



universität
wien

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

The intelligence service of the Austrian NSDAP (1933–1935) Dimensions of illegal National Socialist activity in Austria

verfasst von / submitted by

Tobias Röck, BA BA

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2019 / Vienna, 2019

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

UA 066/803

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

Masterstudium Geschichte

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Doz. Dr. Hans Safrian

For my brother, my mother and my father
for their unconditional support throughout the years
and for all the other incredible people that
have helped and still help me grow
Thank you!!

The intelligence service of the Austrian NSDAP (1933–1935)

Dimensions of illegal National Socialist activity in Austria

Contents

I.	Introductory remarks	1
1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Terminology and Methodology.....	5
3.	State of Research	11
4.	Source materials and their specific origins	16
II.	Contextualisation	22
1.	The development of the Austrian Nazi movement until the July Coup.....	22
2.	Austrofascism and Austrian National Socialism	35
	<i>Heimwehr</i>	38
3.	National Socialist intelligence networks in Austria	47
III.	The intelligence service of the Austrian NSDAP	51
1.	Overview	51
2.	Structure and functioning	55
3.	The core group	60
3.1.	Otto Gustav Wächter	60
3.2.	Otto Begus.....	61
3.3.	Otto Bersch	63
3.4.	Robert Scheickl.....	65
3.5.	Rudolf Pavlu	66
3.6.	Julius Meerganz-Medeazza	66
3.7.	Fritz Thaler	67
3.8.	Franz Hörwarthner	68

4.	Activities and networks	70
4.1.	Infiltration of state institutions	71
4.2.	Violence and terrorism	80
4.3.	Networking and propaganda	89
5.	Prosecution and its legal circumstances	105
6.	The end of the intelligence service	112
7.	Epilogue	115
IV.	Conclusions	120
	Objectives and purposes	120
V.	Bibliography	125
1.	Primary sources	125
2.	Literature	127
VI.	Appendix	139
	Abstract (German)	139
	Abstract (English)	140

I. Introductory remarks

1. Introduction

"To explain the past is the task of all historians, but the daunting nature and complexity of this task in the case of Nazism will become apparent in the pages which follow. Arguably, indeed, an adequate explanation of Nazism is an intellectual impossibility. In Nazism, we have a phenomenon which seems scarcely capable of subjection to rational analysis. Under a leader who talked in apocalyptic tones of world power or destruction and a regime founded on an utterly repulsive ideology of race-hatred, one of the most culturally and economically advanced countries in Europe planned for war, launched a world conflagration which killed around 50 million people, and perpetrated atrocities - culminating in the mechanized mass murder of millions of Jews - of a nature and scale as to defy imagination. Faced with Auschwitz, the explanatory powers of the historian seem puny indeed." – Ian Kershaw¹

In his unequalled standard work on the *Nazi dictatorship* Ian Kershaw elegantly expresses the momentous task with which professional historians and people with an interest in history alike are confronted when working on and facing Nazism, its originators and executors. Due to the inconceivable cruelty of Nazism in general and its committed mass murders and genocides in particular, for Kershaw therefore *"no explanation of Nazism can be intellectually wholly satisfying. Ultimately, nevertheless, the merit of any interpretational approach must rest in the extent to which it might be seen to **contribute** towards a potentially improved explanation of Nazism."*²

This is also the ambitious objective of this thesis: to contribute, even the tiniest bit, to a better explanation of Nazism and especially of its development in and gradual penetration of Austria. It should shed some light on how National Socialists infiltrated the Austrian society and state and accumulated power and influence all across Austrian institutions, public authorities and companies – nota bene, years before the actual National Socialist takeover in March 1938.

At the core of my thesis is an analysis of the intelligence service of the Austrian NSDAP *Landesleitung* whose manifold activities should illustrate how the Austrian Nazi movement for years gradually had expanded their power in Austria. A few years later the National Socialists then finalized the internal and external takeover of Austria with the "Anschluss" in March 1938, but my results will illustrate how it already started at the turn from the First Austrian Republic to the Austrofascist period.

¹ Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London: Edward Arnold, 1985), pp. 3f.

² Ibid., p. 4.

The fundamental research questions are thus in how far the intelligence service was relevant for and involved in the gradual National Socialist seizure of power in Austria, which role the intelligence service played for the Austrian Nazi movement in general and what its objectives and purposes were in particular. Furthermore, I want to analyse how the service can be embedded in the broader picture of illegal National Socialist activity in Austria.

