any regularity to the *Mitteilung*. The voices of non-Austrians and Non-Germans Glasenbachers were by and large conspicuously absent from the *Mitteilung*, although it remains

¹¹ Hans Hadmar-Meyer, “Calendar.”

¹² The *Mitteilung* offers little biographical information about Saida. However, they did offer some insight into her life in “und Wieder einer von Uns,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 47, September, 1968. See also “Unsere Lagerkameradin Prinzessin Saida aus Kario grüßt uns mit Sendung der Saida,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 43, September, 1967.

unclear whether they attended reunions, or maintained relationships with the Glasenbacher community at large.

While feature articles tended to be written by this smaller group of contributors, the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung took careful measure to make their *Mitteilung* polyphonic. Space was readily given to those who wanted to write guest columns, reflections on history and culture, commemorations of fellow comrades and of Glasenbach, and feature articles about their transition back into mainstream society. Similarly, the organization attempted to integrate more voices by excerpting poems and other works written by its members who had not explicitly asked to write for the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, but nonetheless published material that aligned with its ideology. Most of all, however, the lengthy “What our Comrades Write Us” and “From the Local Chapters” columns offered spaces for any member to participate in the authorship of the *Mitteilung*.

2.4. External Publications

As mentioned in the Introduction, a number of Glasenbachers wrote books after their release from Glasenbach detailing their experiences both during and after the war. Some of these authors wrote and published only within the confines of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, and others made careers for themselves in the postwar period as authors of and commentators on the Second World War. The latter group of authors contributed intermittently to the *Mitteilung*, but also served as conduits for the Glasenbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung; through their works, they self-consciously sought to advance the Glasenbachers’ cause, while also crafting an ideological framework around which the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung could orient itself.

Of all the professional authors belonging to the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, Erich Kern stands apart as perhaps the most prominent. Kern was born in 1906 as Erich Kernmayr, and although he had initially been an affiliate of Austria's communist party, he began advocating on behalf of the National-Socialist movement in the early 1930s. Because his early affiliation with the NSDAP, Kern was considered an illegal National-Socialist, and actually served a prison sentence for his political activities prior to the Anschluss. With Germany's annexation of Austria in March of 1938, Kern continued to work as a journalist and published a number of novels. He also worked as press secretary for the Gauleiter (governor) of Saarland, before being admitted to the SS in 1941, wherein he served as an intelligence officer (*Kriegsberichterstatter*). After his release from Glasenbach, in addition to publishing a number of memoirs and novels, Kern was involved in political and literary movements—along with the Glasenbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung—committed to promoting nationalist ideology through cultural means. Most notably, he wrote for the *Deutschen Soldaten-Zeitung* and for the publication of the *Hilfsgemeinschaft auf Gegenseitigkeit der ehemaligen Angehörigen der Waffen-SS (HIAG)*, and helped found the Gmundner Kreis, an organization meant to bring together former leading members of the SS and NSDAP.¹³

Like Erich Kern, the author Joseph Hiess was considered an “illegal Nazi” for his activities with the NSDAP prior to the Anschluss. He served during the Third Reich as the *Landesschulleiter des Volksbundes für Deutschtum im Ausland* (an organization committed to preserving German culture abroad), before working as the director of operations with the *Oberkommando des Heeres*, (High Command of the German Army). He was held after the war

¹³ For more on Erich Kern and his life and works, see: Rolf Düsterberg, *Soldat und Kriegserlebnis. Deutsche militärische Erinnerungsliteratur (1945-1961) zu Zweiten Weltkrieg. Motive, Begriffe, Wertungen*, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000). (Hereafter cited as “*Soldat und Kriegserlebnis*”).

in Glasenbach for one year and nine months, and upon his release, quickly established himself as an independent author, playwright, and poet. Hiess was most notorious for founding the *Oberösterreichischen Künstlerbundes* and the *Verein Dichterstein Offenhausen*, organizations mutually committed to the preservation and promotion of art that aligned with and even improved upon the cultural values outlined by the Nazi regime. The Glasenbachers habitually included excerpts from the publications of both respective groups, quoted Hiess' autobiographies, and asked that he contribute feature articles to their *Mitteilung*.¹⁴

Joseph Hiess and Erich Kern were by far the most well-known and widely-read of all the Glasenbacher authors. However, Lothar Rendulic, who had served as a Wehrmacht General and was later convicted by the Allies at Nuremburg, wrote a number of books during and after his release from prison. Through these works, which articulated his experiences connected with Third Reich, his conception of modern warfare, and his opinions about contemporary politics, Rendulic forged an identity for himself after the war as an author. Additionally, a handful of other Glasenbachers who did not identify as professional authors made a name for themselves through publishing autobiographies about their experience before and after Glasenbach. Most notably, Franz Langoth—who during the Third Reich had served as a judge, leader of the Austrian division of the Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt, and briefly as the mayor of Linz—also asserted himself as an author, when he published his memoir, *Kampf um Österreich*, in 1951.

Together, Kern, Hiess, Rendulic, Lothar, and other amateur Glasenbacher authors asserted themselves as loyal members of the Wohflahtsvereinigung, committed to using literature as a means of maintaining a network through which former National-Socialists could remain

¹⁴ Rolf Düsterberg, *Soldat und Kriegserlebnis*, 244.

Solovy

connected. Writing, and the community writing fostered, became a vital means of self-assertion and self-preservation, as these authors and their fellow Glasenbachers grappled with the implications of Germany's defeat and sought to reorient themselves in a post-Nazi world.

Chapter Two Writing Away Defeat

3.1 Reframing the Terms of Germany's Defeat

Consistently in their publications, the Glasenbachers problematized the notion of the Allies having defeated Germany on May 8, 1945. They asserted that Germany's unconditional surrender merely marked a transitional moment in an ongoing and multi-stage struggle for the supremacy of the German race, and the realization of the National-Socialist vision of history. Erich Kern, in his 1950 memoir *Herz im Stacheldraht*, compared the "struggle" for National-Socialism to an unfinished poker game: "I believe we have not lost this war at all. We have taken a gamble. You know, just like when in playing poker one withholds a good card. "¹ In Kern's estimation the Germans had taken a "gamble" by allowing the Nazi government to crumble in the hopes of giving the more fastidious and capable National-Socialists the space to fulfill the "promise" of "freedom" that the German *Volk* had made to Europe.² Unlike the "fanatic" National-Socialists who had allowed "cowardliness" and a desire for "martyr's glory" to overcome them in the final moments of the war, those who had survived the Third Reich's collapse had the capacity to successfully implement the National-Socialist vision.³

They could still deliver on the Nazis' "promise" of "freedom" for Europe during the second half of the twentieth century, the Glasenbachers contended, because they had an especially refined understanding of the direction and design of history. Citing Oswald Spengler, the Glasenbachers positioned history as propelled by the sinuous rise and fall of nations, empires, and movements.⁴ Across different historical epochs, the rise and fall took many different forms,

¹ Erich Kern, *Herz*, 153.

² Kern, *Herz*, 153.

³ Kern, *Herz*, 166.

⁴ In 1918 Oswald Spengler published his seminal work *The Decline of the West*, or *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*. Spengler argued that World War I represented a watershed moment in world history in which European civilization

and was engendered by a variety of different factors. The Glasenbachers represented the historical moment in which they lived as the “Age of World Wars.”⁵ Regimes attained momentary prominence and then collapsed into obscurity as global wars broke out again and again, each time radically dismantling existing power constellations. On these grounds, they argued that the denouement of the modern epoch had not yet come: The Second World War was merely an intermediate climax in an ongoing historical moment. In fact, beginning in the early 1960s the Glasenbachers attested to the imminence of “World War III,” a conflict that would be dictated by a dispute between the Russian and American forces.⁶ They envisioned that in the course of the war, the Russians and Americans would inevitably destroy one another, thereby presenting the opportunity for a burgeoning and timeless fascist movement to reassert itself: for “as every action evokes a reaction, inevitably a counter-movement must come into being. In the current global context, this countermovement is denoted as ‘Fascism.’”⁷

The Glasenbachers complained that despite copious evidence indicating that National-Socialism remained a germane and persistent historical movement, German civilians, de-Nazified party members, and the Allies had preemptively declared it defunct. They bemoaned that the Allies, the self-proclaimed victors of the war, had advanced a historical narrative of the Third Reich that vilified the German and Austrian people, and assumed the constitutional corruptness, fallaciousness, and inapplicability of National-Socialist ideology. They had

transitioned from unified and hegemonic into a fragmented and decaying conglomerate. Europe had fallen prey to a historical process in which civilizations—as biological or organismic entities—enjoyed prominence for approximately one thousand years, before falling into a millennium-long decline. This book had a profound influence on the conceptualization of history in Europe generally and in Germany and Austria specifically, during the interwar period, and into the Third Reich. There are many published editions of this work. See, for example: Oswald Spengler, *Untergang des Abendlandes: Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*, (Wien.: Bräuml, 1918).

⁵ “Kamerad Dr. Felix Rinner spricht beim Welser Treffen,” *Mitteilung*, Issue 20, December, 1961.

⁶ “Vor dem Dritten Weltkrieg?” *Mitteilung*, Issue 14, June, 1960.

⁷ “Ein Tag Wie jede Anderer,” *Mitteilung*, Issue 8, December, 1958.

construed the war as a victory of good (western democracy) over evil (fascism), while at the same time regarding the German Volk with a mixture of contempt and repulsion that denuded the Volk of the ability to hope and strive for a better future on their own terms. Franz Langoth wrote in his memoir: “Austria is a German state. Its people were and are inextricably linked with the fate of the German people, who today have sunk to the deepest level of degradation. It lies at the bottom like a bed-ridden invalid.”⁸ Succumbing to humiliation and self-pity in the face of this “degradation,” many members of the German and Austrian Volk had “masochistically” accepted the postwar frameworks and narratives disseminated by the Allies.⁹ Josef Hiess cautioned the readers of the *Mitteilung*: “It is not difficult during the good days to proudly wear the flag. When the storm comes, the tatters start to rattle, and the unkempt horde wants to disperse, show yourself to be true!”¹⁰ In Hiess’ opinion the German masses had unquestioningly emulated the Allies’ imposed worldview, thereby enervating the otherwise potent National-Socialist movement.¹¹

The Glasenbachers were especially concerned that the Allies had managed to defame and obstruct the pan-Germanism championed by the NSDAP. The Pan-German Movement—also known as the *Alldeutsche Bewegung*—emerged in the late nineteenth-century as modern European notions of nationalism, national identity, and the nation-state began to crystalize. Many Germans began to call for the formation of a Greater Germany (*Großdeutschland*), a nation-state that would be founded on the basis of racial and linguistic similarities among its inhabitants. Though a variety of organizations in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland had different visions of

⁸ Langoth, Franz, *Kampf*, 365.

⁹ *Mitteilung*, Special Issue, Number 12, March 1967.

¹⁰ Josef Hiess, in *Mitteilung*, Issue 1, July, 1957.

¹¹ Hiess’ statement became an anthem of sorts for the Glasenbachers. The authors of the *Mitteilung* repeatedly cited this quotation in their articles even through the late 1990s.

what and who might be included in a unified Greater Germany, almost all manifestations of the movement readily integrated anti-Semitic, imperialist, and anti-capitalist sentiments into its ideology. When the NSDAP annexed Austria in 1938, the Nazis declared that they had taken an important first step in restoring the German-Nation to its natural, united, form. Hitler said in Vienna on the occasion of the Anschluss: "The oldest region of the German Volk should, from now on, be the youngest bulwark of the German nation, and by extension of the German Empire."¹² With the end of the war, the Allies took careful measure to dismantle the idea of a Greater Germany by denoting Austria as a nation in and of itself, with no claim to the German nation-state. The Glasenbachers recalled in 1918 that "Austria is a part of Germany and is called Germany-Austria. But the calamitous Treaty of Versailles, written with hate, impeded the formation of a Greater Germany."¹³ They went on to decry that the measures taken by the Allies in 1945 represented a recapitulation of the Treaty of Versailles, which had robbed both Germany and Austria of territory, and drawn borders dividing members of the German race from one another.