Illegal activity insofar as the intelligence service's short but very insightful history started with the ban of the Austrian NSDAP and its sub-organisations in June 1933 and the foundation of the intelligence service shortly after. It then particularly flourished in the offensive phase of Nazism in Austria in the first half of 1934 which culminated in the July coup. In this time, it was involved in a large variety of activities. First and foremost, it developed into a key actor for the infiltration of state institutions – such as the police, the judiciary or the army – and the acquisition of sensitive internal information and secrets of those. Besides that, the intelligence service contributed to the ongoing National Socialist terror, inter alia via impeding the prosecution of indicted or wanted terrorists and via the facilitation of arms smuggling. In addition, the service's members and informants were in close contact with important organisations at the time, such as the *Heimwehr*, the Catholic Church or the society *Deutscher Klub*.

Besides these long-term involvements, two of the intelligence service's leaders also assumed leading roles during the July coup. However, the eventual failure of this large-scale attempt for a National Socialist takeover in Austria and the extensive consequences it brought for the Austrian Nazi movement induced the service's decline and, ultimately, its demise. In July 1935 it was disbanded and was thus active for only a little longer than two years. Nevertheless, its analysis can certainly contribute to a better explanation of Nazism and especially of several key questions of its development in Austria. Besides the aforementioned topics, these questions include but are by far not restricted to the role of the Austrofascist regime – one of the main issues here being whether Austrofascism primarily resisted the rising illegal Nazis or rather facilitated their rise through the preceding abolition of democracy and the destruction of oppositional forces on the left.

Apart from that, my analysis also illustrates the course of events in the extensive infiltration of Austrian institutions, identifies the processes and structures that facilitated it and elaborates the intelligence service's role in it. Hence, it should outline how it was possible for Nazism to gradually annex wide parts of Austria from within, in parts years before the first official German soldier stepped on Austrian soil. On a more general note, we are thus confronted with the overarching question on how a democratic system could (and still can today) plunge into authoritarianism, fascism and, eventually,

genocidal Nazi terror within the time span of not even a decade – and how the oft-quoted “*wehrhafte Demokratie*”, the “defensive democracy”, shall be composed and act in order to prevent this.

To confront these questions and various others, the thesis is structured into five sections I–V. At the beginning, reflective and introductory remarks (I) on the used terminology and the applied methods will be given. Following next is an overview of the current state of research which addresses the most important literature used in this thesis. Subsection I.4. then provides a short introduction into the used archival sources and in particular a reflection on their origins and backgrounds. As these origins lie mostly in antidemocratic regimes with wide disregard for the constitutional state they inevitably exhibit serious flaws and restrictions that need to be considered for this thesis.

Section II then should provide the necessary context to the particular intelligence service at the centre of this thesis. First, the development of Nazism in Austria will be outlined, from its very beginnings to the July coup, its major yet only temporary defeat. Then its relations to the ruling Austrofascist system will be described, with a particular focus on the *Heimwehr* that assumes a leading role for the understanding of these changeable, ambivalent and volatile relations. The third section in this chapter will then give an overview of the complex system of National Socialist intelligence in Austria in order to create an understanding for the structures at work here of which the intelligence service of the *Landesleitung* was but one part.

All in all, this contextualising chapter should elaborate the environment in which this particular intelligence network was established, acted and existed.

Section III can be regarded as the main part of this thesis. In its first chapter, a short overview of the turbulent development of the intelligence service of the Austrian NSDAP will be given followed by an elaboration of the service’s structure and functioning. In the next chapter I have identified and described eight people who formed the intelligence service’s core group. The following Chapter III.4. on activities and networks is the most extensive one of the thesis and summarizes the service’s most important contributions. This chapter should in particular provide concrete examples for the service’s manifold involvements and thus illustrate the general assessments and descriptions of it. What follows is a short excursus on the legal circumstances of prosecution against National Socialists. In addition, this chapter also offers insights into the underlying legal situation of the time and the drastic authoritarian and partly fascist changes the Austrofascist government implemented in that regard.

The main part of the thesis is concluded with a chapter on the reasons and the course of events leading to the intelligence service's decline and eventual dissolution and an epilogue chapter which shortly outlines further biographic details of selected protagonists regarded as interesting.

Section IV will then provide concluding remarks and in particular address one of the main research questions on the intelligence service's objectives and purposes.