The Glasenbachers declared that their experience in Camp Marcus W. Orr had apprised them of the potential for the National-Socialist movement to reemerge, and to re-establish the Greater Germany that they had long yearned for. Specifically, they believed that in Glasenbach they had experienced in more stark terms exactly what had been lost with the capitulation of the Nazi regime. Langoth reflected, "Freedom is like air and sun. One must have lost it in order to understand that one cannot live without it. A realization for which I have and will devote my

¹² Helfried Pfeifer, *Die Ostmark: Eingliederung und Neugestaltung; historisch-systematische Gesetzesammlung nach dem Stande vom 16. April 1941; mit Einführungen, Erläuterung, Verweisungen, und Schrifttumsangaben*. Die Ostmark, Engliederung und Neugestaltung, (Wien: Staatsdruckerei, 1941), 24.

¹³ "Was wir Fordern! Dr. Felix Rinner spricht beim Wels Treffen," in *Mitteilung* Issue 12, December, 1959.

entire existence, as long as I live.”¹⁴ Langoth’s “loss of freedom” refers to his incarceration in Glasenbach, but his promise to “devote” his “entire existence” to restoring freedom indicates that he saw the German people as suffering from a more abstract and enduring denial of freedom; the German people may not be physically behind bars, but they remained impinged upon by the narratives and ideologies of the Allies, a phenomenon that he could recognize because of his imprisonment in Glasenbach.

In addition to their acute loss of freedom, the Glasenbachers articulated having uniquely witnessed the power of German culture to counteract the Allies’ “degrading” denazification measures. They reportedly discovered in the camp that “through cultural activities people were drawn out of the drab existence of camp life, and offered a new window into the eternal worth of European art and European culture.”¹⁵ The Glasenbachers thus concluded that continued exposure to and advancement of the cultural values espoused by the National-Socialist movement had a galvanizing effect, one broadly and timelessly capable of restoring faith in Germany’s superiority, as well as its capacity for revival on its own terms.

Upon their release from Camp Marcus W. Orr, the Glasenbachers felt that their enlightened understanding of the present historical circumstances saddled them with an exigent responsibility to act as agents for a revitalized National-Socialist movement, and for the reunification of Austria and Germany under one Reich. “We have all come under the hammer of time” one Glasenbacher wrote in July of 1957, reflecting on the Glasenbacher’s collective identity, “each of us have at some point dedicated ourselves to offering a reasonable solution to the unsolvable problems of the present.”¹⁶ The Wohlfahrtsvereinigung emphasized in September

¹⁴ Langoth, *Kampf*, 10.

¹⁵ Kern, *Herz*, 141.

¹⁶ *Mitteilung*, Issue 1, July, 1957.

of the same year that the organization—a community of individuals with a shared fate (“*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*”)—served to empower and enlighten those who “wanted help” or “should receive help” in weathering the degrading effects of Germany and Austria’s defeat.¹⁷ In other words, the Glasenbachers saw themselves as having been called upon by a transcendental historical force to enact the revival of National-Socialism, in large part by mobilizing the German Volk to participate in the recuperation of the National-Socialist movement. They turned to language in order to carry out this task.

3.2: Writing as a form of *Kampf*

During the Third Reich, manipulating and restructuring language played an imperative role in cultivating a widespread conviction in the core frameworks and assumptions of the National-Socialist movement. In his book *Language of the Third Reich: Notes of a Philologist*, Victor Klemperer argues that Nazism “permeated the flesh and blood of the people through single words, idioms and sentence structures which were imposed on them in a million repetitions and taken on board mechanically and unconsciously.”¹⁸ He adds that by 1947 the Allies had identified language as one of Nazism’s most powerful weapons, and by extension aimed the denazification process at rooting out and expunging the idiosyncratic discursive paradigms introduced during the Third Reich, with varying degrees of success:

So much is being said at present about eradicating the fascist mentality and so much is being done to that end. War criminals are being executed, ‘little Pgs’ (the language of the Fourth Reich!) are being removed from office, nationalist books are being withdrawn from circulation, Hitler Squares and Göring Streets are being renamed, Hitler oaks are being felled. But it appears that the language of the Third Reich is to survive in the form

¹⁷ *Mitteilung*, Issue 2, September, 1957. Original quotation: “Die Wohlfahrtsvereinigung soll für alle da sein, die helfen wollen, und für alle, denen noch geholfen werden soll. Für alle, die sich zugehörig fühlen einer großen Schicksalsgemeinschaft, der nichts blieb, als die damalige Not zu meistern und an das Leben zu glauben.”

¹⁸ Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI, Lingua Terti Imperii: A Philologist’s Notebook*, Trans. by Martin Brady, (London: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 15. (Hereafter cited as *LTI*).

of certain characteristic expressions; they have lodged themselves so deep below the surface that they appear to be becoming a permanent feature of the German language.¹⁹

Aware that denazification consisted in large part of dismantling the frameworks of understanding and communication installed by the Nazi regime, the Glasenbachers used their publications to ensure that these discursive structures instead became “a permanent feature of the German language.” They thought that they could foment a more viable version of National-Socialism through entrenching and reintroducing Nazi terminology, that is, to interpret the past, the present, and the future using the language, narratives, and connotations generated during the Third Reich. “We are conquered-” the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung wrote in its debut issue, “the struggle with weapons is over, but a new struggle will arise so long as we will it, for principles, for traditions, for character.”²⁰ They operated under the assumption that the German Volk had entered a new phase of the historical epoch, one constituted by the assertion of National-Socialism through cultural means.

To this end, the Glasenbachers attempted to establish discursive structures that would lead readers to identify as part of a militarized Volk still fighting on behalf of the National-Socialist movement. Notably, the Glasenbachers interpreted their banal quotidian activities as acts of war which had successfully dismantled and deflected the Allies’ subjugation maneuvers. Summarizing the Glasenbachers’ activity between 1947 and 1957, one member articulated that “over the last ten years we have rebuilt our careers, and through that completely proved that we are worthy members of our *Volksgemeinschaft* and that this worth is independent of the political regime.”²¹ Quite explicitly, the Glasenbachers encouraged their fellow members to interpret small gestures of resilience as evidence of their continued enmeshment in the war against the

¹⁹ Klemperer, *LTI*, 14.

²⁰ *Mitteilung*, Issue 1, July, 1957.

²¹ *Mitteilung*, Issue 1, July, 1957.

Allied forces. They preached that through the simple act of rebuilding their careers, making a sardonic quip at an American or Russian soldier, or writing an article for the *Mitteilung*, one could reclaim his identity as a German combatant. Similarly, the Glasenbachers implied that a person should be regarded favorably in the postwar world if he or she proved to be brave, unyielding, and soldier-like in demeanor. For example, the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung lauded one author for having exhibited exceptional soldierly behavior both during and after his internment in Glasenbach, describing that he was “no lamb who was resigned to his fate, but a fighting puma who fought against bars und against every hiss which came his way, and which by no means prevented him from acting in a comradely manner towards his fellow prisoners.”²²

The Glasenbachers most emphatically positioned themselves as soldiers furthering the National-Socialist cause by referring to one another both in speech and writing as “comrades,” and touting “comradeship” as among the highest ideal for which individuals and communities could strive.²³ They underscored that “our goal must be: through the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung to unify every Glasenbacher and all comrades from former prison camps.”²⁴ What exactly did the Glasenbachers mean by comradeship, and why did they place it at the center of their ideology?

During the Weimar Republic, as Germany reckoned with its loss in World War I, comradeship became broadly mythicized as a restorative and genitive historical force. As one historian explains, in pre-Nazi Germany “the idealized war community, with its myths and its visionary extension into a national Volksgemeinschaft, healed the wounds of the past and overcame the turmoil in the present. If only we had more comradeship, as we once had, suggested many papers and speakers, we could solve all of our problems, explained the popular

²² Hans-Hadmar Meyer, “Calendar,” Forward.

²³ This point is reiterated in nearly every issue of their publication. See, for example, “Glasenbacher Weihnachtsfeier 2001,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 180, March, 2002.

²⁴ *Mitteilung*, Issue 1, July, 1957.

version of the myth of comradeship.”²⁵ As the Nazi regime began to mobilize the Volksgemeinschaft in preparation for war, they accentuated the German Volk as an “idealized war community.” Bonding through shared experiences of struggle, they argued, would allow the German people to access their racial strength and superiority, and by extension to fulfill their fate as the victors of the Second World War. To the bitter end of the war and even in its immediate aftermath, civilians and Nazi functionaries alike clung to comradeship specifically—and Gemeinschaft generally—as an almost messianic experience capable of raising Germany from its despair. Detailing the feeling of camaraderie that she felt with her fellow Austrians in the air-raided shelter, one Viennese woman remembered, “When I think back on it, it becomes totally clear to me just how horrible it all was, just how fearful one was, but in this Gemeinschaft one did not feel alone but ensconced, and one thought: Because we are all together we will not experience our downfall, somehow it will be ok.”²⁶

For the Glasenbachers, the memory of convalescence through comradeship and Gemeinschaft after World War I informed their calls for the cultivation of both in the face of Germany’s second defeat in a world war. They argued that just as comradeship had offered Germany salvation, security, identity, and empowerment during the Weimar Republic, it could also spur a process of regeneration in the late twentieth century. They reported that their experience in the camp affirmed that Gemeinschaft could once again serve as a powerful means of national revival. Although the Americans had attempted to atomize them by decreeing that “fraternization” was strictly forbidden in the camp, the Glasenbachers celebrated that they had managed to nonetheless form a strong and cohesive Gemeinschaft, which they had only further

²⁵ Thomas Kühne, *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler’s Community, 1918-1945*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 29.

²⁶ Testimony. Elfriede M. Kling, File 242, *Kommission Wien 1945*, Historische Kommission, Wien Stadt- und Landesarchiv.

strengthened and expanded since their release.²⁷ Writing from Glasenbach on December 31, 1946, Langoth proclaimed,

our stronger belief in a better future and our courage to remain upright in the face of disparagement cannot be swayed. After twenty months in the concentration camp our inner strength is not broken, but only made stronger, and we know that it will remain with us if we are unified and stand together.²⁸

Because of their sustained commitment to comradeship and Gemeinschaft, the Glasenbachers felt that they represented a more potent historical force than any single political party or movement; they embodied an all-encompassing historical vision that would ultimately dictate the terms and conditions of the future and serve to offer permanent solutions to the most pressing historical questions. Over and over the Glasenbachers decried that in confronting the “problems of the epoch” politics had proven trivial, ephemeral, and palliative at best: “We are of the opinion that it is not necessary, for the purpose of comradeship, the championing of equality, and the reclaiming of honor, to be affiliated with a political group or party. To the contrary, we believe that it is the right course of action to pursue our interests exclusive from the parties and their squabbling.”²⁹ Their use of the term “squabbling” (*Gezänke*) underscores the disgust and condescension with which the Glasenbachers viewed existing political institutions. While politicians and their constituents fought among themselves over matters that only had short-term consequences, the Glasenbachers felt that they were engaged in a more paramount struggle for Gemeinschaft and comradeship, one which would endow them with much more agency and sway should it succeed. “Our impending fate lies in our hands,” they declared. “We maintain our emergency Gemeinschaft, unity is our democratic weapon.”³⁰

²⁷ Josef Hiess, *Glasenbach*, 20-1.

²⁸ “Warum ein Verein?” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 1, July, 1957.

²⁹ *Mitteilung*, Issue 1, July, 1957.

³⁰ Langoth, *Kampf*, 343.

In their writings, the Glasenbachers connoted the Gemeinschaft that they “maintain[ed]” as a microcosm of the Volksgemeinschaft that had begun to coalesce during the Third Reich, a “pure family” of Germans bound by shared race, history, and values.³¹ They defined their Gemeinschaft in opposition to the alien racial groups that had encroached on the German nation in the vacuum of the Nazi regime’s collapse. The Glasenbachers warned that both the Russians and the Americans, in their own ways, sought to become the Master Race by debilitating the German Volk. The Russians did so by importing their particularly degenerate, violent, and cruel customs and practices into the German Reich. Kern emphasized the importance of violent physical engagement with the Russians, instructing that “Against the Ivan one can still shoot.”³² “Ivan” was a term invoked during the Third Reich to belittle and dehumanize the Soviets. Nazi ideology advanced that the “Ivan,” “Asiatic” and primitive, could only be quelled directly, using force. The “Ivan’s” victory in the Second World War had done nothing to change his congenital brute-like nature, and so the Glasenbachers advised that Germans should engage violently and without mercy, when confronted with a Soviet attack.³³

By contrast, the Glasenbachers positioned the Americans as a racial threat because they introduced their rapacious, hedonistic, and unmoored cultural tenets into Europe.³⁴ During the occupation period, many Germans and Austrians advanced a narrative of the American soldiers as kitschy, easily duped, and materialistic cronies, who had absentmindedly imported debased and ahistorical sensibilities to Germany. They attributed this intellectual and cultural degeneracy

³¹ See, for example: “Stunde der Kameradschaft,” *Mitteilung*, Special Issue 3, October, 1957, or *Mitteilung* and “Alles beim Alten?” *Mitteilung*, Issue 10, June, 1959.

³² Kern, *Herz*, 8.

³³ Kern, *Herz*, 8.

³⁴ The Glasenbachers’ critique of American culture and art echoed that of the Nazis’ 1937 “Degenerate Art” exhibit. Like the Nazi regime, the Glasenbachers took extreme offense at modernist works, construing them as emblems of the tawdry and flamboyant American (and Jewish-Bolshevist) aesthetic.

in large part to the interracial composition of the American population.³⁵ They believed that in America, black or “African” sensibilities had infiltrated any lingering tenants of European culture that had been preserved during immigration. Jazz music, in particular, became a symbol of the Africans’ bastardization of white, American culture. Germans asserted that Americans had become unilaterally obsessed with jazz and other “black” artforms, while curtailing the advancement of more superior and historically entrenched European art. One German civilian wrote to the American government in 1947, “I am surprised to hear that [some of] you are fond of hearing classical music. I cannot think that many Americans like to hear it. I guess for them there is no great music but Jazz.”³⁶ The Glasenbachers parroted this trope of the Americans as having imported their degenerate cultural proclivities—in large part through the integration of African Americans and their cultural traditions—at the expense of the pure, Aryan culture that had prevailed during the Third Reich. They celebrated even decades after that in the camp, they had managed to make fun of the Americans and their degraded culture to their faces, and that the Americans, gullible and hedonistic, had had no knowledge that they were doing so. The Glasenbacher Hubs Steiner, who wrote an ongoing column for the *Mitteilung* entitled “Encounters in Glasenbach,” reminisced that they, the prisoners, would run around camp saying “SALMINAK” to one another. He gleefully explained that this term was an acrostic for “**S**au **A**merikaner **L**eck **M**ich **I**m **A**rsch” (American pigs, lick my ass),” and that the K at the end alluded to “**K**reuzweis,” (across).³⁷

³⁵ For more on German conceptions of American GIs, see Christian Schwaabe, *Antiamerikanismus. Wandlungen eines Feinbildes*, (München: Fink, 2003).

³⁶ Paul W. Mandel, “German Letters Gripe to Students About War Trials, Russians, Government, Music,” in *The Harvard Crimson*, April 20, 1949, accessed online on 6/23/2018, <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1949/4/20/german-letters-gripe-to-students-about>.

³⁷ Hubs Steiner, “Begegnung in Glasenbach, Fortsetzung,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 60, December, 1971.

The Glasenbachers lamented that unfortunately, disgracing the Americans in the camp had done little to counteract the American bastardization of German culture; for most deleteriously, the Americans had managed to taint the German language, which in their minds represented the Germans' most effective "weapon" in the "struggle" for cultural advancement.³⁸ Hiess, for instance, decried the Americans for their botched German in his autobiographies. Imitating the American soldiers, he scathingly wrote: "Mak snell, mak snell, faking German!"³⁹ Hiess conjectured that he and his comrades, as writers, had a special responsibility to expel American influence from the German language, and by extension from the German Volksgemeinschaft. To this end, he composed his own autobiographical narrative as well as quotations from his fellow German citizens in Fraktur, which the Nazis had regarded until 1941 as the only "authentic...German script."⁴⁰ However, whenever quoting an American, Hiess switched to block print. By authoring this visual differentiation between German and American, Hiess strove to delineate that which was essentially German and that which was the contrived structures and customs injected by their occupiers; or, to symbolically exorcize American influence from German culture.⁴¹

The Wohlfahrtsvereinigung took similar measures to re-Germanize the German language through implementing Fraktur. One member wrote to the magazine editors, "Please allow your (our) 'Mitteilung' to be printed not in Latin (Antiqua), but in German (Fraktur) script! When

³⁸ *Mitteilung*, Issue 29, December, 1981.

³⁹ Hiess, *Glasenbach*, 31. In proper German, one writes: "Mach schnell," meaning "look sharp" or "move faster." Hiess' misspelling of "Mach schnell" is clearly an attempt to mock an American accent.

⁴⁰ "Aktenvermerk und Aktennotiz des Reichsminister des Innern vom September 1934" in Silvia Hartmann, *Fraktur oder Antiqua, Der Schriftstreit von 1881 bis 1941*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998). In 1941, the Nazi government banned the use of Fraktur by Reich officials, and declared it a Jewish script. Scholars have agreed that this proclamation was pragmatically rather than ideologically driven. To enhance clear communication as the German army entered into the most intensive phase of the war, they decided to use a codified script that everyone would be able to read quickly and accurately.

⁴¹ See Hiess, *Glasenbach*, and Josef Hiess, *Wir Kommen*.

Hitler outlawed the German script and print, it was a debilitating hit for our nation, and the four occupying forces knew all too well what they were doing, when they only allowed Latin (Antiqua) lettering to be used after 1945.” The Wohlfahrtsvereinigung declined to print the *Mitteilung* in Fraktur mostly on practical and financial grounds, but two issues later, did begin printing their masthead in Fraktur, or “German script.”⁴² Through their publications, then, the Glasenbachers aimed to both re-entrench and purify an essential German-ness, one that had been lost as the former Nazi regime fell into a corrupt decline, and the Americans attempted to eclipse German culture.

At the same time that the Glasenbachers used language in order to convey the persistence of a militarized German Volksgemeinschaft still committed to defending Europe against the degenerate Allies, they also sought to embed a narrative of the German Volk as the victim of those malignant forces against which the former National-Socialist government had struggled. In 1943 the Allies issued the Moscow Declaration proclaiming Austria the first victim of National-Socialism. The narrative put forth by the Declaration enabled Austrian citizens to hide behind a veneer of innocence; they could form an identity around having been strong-armed into committing war crimes by the power-hungry Germans. Scholars of modern Austrian history have repeatedly pointed to the unilateral readiness of Austrians—civilians and political leaders alike—to arm themselves with the victimhood proffered by the Moscow Declaration. One historian, for example, argues that the Moscow Declaration “distanced Austria from Germany, and in the role of victim, it allowed Austria to deny responsibility for all the crimes of the Nazi regime...this was the official Austrian narrative, elevated to the status of state doctrine, reiterated in political

⁴² “Was uns Kameraden Schreiben,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 17, March, 1961.

rhetoric and ritual, in school textbooks, and very widely in public opinion.”⁴³ But in reality, many Austrians regarded the exculpatory identity offered by the Allies with some contempt. They viewed this external imposition of identity as a form of cultural colonialism. More concerning to them, by accepting the Allied narrative of Austrian victimhood, they would necessarily have to renounce National-Socialism, acknowledging it as a criminal ideology that had engendered the oppression of the Austrian people.

Problematically, those Austrians averse to the Moscow Declaration still wanted to feel like victims, not least so as to affirm their moral authority and eschew any guilt they felt for having induced the war. Austrians wanted the option to selectively choose what was good and what was bad from their past, or to have agency in deciding the extent to which their victimhood was the product of the Third Reich. Like many of their compatriots, the Glasenbachers expressed a wish to identify themselves as victims, but on their own terms. As a means of doing so, they advanced a definition of victimhood with its roots in the frameworks and institutions of the Third Reich. In his illustrated memoir, Hans-Hadmar Meyer included a cartoon with a caption complaining that their “*Lebensraum*” in the camp was only 1.72 square meters.⁴⁴ Similarly, in the autobiography *So Sah ich Mich*, the author measured his prison sentence in terms of the National-Socialist conception of time: our prison sentence “should last for twenty years? We thought about the Thousand Year Reich that had only just commenced.”⁴⁵ In both cases, the authors positioned themselves as victims because the Allies had denied them the spatial and temporal reprieve that Nazism had promised to offer. Whereas the Nazis had assured them of a *Lebensraum* spanning the entirety of Europe, the Allies offered a *Lebensraum* of only a few

⁴³ Thomas Berger, *War, Guilt, and World Politics after WWII*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 241.

⁴⁴ Meyer, “Calendar.”

⁴⁵ Walter Hoffman, *So Sah ich Mich*.

square meters. Whereas during the Third Reich they had fashioned their lives in anticipation of the next millennium, the Allies had limited their historical horizon to a two-decade prison sentence.

The Glasenbachers also represented themselves, along with the entire German Volk, as casualties of an elaborate scheme by the Jewish race to avenge the fallen Nazi regime's extermination project. Although a stereotype of the Jews as exceptionally vindictive preceded the Third Reich, Nazi ideology reiterated that the Jewish population had a unique proclivity for revenge. They warned that the Jews relied on antiquated and primitive notions of justice which belied the compassionate and morally-informed justice championed by the Christian tradition. The Glasenbachers parroted this longstanding trope in narrating their experience after the war, illustrating their imprisonment as the manifestation of the Jews' egregious wrath. The Glasenbachers explained that they had born witness to the enactment of the Jewish conspiracy for revenge: their imprisonment had in fact been orchestrated by Jewish "emigrants." They depicted the American soldiers who oversaw their captivity as pawns and stated that these soldiers had fallen under the "yoke" of a Jewish conspiracy to sadistically punish the German people.⁴⁶ Kern remembered that in the camp,

The Americans themselves gave up very quickly. They were honorable partners in many cases, in so far as the victor can be with those they have defeated. The emigrants, however, were not so easily satisfied. They wanted to settle a score, a score which had nothing to do with the American people...but where the emigrants, locally, had power, the Americans lost themselves in senseless actions.⁴⁷

More strangely, the Glasenbachers situated themselves as victims of a Jewish conspiracy for vengeance by referring to Camp Marcus W. Orr as a "concentration camp." Meyer even captioned one cartoon depicting the Glasenbachers completing manual labor with "Arbeit Macht

⁴⁶ "Die Einheit Europas," *Mitteilung*, Issue 19, September, 1961.

⁴⁷ Kern, *Herz*, 75.

Frei.”⁴⁸ The Glasenbachers clearly wanted to forge a connection between their experience and the experience of those incarcerated by the Nazis (and the Jews in particular). Doing so of course relativized the criminality of National-Socialism and by extension their own involvement in its apparatus. If the Allies were just as prone to erecting concentration camps, then their complicity in having done so during the Third Reich could be construed as neither unique nor egregious. But choosing to use language borrowed from the Nazi regime—“Arbeit Macht Frei”—in order to characterize their experience as prisoners was not merely an exculpatory maneuver. Instead, they contended that through the “concentration camp” the Jews aimed to “make the statement true: An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, blood for blood.”⁴⁹ Consequently, the Glasenbachers implied, the Jews fashioned Camp Marcus W. Orr in the image of their own concentration camp experience.