Last but not least, the bibliography (section V) will list all archival sources used for this thesis and the consulted literature.

2. Terminology and Methodology

When it comes to this thesis' terminology, the discussion on the correct and preferable term to denominate the ruling political system of Austria in the years from 1933 to the "Anschluss" 1938 is probably the most controversial one. This question is at the core of a long running and complex debate that goes far beyond the capacities of this particular thesis – in the following, I will thus only shortly address it and convey my position in it.

John Lauridsen points out that *"a maze of terms like [...] "clerico-fascism", "quasi-fascism," and "semi-fascism"*³ has been coined to adequately describe the system's reality, to a degree that is barely justifiable anymore. He criticises this specifically Austrian reluctance to apply general terms and instead water them down with partly highly creative adjuncts. Lauridsen identifies *"a peculiar Austrian phenomenon [sic], one that is nearly unique in Europe. It is the proclivity to mystify the definition of fascism by the use of diversionary prefixes. Instead of defining the Heimwehr's fascist traits - [...] - one avoids the problem with the label "Heimwehr-fascism". Rather than seriously facing the question of rightist radicalization in Christian Socialist [sic] circles or the party's militant partnership with the Heimwehr"*⁴ common scientific concepts are watered down to form new terms such as *"authoritarian semi-dictatorship"* or *"semi-fascist authoritarian government dictatorship"*⁵ (both terms of probably the luminary of Austrian contemporary history, Gerhard Botz).

However, I am of the definite opinion that the authoritarian regime that Dollfuß and Schuschnigg headed meets a sufficient number of criteria to be called fascist and therefore I will refer to it as Austrofascism in the following – the prefix "Austro" already being a specification that makes it more accurate and instructive. This term is to a large degree politically charged as the assessment of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg regime as fascist system is in Austria still largely controversial and disputed.⁶

A scientific approach, in the form of definitions of the political sciences, can help to objectify the debate and assess the validity of the used terminology, in particular of the term fascism. However, an abundance of different definitions exists, with a wide range of criteria and perspectives. All in all, a compromise has to be found between too narrow and too broad definitions. Too narrow definitions would only allow the archetype of Italian fascism to be referred to as fascist and hence make an understanding of fascism as at least continent-wide, highly interlinked and complex phenomenon

³ John T. Lauridsen, *Nazism and the Radical Right in Austria 1918-1934* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2007), p. 56.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 56, f.n. 143.

⁶ Karl Dietrich Bracher, "'Austrofascismus" und die Krise der Demokratien', in *Kontroversen um Österreichs Zeitgeschichte: Verdrängte Vergangenheit, Österreich-Identität, Waldheim und Die Historiker.*, ed. by Gerhard Botz and Gerald Sprengnagel (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 1994), pp. 494–510 (p. 496); Grete Klingenstein, 'Bemerkungen zum Problem des Faschismus in Österreich', Österreich in *Geschichte und Literatur*, 14 (1970), 1–13 (pp. 6–9).

impossible. In this way, it would negate the historic reality of several, in many aspects similar and mutually interacting systems in Germany, Spain, Portugal, Austria and other countries and instead treat them as isolated, unrelated singularities.⁷ A definition that is too broad on the other hand would incorporate too many systems and dilute the precision and meaning of the term.

In my opinion, Stanislav Andreski gives a simple yet accurate definition that focusses on the core characteristics of fascism. He *“prefer[s] to confine the denotation of this word to movements and régimes which imitated Mussolini's ideology, the organisation of his party and state, and his method of striving for power by setting up a militarised political party.”*⁸ This definition focusses on the core characteristics of Mussolini's political model and most definitely is applicable to Austrofascism. Just as Mussolini's archetype, ideologically the Austrofascist system was in its core antidemocratic and anti-communist and used a wide range of repressive measures to fight any political opposition. It attempted to establish a militarised mass movement as a foundation of its rulership, which in the form of the *Heimwehr* at least partly succeeded, in the form of the Fatherland's Front rather failed. Moreover, both systems featured distinctive reactionary and militarist beliefs and glorified law and order and the leader principle.⁹ The connection to Mussolini's system and the fascist character of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg regime are particularly evident in the *Heimwehr*, the most influential paramilitary organisation of the Austrofascist regime – which is also the reason why two subchapters in the following focus explicitly on the *Heimwehr* (>>II.2.1. & III.4.3.1.). The *Heimwehr* was massively influenced by Italian fascism and its leaders outlined their affiliation to fascism as continent-spanning

⁷ Peter H. Merkl, 'Comparing Fascist Movements', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvet, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 752–783 (pp. 752, 769).; Stein Hagtvet, Bernt; Rokkan, 'The Conditions of Fascist Victory: Towards a Geoeconomic-Geopolitical Model for the Explanation of Violent Breakdowns of Competitive Mass Politics', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvet, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 131–152 (p. 131).