Beyond fearing a Jewish-Bolshevist revenge scheme, the Glasenbachers regarded the world as vulnerable to the virulent parasitism of the Jewish population. They saw the formation of Israel as an emblem of the Jews’ renaissance, and authored distressed (albeit coded) articles about the threat that a Jewish state might pose. For example, in December of 1981 the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung published an article entitled “Visit in Israel.” The article showcased excerpts from a letter that one member had received from a friend recently returned from vacation in Israel. The letter detailed the ways in which the Jews living in Israel continued to depend on Germany for sustenance, cautioning that there were many Jews there who “still today live off of supplies from Germany.”⁵⁰ The letter also included descriptions of Jewish life in Israel which served to exotify Judaism in a manner reminiscent of the 1940 propaganda film *The*

⁴⁸ Meyer, “Calendar.”

⁴⁹ Kern, *Herz*, 74-5.

⁵⁰ *Mitteilung*, Issue 100, December, 1981.

Eternal Jew.⁵¹ The author described the destitution of elderly Jews who were on the breadline (“*am Hungertüche nagen*”), as well as the rampant violence that plagued Israel and had “nothing” to do with Germany or the Second World War in the least. Even into the 1980s and beyond, then, the Glasenbachers preserved the stereotype of Jews as dirty, violent, and alien parasites who brazenly syphoned resources from other peoples, and most zealously from the Germans. In their imagination, the founding of a Jewish state had not alleviated Europe of the deleterious Jewish diaspora, but instead offered a haven so that the Jews could enact their conspiracy from afar.

“As it has always been, through its advanced development Germany shows the blind where the path goes and where it will go,” the Glasenbachers wrote.⁵² Their insistence on the ever-mounting malevolence of the world’s Jewish population certainly served to reify the victimhood of the German Volk, but it also implied that the apocalyptic vision of German defeat long propagated by the National-Socialist movement had indeed come to pass. Though the Nazi regime had made significant strides in quelling the Jewish threat, they had ultimately failed to complete its messianic task. The Glasenbachers made clear that in consequence, a revamped National-Socialist movement—with anti-Semitism still at its core—was not only possible to engender, but indispensable to the prosperity, freedom, and survival of the world’s present and future generations.

⁵¹ The *Eternal Jew* was presented by the Nazis as a truthful documentation of Jewish life in Poland. The film exoticized the Jews, positioning them as slovenly, alien, and Asiatic. For more about the film see especially David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema, 1933-1945*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001).

⁵² “Der Weg Zurück,” *Mitteilung*, Issue 17, March, 1961.

Chapter Three

Becoming a “Somebody:” Nazi Identity After the Third Reich

4.1. Becoming a “Somebody”

“At home, in the Sudetenland, my father was...well...a joiner, neither very good, or bad—you know. But I can remember when he got that black SS uniform: that’s when he began to be ‘somebody’ I suppose, rather than just anybody.”¹ Host Münzenburger said this of his father, an SS officer who had worked in the gas chambers of Treblinka, during a 1972 interview with the acclaimed journalist Gitta Sereny. Münzenburger’s comment articulates with marked pointedness a primary appeal of National-Socialism to German civilians generally, and to those who became middle and high-ranking officers in particular: Nazism cast the existence of every single German not as not incidental, but meaningful and consequential. Nazism allowed Germans to see themselves as historical actors whose lives and even deaths would have longstanding prominence and implication.

This yearning for purpose and significance ran especially deep for Germans and Austrians because of the drab and unmooring conditions of the Weimar Republic. The humiliating nature of the Treaty of Versailles, and the dramatic dissolution of social and economic frameworks, hierarchies, and assumptions had already compelled Germans to feel dispossessed and disoriented. But when the economy precipitously rendered millions unemployed in 1929, Germans and Austrians felt an even more acute sense of purposelessness and insignificance. They felt themselves to be victims of broad and impersonal historical and geopolitical forces, and without agency to effect change on the course of history. The artist Leah Grundig reported having seen in Dresden “an old carpenter [who] chopped his table into pieces

¹ Gitta Sereny, *Into that Darkness: An Examination of Conscience*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 222.

in his room, so he could painstakingly put it back together again. Thus he was able once again to do what had become essential to him.”² The reprieve that Nazism offered then, in large part, was one of restoring Germans with a sense of purpose, and endowing confidence in the consequence of their existence. The Glasenbachers themselves recalled the salvation that Nazism offered in terms of restoring a conviction in their fundamental worth and import, as Germans, within a broader historical framework. In 1974, one member reflected upon the myriad ways in which National-Socialism had reintroduced Germans to their “fate” and to their “Geist,” from which they had been alienated prior to the Third Reich: “I declare here with certainty, that National-Socialism was born from the needs of humanity at a particular historical moment.”³

The capitulation of the Third Reich and the dissolution of the Nazi regime once again engendered an intense existential anxiety within the German and Austrian populations: Without Hitler, without Nazi ideology, and without the assurance of a thousand-year Reich, they no longer had a framework for assigning their lives and their deaths meaning. Indeed, in the final days of the war, it was not the death of loved ones in and of itself that distressed civilians, but rather the possibility that these deaths were “senseless.” One Viennese woman wrote in her diary on May 1, 1945:

The Führer is dead. I have heard this so many times today, but the sentence “Hitler dead” still sounds so unreal: I cannot believe it. Why did so many people have to bleed to death in this ghoulish war? Were all of the sacrifices of millions of people senseless? The line differentiating between sensical and senseless staggers and shifts. I will never be able to be happy again. They are dead—my friends are finished off, mutilated, sick. I have seen crying mothers, sobbing women, helpless children. Why all this? Why?⁴

² Lea Grundig, “Visions and History,” in Roderick Stackelberg and Sally A. Winkle, *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook: An Anthology of Texts*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 97.

³ “Festrede des Kamerad LA Alois Zillner,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 71, June, 1974.

⁴ Diary. Ilse Schrott, File 226, *Kommission Wien 1945*, Historische Kommission, Wien Stadt- und Landesarchiv.

Like their fellow civilians, the Glasenbachers felt an intense anxiety at the end of the war and beyond about the import of their work as National-Socialists, and thus about their relevance to the present and future. In a letter to his wife in 1946, one Glasenbacher complained: "Here, a threatening nihilism is mounting, as is a chaos of justice and morals, and all in the heart of Europe!"⁵ The "mounting" "nihilism" threatened to cast the Glasenbachers' accomplishments within the Third Reich as in service of a pointless and vacuous cause. This anxiety made the Glasenbachers desperate for affirmation of their ongoing relevance as former National-Socialists, and that their efforts between 1934 and 1945 had had an intrinsic value and consequence.

4.2. The Überlebenden

The Glasenbachers attempted to use their *Mitteilung* in order to reissue frameworks and narratives that would recast them to become "somebodies" again, or that would help them to give meaning to their past and to their present. More precisely, at the end of the war the Glasenbachers fashioned a sense of self on the basis of having physically survived the Third Reich's collapse, of having chosen or been chosen to live. They termed themselves the "Überlebenden," or the "survivors," properly opposed to those who had either succumbed to death or committed suicide during the war. The Glasenbachers explained: "when the Second World War found its beginning and then its end, and some of us were allowed to count ourselves among the survivors, we learned some decisive things. And only in consequence could we survive in the era after 1945."⁶ Through their unique experience of survival after the war, the Glasenbachers saw themselves as belonging to a distinct generation, one that was defined as much by birth-date as by death-date: "The lost generation-that is what one calls our war

⁵ Robert Thiele, „Kameradenschicksale aus Briefen,“ reprinted in *Mitteilung*, Issue 83, September 1977,.

⁶ "Ernst Jünger-einige Worte zu ihrem 99 Geburtstag," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 150, June, 1994.

generation. We Überlebenden can at least say that we escaped. And then came the postwar generation.”⁷ By positioning themselves as a special generation characterized by its having survived the war, the Glasenbachers managed to fashion an identity for themselves as both a part of and exempted from the bygone Third Reich. They served as a bridge between the Nazi past and the degenerate present under Allied occupation and influence.

The divergent ways in which the Glasenbachers regarded indicted and sentenced Nazi perpetrators further illuminates their self-understanding as a part of a liminal or purgatorial generation which belonged both to the Third Reich and to the present. Throughout their *Mitteilung*, they professed an intense identification and solidarity with those National-Socialists living out prison sentences. Most often, they lionized Rudolf Hess, Hitler’s Deputy Führer, and Walter Reder, the SS commander responsible for the infamous Marzabotto Massacre. They bemoaned that both Hess and Reder had been sentenced by the Allies to life imprisonment—the former in Spandau and the latter near Naples, Italy—and believed that these two former SS-officers epitomized the ideals, identity, and character of the Glasenbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung.⁸ For instance, the Salzburg division of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung maintained a correspondence with Reder’s mother, assuring her that they considered Reder to be among their ranks and worthy of their attention, concern, and advocacy: “we will show ourselves to be real comrades, and help alleviate the fate of our comrade Major Walter REDER.”⁹

By contrast, the Glasenbachers did not readily identify with those Nazi perpetrators who had been put to death by the Allies, although they did sympathize with and attempt to give meaning to their plight. They saw the sacrifice that these former Nazis had made for the Third

⁷ Dietrich Hack, "Die Bewältigte Vergangenheit, Dietrich Hack in *Mitteilung*, Issue 125, March, 1988.

⁸ Hess died in prison at the age of ninety-three, whereas Reder was released on parole in 1985.

⁹ *Nachrichten Glasenbacher*, Issue 2, November, 1964.

Reich to be a form of struggle that ultimately lacked the same significance or arduousness of the struggle undertaken by imprisoned National-Socialists like Hess and Reder, who continued to live into the late twentieth century. In reflecting on Hess' imprisonment, the Glasenbachers commented that "it was a more awful course of action than were the death sentences carried out in Nuremburg...!"¹⁰ Similarly, one Glasenbacher wrote of Walter Reder:

A life in prison is more than death!
Sentenced to die through years of hardship
You wage your life for the peace of the world
They needed the war, so that Germany would fall.
Sentenced, although you are the cleanest of them all
And none are as doomed ("*verloren*") as you.
They gave you only calumny and derision
You are your Volk's deserted son.
Forgotten by those who failed to appreciate you,
Forgotten by your own people and land.
How are honor and truth so far afield from us?
How restless the Volk, how dishonorable these times!
Behind bars, you must forget the endless years ahead of you,
Forget too that your life was just lived earnestly,
But know, that there is still a group of us
That will hoist you into the future, and into eternity.¹¹

In these two statements, the Glasenbachers emphasize the heroic and extraordinary struggle undertaken by imprisoned National-Socialists relative to that of executed Nazis. Through their imprisonment in Glasenbach they, along with the other National-Socialists who had spent time in other prisons and prison camps, had elected to continue fighting on behalf of the National-Socialist cause. Thus, for the Glasenbachers, to have survived—or to be a member of the

¹⁰ *Mitteilung*, Issue 40, December 1966.

¹¹ Walter Groß, "Rudolf Heß" in *Mitteilung*, Issue 91, September, 1979.

anointed Überlebenden generation—meant having evaded justice and the Allied hangman’s noose after 1945, as much as it meant having survived the war itself.¹²

As members of this liminal Überlebenden generation that was connected with and yet fundamentally detached from both the war, its aftermath, and from the present, the Glasenbachers believed that they had access to distinct insights, experiences, and duties. First and foremost, the Glasenbachers felt called upon to serve as witnesses of monumental historical events, or as extent vestibules of truth. Indeed, over and over in their publications, the Glasenbachers emphasized their primary identity as witnesses, or “Zeitzeugen.” As one prisoner wrote in his 1946 poem, “I have survived; that is all/ I am allowed to sadly brag to you about/ I remain back as a witness for our case.”¹³ As surviving “witnesses” of history, the Glasenbachers believed that they had a special duty to shape the mentalities and attitudes of the next generation. One member wrote to the *Mitteilung* in 1968, “As active witnesses of the events of the so fateful last decades, we are called upon as no one else is to do everything in our power to give youths at least a bit of experience to inform their future.”¹⁴ Giving youths “a bit of experience” specifically meant embodying and representing the values and structures engendered by the Third Reich. The Glasenbachers positioned themselves as role models for the postwar generation: “As long as we are still living” wrote the same Glasenbacher ten years later, “we want to remain true to our Volk and to our ideals and to serve as role models for the deluded youths.”¹⁵ If the Glasenbachers could model the ideals of National-Socialism while at the same time serving as emblems and reminders of a dislocated but not defunct past, then they could restore a sense of hope and

¹² I would like to thank Professor Hans Safrian, who first suggested to me that the Glasenbachers might have regarded themselves as the Überlebenden not only because they had survived the war, but also, because they had ultimately evaded the death sentence.

¹³ Fritz Stüber, *Ihr Toten Helden*, in Rudolf Nowotny, Editor, *Und Jede Stunde Tropft die Lageruhr. Sonderheft der Mitteilung der Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher*, (Linz: Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher), 12.

¹⁴ Hans Dörfler, “Drei Briefe,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 46, June, 1968.

¹⁵ Hans Dörfler, “Wir dürfen nicht länger schweigen,” in *Mitteilung*, 56 Folge, December, 1970.

conviction in the most precious ideals espoused by the Nazi movement, among the next generation.

Yet it was not just the fate of future generations that the Glasenbachers believed they held in their hands as the *Überlebenden*. Rather, they argued that their survival was also imperative because it allowed them to reanimate and preserve the Nazi past, or to ensure that those who had given their lives to the National-Socialist cause had not died “senseless” deaths. In reflecting on those soldiers who died during the war, one Glasenbacher said: “we obviously live in the past and we readily admit that, because our dead cannot be forgotten, and we don’t want to betray them. They continue to live with and in us, and we measure our deeds on the basis of their everlasting worth and sacrifice for our Volk!”¹⁶ In order to ensure that the dead soldiers could “continue to live with and in” them, the Glasenbachers periodically held vigils for fallen soldiers of the Second World War, and complained in their *Mitteilung* when they believed that these soldiers were improperly memorialized or regarded with shame by German and Austria society.¹⁷ They preached that the organization should use its many resources—including the *Mitteilung* itself—to memorialize members of the Wehrmacht and SS who had sacrificed their lives for the National-Socialist cause: “The *Mitteilung* binds us all—the living and dead—together, and we can secure a home for our dead comrades in our hearts.”¹⁸

In imbuing the deaths of the fallen with a certain “sense” or meaning the Glasenbachers believed that they also gave structure and meaning to their national history. They wrote, “the homeland (*Heimat*) is only lost, when the living fail to commemorate their dead.”¹⁹ The

¹⁶ Heidl Rühl, “An die Deutschen mit der ‘Gnade der späten Geburt!’” In *Mitteilung*, in Issue 146, June, 1993.

¹⁷ See, for example, Hansjakob Stehle, “Tote Halten Frieden,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 21, February, 1962.

¹⁸ “Gedenkworte des Salzburger Kameraden Rudolf Neutatz vor dem Lagerehrenmal Glasenbach am 19.3.1983,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 106, June, 1983.

¹⁹ *Mitteilung*, Issue 73, June, 1974.

connection that the Glasenbachers draw between the “Heimat,” “the living” and “their dead” is especially significant. Through remembering and celebrating those who had during the war, they managed to not only animate their comrades, but also their nation—and its history—in its entirety. The Glasenbachers thus saw their physical survival, or their ability to both bear witness and to remember, as a prerequisite for the preservation and reanimation of German nationhood.

The Glasenbachers regarded themselves as extraordinary and unique—or as “somebodies”—because they had elected or been chosen to be among the Überlebenden. But they by no means believed that they, the Glasenbachers, were the only group able to identify as such. To the contrary, they believed that any German or Austrian who had lived as an adult through and beyond the Third Reich had a claim to this identity, and all the significance and insight that came with it. The difference between themselves and their coevals, however, was that they were in touch with and amenable to arming themselves with this identity; whereas most Germans mourned and fought against their survival, the Glasenbachers embraced their subsistence, and harnessed it in service of political, cultural, and ideological revival. The Glasenbachers preached:

The Germans must learn to feel like a nation again. To this day, they still have time to consolidate themselves. But if the German Volk continues to fight suicidally against their survival, then there may be a land or a province, where German is still spoken, but whose inhabitants have as little to do with Germany as the contemporary Grecians have to do with the free citizens of Athens, or with Laconia.²⁰

That the Glasenbachers position “suicide” as properly opposed to survival in the statement quoted above, is especially noteworthy. In his essay “Hatred After War,” Richard Bessel points out that at the end of the Second World War, civilians committed suicide in unprecedented

²⁰ K., “Sagt unserem Volk,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 39, September, 1966.

droves. They did so, he argues, primarily because of ubiquitous feelings of hatred and loathing.

Bessel's claim is worth quoting at length:

The frequency of suicide during this period meant a change in the character of the phenomenon. Suicide no longer was just a private affair, a matter of private concerns, desperation, depression or aggression; the frequency and nature of the suicides of 1945 made it a public phenomenon as never before. During the "suicide period," the effects of the act were not limited to the private sphere involving the relatives, friends and acquaintances of the deceased; the most raw of private emotions had burst forth into the public sphere...suicide, and in particular the remarkable events of 1945 in Germany, should be understood as an expression of hatred. The hatred is not necessarily directed solely or in the first instance against oneself; instead, it may be aimed against the people who will live on after the act has been carried out. That is to say, suicide may be seen as both a product and an expression of aggression... The fact that so many convinced (and no doubt many less convinced) National Socialists decided to end their lives by their own hand points to their hatred not only toward the troops of the victorious Allies...it also, and perhaps especially, points toward a hatred of the Germans left alive.²¹

In other words, at the end of the Second World War, suicide and hatred became entwined with one another. Germans and Austrians looked back on the material and immaterial sacrifices that they made in the name of the Volksgemeinschaft, and also on their enthusiasm for and participation in the various Nazi institutions and programs, as fraudulent and fatuous.²² Feeling betrayed and duped, they harbored an intense hatred, and sought to express this hatred through committing suicide.

Notably, throughout their *Mitteilung*, the Glasenbachers positioned themselves as bereft of these hateful sentiments and disposed against the hate-driven actions carried out by their suicidal peers. They believed that the time in which they lived had become "rotten" with "hate and envy," and that "hate" managed to "devalue" and "debase" the "meaning of life."²³ The Glasenbachers proudly proclaimed that they had by contrast distinguished themselves, by

²¹ Richard Bessel, "Hatred After War: Emotion and the Postwar History of East Germany," in *History and Memory*, Vol. 17, No. 1-2, (Bloomington: University of Indiana, 2015), 200-02.

²² On the break-down of the Volksgemeinschaft, see Thomas Kohut, *Generation*, 146-47.

²³ "Bundesobmann Luckesch," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 20, December, 1961.

choosing to “make our little lives bigger, so that they transcend envy and hate.”²⁴ They asserted their time in Glasenbach did not “awaken” “feelings of hatred” within them, even though the experience attuned them to the “bitter distress of our kin outside of the barbed wire.”²⁵ In their minds, “burying hate” precluded their “becoming good comrades.”²⁶

Instead of identifying with destructive forces of hate that induced death and “debased the meaning” of their lives, the Glasenbachers claimed that they maintained vitalizing feelings of sadness and grief about the “tragedy” beget by the Third Reich’s collapse.²⁷ They referred to themselves as both a *Trauergemeinde* and a *Leidengemeinschaft*, or as a community of mourners and sufferers, and prided themselves on espousing a fraternal grief for their defeated and confused Volk. As one Glasenbacher wrote,

If we can’t defend against our enemies of today, who in the present discriminate on the basis of the past, and collectively exploit us, we must all hold up a mirror of self-knowledge to those who once shared our sensibilities, but who now concertedly attempt to undermine us. We will do this tactfully, yes tactfully...by using the lessons taught by the sorrow (*Leid*) of the time, the sorrow that is our own.²⁸

Similarly, the Glasenbachers believed that sadness and grief allowed them to forge more intimate relationships with their comrades, and to come into contact with the meaning and potency of *Gemeinschaft*: “The profoundly sorrowful and difficult fate that we experienced only made our Heimat more valuable for us, compelled us to continue our mission (*Einsatz*). Comrades in suffering/sorrow are the truest children of their Austrian Heimat.”²⁹ In both statements, the Glasenbachers assert that mourning, grieving, and sadness helped to put them in touch with the

²⁴ “Ich hatt einen Kameraden” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 3, October, 1957. This article was again reprinted in the 140th issue of the *Mitteilung*.

²⁵ Trude Rybak Erlach, “Julrede, Trude Rybak Erlach to Ortsgruppe Linz,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 69, March, 1974.

²⁶ “Festrede des Kamerad LA Alois Zillner am 11. Mai 1974 in Wels,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 71, September, 1974.

²⁷ “Das Jahr 1945 in Oberschleisien, dem Land unter dem Kreuz, Erlebnisbericht von Elisabeth Lengenfelder, Teil VII,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 82, June, 1977.

²⁸ “Im Waldenden Zeiten,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 18, June, 1961.

²⁹ Felix Mirwald, “Was uns Kameraden Schreiben,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 39, September, 1966.

“meaning” of the times in which they lived, and to take ownership of their own emotions and narratives. They felt that their sadness and grief would have an animating potency, capable of enlivening and binding the Überlebenden, who would in turn distinguish themselves by mobilizing a second wave of the National-Socialist movement.

4.3. The Glasenbachers’ Deaths

While the Glasenbachers emphatically positioned themselves as distinguished by their survival, this identity was incredibly fragile. Beginning in the late 1970s many members of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung began dying of old age, and the narrative of physical survival as the basis of their significance broke down. The Glasenbachers began to discuss death with more frequency and anxiety in their *Mitteilung*, both explicitly and implicitly. But while this anxiety about their own deaths became much more pronounced in the latter years of the organization’s tenure, the earlier publications also reflected a struggle to reconcile their inevitable and impending deaths with a narrative of themselves as the Überlebenden. From the very conception of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, then, the Glasenbachers felt a mounting uncertainty about physical survival as the basis of their identity.

That the Glasenbachers viewed themselves through the lens of their impending deaths, is also evident in their articulation of themselves as the “*Alten*,” or the “aged.” After the war, they believed that the demography of Austrian and German society had been reconfigured: instead of consisting of multiple generations, they found that their society was bilaterally split into the old (*Alten*) and the young (*Jugend*). For instance, the Glasenbacher Adolf Klein acerbically wrote: “We *Alten* are diminishing in number. *And what remains?* A prosaic generation, who no longer

has any ideals, who has already been so changed, that its members must be reminded to be German.”³⁰

The Glasenbachers’ perception of themselves as the “Alten” was not only explicitly articulated, but also implicit in the attitudes they exhibited towards their generational counterparts, the Jugend. In his book *The Life Cycle Completed*, the psychoanalyst Erik Erikson characterizes “old age” as a crisis between “integrity” or “wisdom,” and “despair.”

The dominant antithesis in old age and the theme of the last crisis we termed *integrity vs. despair*. Here, the dystonic element may seem more immediately convincing, considering the fact that the top line marks the total end (unpredictable in time and kind) of this, our one given course of life. Integrity, however, seems to convey a peculiar demand—as does the specific strength that we postulate as maturing from this last antithesis—namely, *wisdom*. This we have described as a kind of ‘informed and detached concern with life itself in the face of death itself,’ as expressed in age-old adages and yet also potentially present in the simplest references to concrete and daily matters. But then again, a more or less open *disdain* is the antipathic counterpart to wisdom—a reaction to feeling (and seeing others) in an increasing state of being finished, confused, helpless.³¹

Throughout their *Mitteilung*, the Glasenbachers certainly expressed a disdain for and an alienation from the present, while at the same time feeling called upon to save the postwar generation from itself. For example, one Glasenbacher, who referred to himself as “Eberhart,” wrote to the magazine: “The youth of our age will proceed down their path unaware of the various hostilities, and the disparagement and lack of direction, but no one believes that they don’t look to the older generation, and don’t evaluate us. Are we, the older ones, really doing everything that we can to be worthy of standing alongside them, or must we immediately have to succumb to self-criticism?!”³² “Austria is moving in a direction, that we Alten cannot

³⁰ Adolf Klein, “Was uns Kameraden Schreiben,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 60, December, 1971. Emphasis added.