⁸ Stanislav Andreski, 'Fascists as Moderates', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvet, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 52–55 (p. 52).

This is also largely in line with criteria that Ian Kershaw outlines. According to him a fascist movement is:

“an anti-socialist, anti-marxist thrust aimed at the destruction of working-class organizations and their marxist political philosophy; the basis in a mass party drawing from all sectors of society, though with pronounced support in the middle class and proving attractive to the peasantry and to various uprooted or highly unstable sectors of the population; fixation on a charismatic, plebiscitarily legitimized leader; extreme intolerance towards all oppositional and presumed oppositional groups, expressed through vicious terror, open violence, and ruthless repression; glorification of militarism and war, heightened by the backlash to the comprehensive socio-political crisis in Europe arising from the First World War; dependence upon an 'alliance' with existing élites - industrial, agrarian, military, and bureaucratic - for their political breakthrough; and at least an initial function - despite a populist-revolutionary, anti-establishment rhetoric - in the stabilization or restoration of social order and capitalist structures.” Kershaw, pp. 37f.

⁹ Klingenstein, pp. 6–8.; Stanley G. Payne, 'The Concept of Fascism', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.* (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 14–25 (pp. 20–23).; John Rath, Schum, 'The Dollfuß-Schuschnigg Regime: Fascist or Authoritarian?', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvet, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 249–256 (pp. 251f.); Emmerich Tálos, 'Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933–1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 394–420 (pp. 398–403).

movement¹⁰ – for example when *Heimwehr* leader Ernst Starhemberg congratulates Mussolini for his victory in the Second Italo-Ethiopian War by stating “*long live the purposeful leader of victorious fascist Italy, long live the victory of the fascist thought in the whole world!*”¹¹

While accepting some of the arguments of people opposing the term “Austrofascism” in general¹², the arguments for using the term therefore definitely outweigh these in my opinion. Notwithstanding linguistic challenges outlined in the following, this is also the reason why I chose English as this thesis’ language. At the core of my work lies the understanding of fascism as international political phenomenon that should thus be analysed without country boundaries. Hence, I decided to write in the more accessible English language to take account of fascism’s continent-spanning extent and increase its integrability into international fascism research.

The above given quote of Ernst Starhemberg can thereby exemplify the handling of quotes within this thesis. Most quotes, both from archival sources and from literature, are originally in German, but have been translated by myself with the utmost prudence. For the readability for English readers, in the text itself the English quote is given but the German original quote is added in footnotes to enable the reader the assessment of the translation’s accuracy.

Writing a thesis with a strongly Austrian-German focus in English naturally confronted me with further challenges with regards to terminology. In selected cases, I chose to stick to the original terms of German nomenclature if they convey significantly more information and are unequivocally more convenient. One example for this could be the term “*Landesleitung*” which means the main committee of the leadership of the Austrian NSDAP. It stems from the specific administrative system of Nazism and as such is simply not fully translatable without a substantial loss of either meaning and accuracy or readability.

This applies similarly to the term “*Gau*”. A *Gau* was a major geographic-administrative unit in National Socialist understanding. It could roughly be translated as federal state, but only with a certain loss of

¹⁰ Kurt Bauer, ‘Dollfuß, Engelbert - Biographische Anmerkungen zu einer umstrittenen Persönlichkeit’, in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 365–369 (p. 368); Emmerich Tálos and Walter Manoschek, ‘Zum Konstitutierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus’, in *Austrofascismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 6–25 (p. 23); Gudula Walterskirchen, ‘Ernst Rüdiger Fürst Starhemberg als ambivalenter politischer Akteur’, in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 371–376 (p. 374).

¹¹ Original quote: „*Es lebe der zielbewusste Führer des siegreichen faschistischen Italien, es lebe der Sieg des faschistischen Gedankens in der Welt.*” Ernst Starhemberg in May 1936 quoted according to Manfred Scheuch, *Der Weg zum Heldenplatz. Eine Geschichte der Österreichischen Diktatur 1933-1938* (Vienna: Kremayr & Scheriau, 2005), p. 218.