³¹ Erik Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 61.

³² Eberhart, “Was uns Kameraden Schreiben,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 10, March, 1959.

understand,” the Glasenbacher Erich Brandl similarly declared, “and so I hope that our Heimat will go down another path which won’t deface...our Volk’s culture.”³³

The “informed and detached concern with life” that Eberhart and Brandl espoused cloaked their sense of themselves as “finished, confused, helpless.” Between 1957 and 2005, the Glasenbachers displayed an intense anxiety about their relevance and significance to history. The Glasenbachers feared being seen by their fellow countrymen as relics of a shameful and senseless past, with little to offer in terms of shaping the present and the future. They worried that they had become anachronisms and decried the “merciless wheel of history” that had left them behind.³⁴ Indeed, in their *Mitteilung*, the Glasenbachers exhibited an almost pathological fear of being forgotten and abandoned. Over and over, they cited the way in which the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung offered them a rare (if not singular) assurance of their ongoing relevance. Such statements most often appeared in the “What our Comrades Wrote to Us” column, and usually followed an articulation of having received a greeting card from the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung or attended a reunion of some sort. For instance, one Glasenbacher wrote in 1966: “The realization that one is not forgotten by one’s comrades and champions of suffering, evokes a feeling of joy, and grants us much bravery and strength as we continue on our progressively lonelier path, the path of the old days.”³⁵ Similarly, the Glasenbacher Dr. Arthur Staudacher expressed, “the postwar era’s terrible influence meant, that we became lonelier and lonelier. In light of this, I am even more happy, that you all have not forgotten me.”³⁶ In both statements, the authors express having felt isolated, abandoned, and irrelevant at the end of the

³³ Erich Brandl, “Was uns Kameraden schreiben,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 145, March, 1993.

³⁴ “Festrede von Walter Leitner bei der Josefifeier am 17. März 1990,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 134, June, 1990.

³⁵ Bernhard Keidel, “Was uns Kameraden schreiben,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 39, September 1966.

³⁶ Arthur Staudacher, “Was uns Kameraden schreiben,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 48, December 1968.

war. The “loneliness” that they felt not only as they grew older, but even as the war came to an end, prevented them from feeling like “somebodies.”

For the Glasenbachers, this feeling of being “finished, confused, helpless” was especially unsettling (or, to use Erikson’s language, “dystonic,”) because it rendered their identity as the Überlebenden incredibly fragile. If they were regarded as old and anachronistic, then they could not structure their identity around a narrative of survival and physical persistence and would need to re-establish a distinguished identity on the basis of a different criterion. To counteract this crisis of identity, the Glasenbachers sought to establish a more robust narrative of themselves that had its roots both in the past and in the future; or, put another way, to re-orient their sense of self around their deaths as much as around their lives. Specifically, they took measures to author an origin myth for the emergent post-Hitler era, one which connoted their lives and works as indispensable to the unfolding historical epoch.

The myth that the Glasenbachers’ constructed began with a reflection on their behavior and activity during the Third Reich. They claimed that they had been identified, from early on, as the embodiment of the National-Socialist vision, both in terms of their attitude and their behavior. On these grounds, once the Nazis had seized power first in Germany and then in Austria, many were chosen—by fate, as much as by the Party leaders—to belong to what they considered the most exemplary group of the National-Socialist movement: the SS. In their minds, belonging to the SS had affirmed that they were “elite” National-Socialists, or that they belonged to an exclusive group of “pioneers” meant to guide and even help shape the National-Socialist vision.³⁷ A Glasenbacher wrote to the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung in 1971, “I was proud that I was allowed to take action in the coat of an elite unit, the SS...the elite troops of the Waffen-SS

³⁷ Festrede, des Kameraden Georg König, Kirchdorf/Krems anlässlich der Glasenbacher Josefifeier am 20 März 1971 in Salzburg“ in *Mitteilung*, Issue 60, December, 1971.

admitted us into their ranks.”³⁸ In addition to having a significance within the Nazi apparatus, the Glasenbachers positioned their elitism within a universal historical context. As members of the SS, they asserted that they had “fought like almost no other man has in history.”³⁹ Thus, they declared themselves as elite not only within Nazi society, but also within the grand scheme of history.

The Glasenbachers implied that it was not only their appointment to the SS that distinguished them as model National-Socialists during the Third Reich, but also their unwavering commitment to National-Socialism within the organization, even as those around them descended into crippling self-consciousness, doubt, and corruption. As the war progressed, they found that the unity championed by National-Socialism was undermined by petty, based infighting. In their minds, this transformed the war from a messianic crusade to, “one could say, a civil war among a section of the Volk, which was carried out with bitterness until the bitter end.”⁴⁰ In stark contrast, they continued to preserve the original, un-perverted ideals of the National-Socialist movement, and remained “true” and “loyal” to their cause until Germany’s surrender in May of 1945: “Yes, we loyally served our Fatherland, and we did not renege our loyalty even in the most difficult moments of wartime.”⁴¹

The Glasenbachers went on to draw a direct connection between their elite status in the Third Reich, and their imprisonment. They contended that their incarceration by the American forces affirmed that they were the most important living National-Socialists, and those who posed the largest threat to the Allied cause. A Glasenbacher wrote of his fellow member of the

³⁸ Festrede des Kameraden Georg König, Kirchdorf/Krems, anlässlich der “Glasenbacher Josefifeier” am 20. März, 1971,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 58, June, 1971.

³⁹ “Der Krieg, Nürnberg, und die Folge,” in *Nachrichten Glasenbacher*, Issue 10, December, 1966.

⁴⁰ Karl Leipert, “Schach dem schmutzigen Krieg,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 53, March, 1970.

⁴¹ “Was uns Kameraden Schreiben,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 145, March, 1993.

Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, "His membership in the SS drove him to Glasenbach, where he demonstrated his unbowed and relentless comradely attitude."⁴² Because so many members of the SS were incarcerated at Camp Marcus W. Orr, they celebrated that the camp ultimately came to "contain the highest concentration of a spirited elite" leftover from the Third Reich.⁴³

If their elite status within the Third Reich landed them in Glasenbach, the Glasenbachers asserted that their elitism quickly took on new meaning. First, while incarcerated they established themselves (along with other imprisoned National-Socialists) as martyrs who had sacrificed more than any other group after the end of the war. They argued that "comrades in suffering are the most faithful children of their Austrian homeland." In fact, they expressed that weathering extreme suffering "did not break our inner fortitude, but rather made it even stronger."⁴⁴ The suffering that they bore, the Glasenbachers narrated, in turn compelled them to become the original members of a new Volksgemeinschaft, one that would be remembered for generations as the founders of and martyrs for the revived National-Socialist movement: "Austria's elite sat in Glasenbach. I believe that we all are justified in demanding that the following generations recognize, that we did the heavy-lifting in terms of rebuilding our Austrian homeland."⁴⁵

Part of the "heavy lifting" that they undertook, the Glasenbachers explained, was the resistance they exhibited against the Allies while in the camp. Most markedly, the Glasenbachers took measures to position what they called "Josefitag" as the first act of postwar resistance. In August of 1947, on St. James' day ("Josefitag,") eighteen Glasenbachers drove a truck through

⁴² "Tod, Bundeskassier Max Bumberger," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 21, February, 1962.

⁴³ "Glasenbach-Begriff, nicht Grenze!" in *Mitteilung*, Issue 2, September, 1957.

⁴⁴ "Glasenbach Gelöbnis Franz Langoth, Glasenbach 1946," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 8, December, 1958.

⁴⁵ "Festrede des Kameraden Ing. Othmar Christ in der Glasenbacher Josefifeier 1996, Teil III," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 160, December, 1996.

the double fence surrounding Camp Marcus W. Orr. The escape attempt was short-lived; all escapees were found and brought back to the camp, with the exception of two prisoners—the Ustasha official Ivo Bulic and the SS Sturmmann Josef Barta—who were never recovered. As the camp officials searched for the escapees, over one-thousand prisoners in Camp Marcus W. Orr began to demonstrate against their internment and attempted to break down the camp doors. American tanks were brought in to quell the riot, but it was not until Sydney Wooten stepped in to serve as a sympathetic mediator, that the situation was ultimately defused.⁴⁶ Despite the rather anti-climactic nature of these protests, in their writings, the Glasenbachers quickly began lyricizing and commemorating “Josefitag”—the day of the attempted escape—as a precedent-setting act of bold resistance against the Allied occupiers. They commemorated the riot as the first attempt at launching a new political and historical moment, one not unlike the Beer Hall Putsch. Indeed, with the Josefitag, they claimed “the ringleaders of the revolt were discovered!” before going on to discuss the ways in which Josefitag, like their comradeship, had taken on a symbolic meaning that extended far past the event itself.⁴⁷ Additionally, every year, the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung held a Josefitag commemoration event, and habitually wrote poems, short memoirs, and even a ballad in honor of the “magic” day.⁴⁸ The persistent fervor with which the Glasenbachers referenced and commemorated the Josefitag, suggests that they tried to mythicize the event, positioning it not only as an isolated incident belonging to the past, but an initial act of resistance that had spurred an entire historical movement. Glasenbach, they declared, came to symbolize the struggle of the postwar era.

⁴⁶ Eigensberger and Dohler, *Camp Marcus W. Orr*, 65-66.

⁴⁷ “Josefi-feier in Glasenbach, 19. März 1947,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 2, September, 1957.

⁴⁸ For an example of the Glasenbachers invocation of the term “magic,” or “Zauber” to describe the Josefitag, see: “Festrede des Kameraden Hans Dum zum 13. Glasenbacher Treffen in Wels am 6 Mai 1978”, in *Mitteilung*, Issue 87, September, 1978.

Upon their reintegration back into German and Austrian society, the Glasenbachers asserted that their exemplary commitment to comradeship, their refusal to accept Nazism's terminal defeat, and most of all their willingness to re-entrench the language of the Third Reich, distinguished them both as individuals and as an organization. In fact, they contended, they became a "symbol" or a "concept" (*Begriff*), rather than just a mainstream organization. Specifically, they positioned themselves as a symbol of the difficult postwar years and of the galvanizing suffering that had impelled the formation of a new and more potent Volksgemeinschaft: "Today, the Volk associates the word 'Glasenbach' with the first postwar years, the trials and tribulations, the occupation period, the uncertainty, the worry, the fear, but also the comradeship among men and women..."⁴⁹ More importantly, however, they asserted that the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung had become a concept or a symbol for an entire historical movement, one which had its roots towards the past, but which would become noteworthy for charting a grand future for Europe on the basis of comradeship, Gemeinschaft, purity, and truth. They claimed that "Glasenbach is more than a toponym, it is a symbol, and Glasenbacher is more than a designation for a random group of battered, humiliated and poor or even punished humans, rather it is a binding recognition of being the bearers and upholders of comradeship. It is a concept that affects all in the same way!"⁵⁰ In both cases, the Glasenbachers implied that their individual existence was entwined with or integrated into the creation of a historical movement that transcended their physical lives. Through creating and belonging to the Glasenbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, they had become symbols, and in consequence, ensured that they were embedded in an enduring concept which would be invoked by generations to come. In fact, they were so certain of their impending importance to history, that in the last few years of the

⁴⁹ "Glasenbach-Begriff, nicht grenze!" in *Mitteilung*, Issue 2, September, 1957.