¹² For example: -the generalizing character of the term that blends very different systems and movements in one term. Cf. Gerhard Botz, ‘Introduction’, in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*. (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget), pp. 192–201 (pp. 197f.); Bracher, p. 496.

- lack of anticonservatism and revolutionary drive within Austrofascism. Cf. Ernst Hanisch, ‘Der Politische Katholizismus als ideologischer Träger des “Austrofascismus”’, in *Austrofascismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 68–86 (p. 69); Rath and Schum, p. 253.

- lack of a mass movement from below as foundation. Tálos and Manoschek, ‘Zum Konstitutierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus’, p. 23.

accuracy as *Gau* as term immediately refers to the system of National Socialist administration that is not identical with the administrative systems of neither the First nor the Second Austrian Republic and their federal states. For this reason, normally the original term *Gau* will be used in the following.

Other examples in this regard are, inter alia, "*Anschluss*" – the National Socialist takeover in Austria in March 1938 or "*Illegalen*", meaning a member of the Nazi movement in the illegal period. Terms like these are used in the German original and indicated with cursive font, in some instances (such as "*Anschluss*") with additional quotation marks to emphasise the problematic belittling connotation of the term.

For organisations and institutions, English translations are provided if not already used in the first place while National Socialist political functions and positions are normally referred to in the German original (*Landesleiter*, *Landesinspekteur* etc.) to ensure higher semantic precision.

One further linguistic and semantic problem that has to be addressed is the inherent generalisation in often used terms such as "Nazi movement". Due to the heterogeneous and divergent development and interests within the major National Socialist organisations NSDAP, SS and SA, Hans Schafranek justifiably points out that "*it is questionable in the first place to speak of "the" NS movement for the period of 1933-1938*"¹³ Similar can be stated for "the" National Socialists. However, there is unfortunately no practicable alternative as it is simply impossible to always exactly define the relevant National Socialist protagonists. I therefore ask the reader to reflect upon these grossly simplifying terms and their inherent generalisation, which should not cover nor overlook the inner complexity and diversity among Nazism but rather serve a necessary complexity reduction of an otherwise potentially overwhelmingly complicated subject matter and nomenclature. In doing so, they should conceptually and comprehensibly grasp the myriad of different stakeholders of Austria's Nazi movement in convenient, understandable terms.

Another difficult term is the one for the denomination of the various discussed intelligence services. In the sources and the German literature, the term "*Nachrichtendienst*" is most commonly used to refer to these networks. The translations news agency or news service, however, would misleadingly rather indicate a media organisation that collects and broadcasts news. Because of that, the terms intelligence service and intelligence networks (occasionally also secret service) are used in this thesis which are not absolutely accurate, but in my opinion the best available.

¹³ Original quote: „[Es ist] überhaupt fragwürdig, für die Periode 1933-1938 noch von "der" illegalen NS-Bewegung zu sprechen.“ Hans Schafranek, 'Österreichische Nationalsozialisten in der Illegalität 1933-1938. Ein Forschungsbericht', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 105–137 (p. 129).

Methodology

As I will elaborate in detail in chapter four, one of the main foundations of this thesis are archival sources, in particular of the Municipal and Provincial Archives of Vienna (*Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv*) and the Austrian State Archives (*Österreichisches Staatsarchiv*). The work with archival sources demands a thorough reflection on the sources' background and limitations of its informative value. The most important methodological approaches of this thesis are thus the hermeneutic method in general and source criticism in particular to adequately take account of the specific origins and deficiencies of my archival sources. Further relevant and more specific remarks in this regard will also be given in chapter four on "source materials and their specific origins".

Hermeneutics as philosophical-scientific approach is an ancient concept and at the centre of debates that started in Greek and Roman antiquity. For obvious reasons, I hence do not want to delve into these debates but rather shortly sketch its meaning for the paper at hand. In the context of this thesis Hermeneutics is generally regarded as systematic approach aiming for a comprehensive and reflective understanding and interpretation of texts and plausible and intersubjectively comprehensible results and explanations in particular.¹⁴ Accordingly, in the course of my research information obtained from a variety of different origins in both archives and the literature should be assessed and analysed critically in order to distil plausible, reliable and substantiated results.