⁵⁰ "Kamerad Dr. Felix Rinner spricht beim Welser treffen," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 20, December, 1961.

organization's existence the Glasenbachers professed a "duty" to collect and "archive" documents and artifacts from the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung for "future historians."⁵¹

The final issue of the *Mitteilung* most emphatically capitulated the Glasenbachers' narrative of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung as having a symbolic and thus an enduring resonance. In 2005 the organization wrote: "All comrade-organizations, which were founded because of experiences during the war and immediately thereafter, have already crossed their retirement age, and have now disbanded-so also must the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung of the Glasenbacher the 31st of December, 2005." But despite the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung having reached its threshold, the Glasenbachers professed that it would endure as an institution; they claimed that "one can disband an organization, but only the almighty can end an institution, like that of the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung of the Glasenbachers, with the withdrawal of the last comrade of fate...as long as this committed Gemeinschaft continues to live."⁵² In other words, the Glasenbachers regarded the life of an organization as dependent on place and time, or on having living and contributing members. Should its members die or disappear, an organization could not endure. By contrast, they believed that an institution was a self-contained structure. It professed an idea, a phenomenon, a concept, and thus was not subject to human mortality for survival. Defining the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung as an institution rather than an organization, then, assured the Glasenbachers of their ongoing prominence and engagement in a future that they would not physically be a part of.

Beyond the seminal comradeship and Gemeinschaft engendered by the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, the Glasenbachers believed that it was their writings—or the *Mitteilung* itself—which would grant them a sustained significance. The Glasenbachers projected that the

⁵¹ "Das Ende einer Institution, 13. November 2005," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 194, November, 2005.

⁵² "Das Ende einer Institution, 13. November 2005," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 194, November, 2005.

magazine would be celebrated and studied far into the future. The Glasenbachers expressed this conviction in large part by historicizing and mythicizing the *Mitteilung* itself, even as they were still writing it. Throughout the *Mitteilung* the Glasenbachers seemed less interested in commemorating their time in Glasenbach, than they did in commemorating the history of the *Mitteilung* itself over the course of the organization's lifetime. Even the regular column "Encounters in Glasenbach"—which was ostensibly designated for the re-telling of experiences and events that took place in the camp—often drifted off into musings about the Wohlfahrtsvereinigung, present woes and concerns, and even discussions of philosophical and biblical parables. The Glasenbachers also published multiple anniversary issues in which they reprinted noteworthy articles and re-affirmed the present and future influence of the *Mitteilung*. On the ten-year anniversary, for example, the magazine declared: "The Glasenbacher *Mitteilungen*! It should live on for much longer...and will mean much for the intrinsic volkisch value of all of the German people."⁵³ This impulse to proclaim the historical significance of the *Mitteilung* even before its significance had become apparent, illuminates just how much stock the Glasenbachers placed in their writing, to ensure their historical prominence. They expressed that just as the "humans" Goethe and Albrecht Dürer were eternally embodied within their works, their *Mitteilung* gave them access to spiritual and symbolic life that would persist long past their physical deaths, or even the potential death of the Gemeinschaft.⁵⁴

"There will not be an end, because there is no end, rather, there will be a way forward to a new tomorrow," the Glasenbachers proclaimed.⁵⁵ The "new tomorrow" that the Glasenbachers envisioned was one in which they would be remembered as the fathers and mothers of a new

⁵³ "Den Glasenbacher Mitteilungen zum Jubiläum," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 43, September, 1967.

⁵⁴ "Warum ein Verein?" in *Mitteilung*, Issue 1, July, 1957.

⁵⁵ Peter Futterer, "Rückschau und Ausblick," in *Mitteilung*, Issue 15, September, 1960.

historical epoch, defined by its simultaneous preservation of and improvement upon the Third Reich. This hope is embedded in their insistence that their biological descendants would be honored for simply being related to an “original” Glasenbacher; they imagined a future in which their sons would “automatically be appointed to an elite unit in the national army. In explaining their prominence, they could say with pride: 'my father was a Glasenbacher.’”⁵⁶

The Glasenbachers needed to assure themselves that their historical significance would have no expiration date. The defeat of the National-Socialist movement in 1945 made them feel anxious about the import and meaning of their lives, an import and meaning that they had yearned for since the beginning of the twentieth century, and then cultivated during the Third Reich. For the Glasenbachers, then, 1945 could represent neither a historical caesura nor as a moment of monumental defeat and decline; for if it did, they would have to accept that they, as former National-Socialists, would have to “forget and be forgotten.” Instead, they staved off this existential crisis of identity by trying to canonize themselves as elite Germans of the twentieth century who had given genesis to a historical movement that would unfold over the next decades, if not centuries.

⁵⁶ "Kam Dr. Felix Rinner, Wien" in Issue 42, June, 1967,

Conclusion

“Stunde Null” and Defeat: Two Historical Concepts

5.1. The Stunde Null Paradigm

The historiography of postwar Austria and Germany has been primarily organized around the oft-cited “Stunde Null,” or “Zero Hour” concept. The Stunde Null concept emerged at the end of the war, but did not become a mainstreamed theory until 1948, with the production of Roberto Rossellini’s film *Germania, Anno Zero*. The movie, which relates a fictional story about a family struggling to survive in occupied Berlin, captured with particular vividness the city’s devastation, and the initial attempts at restoration and rebirth that were made in Germany following the War. Since then, the term has internationally been integrated both explicitly and implicitly in historical analyses of the postwar period.

The Stunde Null theory argues that when the war came to an end in May of 1945, civilians, surviving Nazi officials, and even victims, immediately wanted to rebuild their society anew. They saw 1945 as a moment of historical rupture, in which one epoch came to an end and another, entirely different epoch began. The past became irrelevant to their present, and their future was imagined as entirely detached and alien from their former lives: “The past,” one historian wrote about May, 1945, “melted away almost overnight.”¹ For historians who subscribe to this theory, Stunde Null encompasses a sea-change that took place in 1945, when the institutions and infrastructures of the Nazi regime were dismantled, a new democratic government took power, fascism no longer seemed like a viable political and ideological framework, and the era of World Wars came to an end in Europe.²

¹ Richard Overy, “Interwar, War, Postwar: Was there a zero hour in 1945?” in Dan Stone, Editor, *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 62.

² See also: Robert G. Moeller “Winning the Peace at the Movies,” in Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller, Eds., *The Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Clemens Vollnhals, “Entnazifizierung. Politische Säuberung unter alliierter Herrschaft,” in Hans-Erich Volkmann,

Dissenting historians by contrast have argued that 1945 was a moment of failed transition, in which the Allies and the democratic forces within Germany and Austria ineffectively expunged Nazi institutions and personnel from the political and economic spheres. Citing the weakness of denazification, the retention of former Nazi bureaucrats and governments in the new government, and of course punitive measures that often culminated either in amnesty or the doling out of meagre and incongruous sentences, these scholars see *Stunde Null* as an ideal to which postwar Germany and Austria never did or could live up. The historian Mark Mazower, for example, argues: “The German surrender is a convenient marker for historians, but little more. Indeed, it is positively misleading in so far as it suggests the ending of one epoch and the start of another. There was, in reality, no Year Zero, no clean break between hot and cold war, and the postwar regimes which emerged in the latter had their roots in the social experiences of wartime.”³

Whether historians regard the institution of a *Stunde Null* as sufficiently or insufficiently executed in postwar Germany, in either case, both assume that historical epochs are determined by events; when power changes hands, economies rise or fall, and ideological or cultural paradigms shift, one era ends, and another begins. Institutions and power constellations determine the contours and divisions of history. But while from our perspective in the present the radical shift in power, ideology, economy, and even geography after the Second World War certainly suggests historical rupture (or perhaps a failure to engender historical rupture), for the historical actors themselves, the caesura was not so cleanly experienced. We must remember that

Editor, *Ende des Dritten Weltkriegs-Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, (München, Piper, 1995); Tony Judt, “Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe,” in Jan-Werner Müller, Ed., *Memory and Power in Postwar Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

³ Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe’s Twentieth Century*, (London: Penguin, 1990), 216. See also, especially. “Gerhard Botz, 1945: Viele Brüche und Kontinuitäten-ein „Epochenbruch?“ in Stefan Klärner, Gerhard Botz, Helmut Konrad, eds., *Epochenbrüche in 20. Jahrhundert*, Vol. 4, (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2017).

“historical continuity is provided inevitably by human beings. The continuities that connect the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich and the Third Reich to the two postwar Germanys exist because people continued to live their lives after 1933 and after 1945, bearing the past into the present to create future historical realities.”⁴

Indeed, after the war, the Glasenbachers self-consciously bore “the past into the present to create future historical realities.” They wanted to salvage both the Third Reich and the future; or to preserve both National-Socialism and the sense of self that National-Socialism had offered to them. Even though the postwar years, the cold war era, and even the post-Cold-War era introduced radically new political, economic, ideological, and even cultural paradigms, the Glasenbachers nonetheless sought to ensure that their lives had continuity. They needed their present and their imagined future to be bound up in their Nazi past.

The Glasenbacher Wohlfahrtsvereinigung serves as just one example of the Stunde Null paradigm’s limitations. After the war, thousands of former National-Socialists banded together across the world—in Germany, in Austria, in Italy, and even in South America—and independently published magazines similar to the *Mitteilung*: *The Heimkehrer*, *The Soziales Friedenswerk*, *La Plata Ruf*, *Kameradschaft IV*, and *Der Ring*, to name only a few. A cursory evaluation of these publications indicates that these organizations made no attempt at veiling their National-Socialist affiliations, and even employed a discourse similar to that of the Glasenbacher *Mitteilung*. The Glasenbachers thus either consciously or (more likely) unconsciously were part and parcel of a larger project to maintain a certain continuity in their lives and in history. They did so by seeking to both restore and advance the National-Socialist

⁴ Kohut, *Generation*, 158. Kohut credits this idea to Lutz Niethammer, who articulated this point in his introduction to *Die Jahre weiß man nicht, wo die heute hinsetzen soll. Faschismus Erfahrungen in Ruhrgebiet, 1930-1960*, (Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger, 1983).

movement—a project which spanned the twentieth century, and many different corners of the globe.

5.2. The Meaning of Defeat

As has been illustrated, essential to the story of the Glasenbachers is their fear of defeat, or the almost pathological need that they felt to deny the failure of the National-Socialist movement into the twenty-first century. In fact, the Glasenbachers elided the terms “defeat” (“*Niederlage*”) and “decline” (“*Niedergang*”) from their works. It was not until 1970 that they used these terms at all in their magazine; and even then, they always qualified the Third Reich’s collapse merely as a “military defeat” or a “so-called defeat.”⁵ Why were these concepts so threatening to the Glasenbachers? What would it mean to attach “defeat” and “downfall” to the year 1945?

In the past few decades, two noteworthy scholars—Reinhart Koselleck and Wolfgang Schivelbusch—have sought to elucidate shifting notions of the terms “defeat” and “decline” in modern European history. In his book *The Culture of Defeat*, Schivelbusch argues that endemic to defeat is a fear of extinction and annihilation, “a threat that resonates long past the cessation of hostilities.”⁶ The persistence of this “threat” means that defeat is not as a finite experience or event, one with a distinct psychological impact on either side of its occurrence. Instead, he believes that the threat of extinction is born with the onslaught of war itself and lingers long thereafter. In the twentieth century, Schivelbusch explains, this threat loomed even larger, because of the World Wars’ totalizing and unbounded nature: “...while the cabinet wars of the

⁵ Hans Dörfler, “Briefe, die uns Erreichen,” in *Mitteilung*, Issue 54, June, 1970.

⁶ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat. On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery*, Trans. by Jefferson Chase, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), 5. (Hereafter cited as “*Culture of Defeat*”).

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries restricted violence to the direct participants on the battlefield, the scorched-earth policies of twentieth-century total war once more universalized the threat.”⁷ In consequence, defeat in warfare amounted to the defeat of the nation, or “the nation’s death agony.”⁸ The army was no longer seen as a force detached from or extraneous to the nation and its Volk, but instead the defeat of the army and the overthrow of a regime meant the demise of an entire people.

Reinhart Koselleck agrees to some extent with Schivelbusch, that by the twentieth century, defeat had become bound up in new existential anxieties, as well as in the formulation of utopic ideologies. However, in his book *Begriffsgeschichten*, Koselleck looks more closely at the term “decline,” thereby focusing more on the temporal dimensions (“Niedergang”) of loss, rather than its spatial dimensions (“Niederlage”). He devotes a chapter—thought to overlap with Carl Schmitt’s 1946 essay on Alexander de Tocqueville in many capacities—to discussing the ways in which the terms “progress” and “decline” came to be defined, both independently and in relation to one another. “Decline” Koselleck concludes, was an age-old concept that changed dramatically during the early modern period, whereas “progress” was only ever introduced during the Enlightenment. He demonstrates that during Antiquity and the medieval epoch, progress and decline were regarded as mutually exclusive; individuals and institutions either worked towards or deviated from God’s precepts. However, by the nineteenth century, “decline emerged again and again as the aporia of progress, or as the reproduction of decline through progress itself.”⁹ In other words, in modernity, defeat and decline came to be enveloped by the

⁷ Schivelbusch, *Culture of Defeat*, 5.

⁸ Schivelbusch, *Culture of Defeat*, 5.

⁹ Reinhart Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), 226.

term progress. Decline was no longer seen as the enemy of progress, but rather one of its provokers.

When taken together, Schivelbusch and Koselleck present at times congruent and at times contradictory arguments about how loss came to be experienced and conceptualized in modernity. Namely, they saw loss as having an existential and historical importance; by the twentieth century, defeat and decline were understood as cataclysmic, in that they necessarily signified the extermination of a people. On the other hand, as Koselleck demonstrates, defeat could not be given too much credence, because doing so would undermine the progressive framework of history.

Schivelbusch and Koselleck's conceptual histories of "defeat" and "decline" together explain why the Glasenbachers shied away from invoking the term in their *Mitteilung*. For the Glasenbachers, staving off defeat meant acknowledging military failure, but denying this failure as constitutive of historical rupture; they needed to craft a narrative that characterized the capitulation of the Third Reich not as a permanent historical decline, but rather as an intermediate set-back within a broader trajectory of historical progress.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Oberösterreichische Stadt und Landesarchiv

Publication. *Mitteilungen. Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher*. Boxes 3-6, numbers 31-34.
Sammlung Camp Marcus W. Orr.

Österreichische National Bibliothek

Publication. *Mitteilungen. Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher*.
Publication. *Nachrichten Glasenbacher. Mitteilungsblatt der Ortsgruppe Salzburg der Ortsgruppe Salzburg-Stadt u. Flachgau der Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher*.

Wien Stadt- und Landesarchiv

Diary. Josefine Neuwirth. File 84. *Kommission Wien 1945*. Historische Kommission.
Testimony. Elfriede M. Kling. File 242. *Kommission Wien 1945*. Historische Kommission.

Published Memoirs, Autobiographies, and Commemorative Books

Hiess, Joseph. *Glasenbach: Buch einer Gefangenschaft*. Wels: Welsermühl, 1956.
———. *Wir Kommen aus Glasenbach: Buch einer Heimkehr*. Wels: Weisermühl, 1957.
Hoffman, Walter. *So Sah ich Mich: Aufzeichn. d. PW 31G-5181013*. Osnabrück: Munin, 1978.
Langoth, Franz. *Kampf um Österreich*. Wels: Welsermühl, 1951.
Kern, Erich. *Herz im Stacheldraht*. Salzburg: Diana, 1950.
Meyer, Hans-Hadmar and Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher. *In dem Lager ist Österreich!*
Salzburg: Rabenstein, 1957.
Nowotny, Rudolf, Editor. Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher. *Und Jede Stunde Tropft die Lageruhr. Lyrik hinter Stacheldraht und Gefängnismauern*. Linz: Wohlfahrtsvereinigung der Glasenbacher, 1961.
Rendulic, Lothar. *Glasenbach-Nürnberg-Landsberg. Ein Soldatenschicksal nach dem Krieg*. Graz: Stocker, 1953.

Newspaper Articles

Mandel, Paul W. "German Letters Gripe to Students About War Trials, Russians, Government, Music."
In *The Harvard Crimson*. April 20, 1949. Accessed online on 6/23/2018.
<https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1949/4/20/german-letters-gripe-to-students-about>.

Secondary Sources

Adorno, Theodor. *Guilt and Defense, On the Legacies of National-Socialism in Postwar Germany*.
Translated by Olick, Jeffrey, and Perrin, Andrew J. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
Bale, Jeffrey. *The Darkest Side of Politics. Postwar Fascism, Covert Operations, and Terrorism*.
Abingdon: Routledge, 2018.
Behrenbeck, Sabine. "Between Pain and Silence." In Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann, eds. *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*. Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute, 2003.

- Berg, Matthew Paul, Ed., with Jill Lewis and Oliver Rathkolb. *The Struggle for a Democratic Austria: Bruno Kreisky on Peace and Social Justice*. New York: Berghan Books, 2000.
- Berger, Thomas. *War Guilt and Politics after World War II*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Bessel, Richard. "Hatred After War: Emotion and the Postwar History of East Germany." In *History and Memory*, Vol. 17, No. 1-2. Bloomington: University of Indiana, 2015.
- Botz, Gerhard. "1945: Viele Brüche und Kontinuitäten-ein 'Epochenbruch?'" In Klarner, Stefan, Botz, Gerhard, Konrad, Helmut, Editors. *Epochenbrüche in 20. Jahrhundert*, Vol. 4. Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2017.
- Buchheim, Hans et. al, eds. *Anatomie des SS-Stadtes*. Band 1. Munich: Deutsches Taschenbuch, 1984.
- Browning, Christopher. "German Memory, Judicial Interrogation, Historical Reconstruction." In Saul Friedlander, ed. *Probing the Limits of Representation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- . *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.
- Butterweck, Hellmut. *Verurteilt und Benadigt: Österreich und seine NS-Straftäter*. Wien: Czernin, 2003.
- Carruthers, Susan. *The Good Occupation, American Soldiers and the Hazards of Peace*. Cambridge: Harvard University, 2016.
- Confino, Alon. *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2006.
- Danglmaier, Nadja and Koroschitz, Werner. *National Sozialismus in Kärnten: Opfer, Täter, Gegner*. Vol. 7. Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2015.
- Diem, Peter. *Die Symbole Österreichs, Zeit und Geschichte in Zeichen*. Wien: Verlag Kremayr & Scheriau, 1995.
- Dohler, Oskar and Eigelsberger, Peter. *Camp Marcus W. Orr: "Glasenbach" als Internierungslager nach 1945*. Linz: Oberösterreichische Landesarchiv, 2009.
- Düsterberg, Rolf. *Soldat und Kriegserlebnis. Deutsche militärische Erinnerungsliteratur (1945-1961) zu Zweiten Weltkrieg. Motive, Begriffe, Wertungen*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000.
- Ebner, Katharina. "Karl Anton Prinz Rohan und der Italienische Faschismus in Österreich." In Lucile Dreidemy et. al, *Bananen, Cola, Zeitgeschichte: Oliver Rathkolb und das Lange 20. Jahrhundert*. Wien: Böhlau, 2015.
- Erikson, Erik. *The Life Cycle Completed*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997.
- Goldhagen, Daniel. *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.
- Grundig, Lea. "Visions and History." In Stackelberg, Roderick and Winkle, Sally A. *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook: An Anthology of Texts*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Hartmann, Silvia. *Fraktur oder Antiqua. Der Schriftstreit von 1881 bis 1941*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998.
- Hoppe-Kaiser, Eva Maria. *Hitlers Jünger und Gottes Hirten: der Einsatz der katholischen Bischöfe Österreichs für ehemaligen Nationalsozialisten nach 1945*. Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2017.
- Judt, Tony. "Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe." In Müller, Jan-Werner, Editor. *Memory and Power in Postwar Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Kastner, Florentine. *373 Camp Wolfsberg*. Diplomarbeit. Advised by Oliver Rathkolb. Vienna: Universität Wien, 2011.

- von Kellenbach, Katharina. *The Mark of Cain: Guilt and Denial in the Postwar Lives of Nazi Perpetrators*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Klemperer, Victor. *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI, Lingua Terti Imperii: A Philologist's Notebook*. Translation by Martin Brady. London: Transaction Publishers, 2000.
- Kohut, Thomas A. *A German Generation: An Experiential History of the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. *Begriffsgeschichten*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006.
- Kühne, Thomas. *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler's Community, 1918-1945*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Mazower, Mark. *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*. London: Penguin, 1990.
- Meissl, Sebastian, Mulley, Klaus-Dieter, and Rathkolb, Oliver, Eds. *Verdrängte Schuld, verfehlte Sühne: Entnazifizierung in Österreich, 1945-1955*. Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1986.
- Mitscherlich, Alexander and Mitscherlich, Margarete. *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern: Grundlagen kollektiven Verhaltens*. Munich: Piper, 1967.
- Moeller Robert G. "Winning the Peace at the Movies." In Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller, Eds. *The Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2010.
- Niederacher, Sonja. "Die Entwicklung der Entnazifizierungsgesetzgebung." In Mesner, Maria. *Entnazifizierung zwischen politischem Anspruch, Parteienkonkurrenz und Kaltem Krieg, Das Beispiel der SPÖ*. Wien: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2005.
- Niethammer, Lutz. *Die Jahre weiß man nicht, wo die heute hinsetzen soll. Faschismus Erfahrungen in Ruhrgebiet, 1930-1960*. Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger, 1983.
- Overy, Richard. "Interwar, War, Postwar: Was there a zero hour in 1945?" In Stone, Dan, Editor. *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Pfeifer, Helfried. *Die Ostmark: Eingliederung und Neugestaltung; historisch-systematische Gesetzesammlung nach dem Stande vom 16. April 1941; mit Einführungen, Erläuterung, Verweisungen, und Schrifttumsangaben*. Wien: Staatsdruckerei, 1941.
- Rathkolb, Oliver, Wirth, Maria, Wladika, Michael. *Die 'Reichsforste' in Österreich, 1938-1945. Arsierung, Resitution, Zwangsarbeit, und Entnazifizierung*. Wien: Böhlau, 2002.
- Reiter, Margit. "Die 'Ehemaligen' nach 1945." In Dreidemy, Lucile et. al. *Bananen, Cola, Zeitgeschichte: Oliver Rathkolb und das Lange 20. Jahrhundert*. Wien: Böhlau, 2015.
- Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *The Culture of Defeat. On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery*. Translated by Jefferson Chase. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003.
- Schuster, Walter and Weber, Wolfgang. *Entnazifizierung im Regionalen Vergleich, (Historische Jahrbuch der Stadt Linz.)* Linz: Archiv der Stadt Linz, 2004.
- Christian Schwaabe. *Antiamerikanismus. Wandlungen eines Feinbildes* München: Fink, 2003.
- Sereny, Gitta. *Into that Darkness: An Examination of Conscience*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983.
- Spengler, Oswald. *Untergang des Abendlandes: Umrisse eine Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*. Wien: Bräumiller, 1918.
- Stiefel, Dieter. *Entnazifizierung in Österreich*. Wien: Europaverlag, 1981.
- Stifter, Christian. *Zwischen geistiger Erneuerung und Restauration*. Wien: Böhlau, 2014.
- Svoboda, Wihelm. "Das Salzburger Internierungslager: Ein kritische Excurs." In *Salzburg 1945-1955. Zerstörung und Wiederaufbau*. Salzburg: Salzburger Museum Carolino Augusteum, 1995.
- . "...Vorbehaltlos meine Pflicht Erfüllt." Das Internierungslager Glasenbach (Camp „Marcus W. Orr"). *Zeitgeschichte*. Vol. 22, No. 1-2, 1995.

Vollnhals, Clemens. "Entnazifizierung. Politische Säuberung unter alliierter Herrschaft." In Volkmann, Hans-Erich, Editor. *Ende des Dritten Weltkriegs-Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges*. München, Piper, 1995.

Welch, David. *Propaganda and the German Cinema, 1933-1945*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2001.