Ulrich Muhlack emphasises the importance of the figure of the historian for these processes which I can certainly relate to. According to him, the objective of the hermeneutic approach is the best possible comprehension of an issue that is considered relevant for the historian's present. He states that *"the "comprehension" [quotation marks in the original, author's note] of an external individuality is always a contemporary act of the historian, destined to throw light on a problem, that arises in his[/her] particular time situation. It is not interesting by itself, but only insofar, as that it serves the elucidation of this problem (...)." Precondition for the historian's analysis is thus that "the historian attaches importance for the present to the individuality researched by him[/her]."*¹⁵

¹⁴ See Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'Vorlesung 5: Skizze der Grundlagen einer Hermeneutik (1958)', in *Das Problem des historischen Bewußtseins*, ed. by Hans-Georg Gadamer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), pp. 42–57 (pp. 42–45).; Jeff Malpas, 'Introduction: Hermeneutics and Philosophy', in *The Routledge Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. by Jeff Malpas and Hans-Helmuth Gander (Oxon/New York: Routledge), p. 2015.; Ulrich Muhlack, 'Verstehen', in *Geschichte. Ein Grundkurs*, ed. by Hans-Jürgen Goertz (Reinbek: rowohlt, 2007), pp. 104–136.; Thomas Welskopp, 'Erklären, Begründen, Theoretisch Begreifen', in *Geschichte. Ein Grundkurs*, ed. by Hans-Jürgen Goertz (Reinbek: rowohlt, 2007), pp. 137–177.

¹⁵ Original quote: „Das <<Verständnis>> einer fremden Individualität ist immer ein gegenwärtiger Akt des Historikers, dazu bestimmt, ein Problem zu klären, das sich ihm in seiner jeweiligen Zeitsituation stellt. Sie interessiert nicht an sich, sondern nur insoweit, als sie der Erhellung dieses Problems dient, und ist nur insoweit Gegenstand einer <<verstehenden>> Erkenntnis. Die <<Übereinstimmung zwischen dem Subject und dem Object>> ergibt sich daraus, dass der Historiker der von ihm erforschten fremden Individualität diese Gegenwartsbedeutung zuspricht.“ Muhlack, p. 132.

For him, the motivation of the historian in this inevitably imperfect¹⁶ undertaking of comprehension is self-knowledge: *“We strive for historical knowledge, because it is self-knowledge: it shows us the manifoldness of historical manifestations of the human nature”*¹⁷ To me this is especially relevant when facing Nazism and the unfathomable scope of its crimes – that nevertheless have to be regarded as part of this wide possible range of human existence and actions. Part of the working process on this thesis hence also involved a personal reflection on my interest in the historical field in general and in the specific intelligence service at the centre of this thesis in particular. It is clear to me that my motivation in writing this thesis and dealing with the circumstances and background of Nazism’s rise to power in Austria lies in my moral principles, my anti-fascist conviction and my position in society and the understandings of and wishes I have for it – which are diametrically opposed to National Socialist ideology and which, of course, influence my research as well. However, Florian Wenninger argues that this is inevitable and that scholars are always influenced by their own convictions and beliefs – whether they acknowledge it or not. In the context of this thesis, this can be seen in the question of the legitimacy of certain political or juridical actions: where does the legitimate desire of a political system to maintain order and to defend itself against (both allegedly and factually) harmful movements end and where does antidemocratic oppression of the political opposition begin? Each and every historian has to reflect upon questions like these and attempt to find and answer for him-/herself. In the following, one can then strive to discover links and developments within the source material and acknowledge and further pursue them – whether they are consistent with one’s own political preferences and convictions or not. For Wenninger – and I fully agree – that is what scientific and intellectual honesty means and commands and what makes the historian’s work scientific in the first place.¹⁸

According to Muhlack, this stated personal involvement of the historian demands him or her to deploy all available *“analytical-rational instruments”* and *“analytical rationality”*¹⁹ in order to arrive at plausible and substantiated results – which is what I endeavoured with all my capacities.

¹⁶ Welskopp, pp. 142–145.

¹⁷ Original quote: *“Wir erstreben deswegen historische Erkenntnis, weil sie Selbsterkenntnis ist. Sie zeigt uns die Mannigfaltigkeit historischer Erscheinungen des Menschlichen, an der wir unser eigenes Menschsein klären können.”* Muhlack, p. 127.

¹⁸ Florian Wenninger, ‘Austrian Missions – Das Problem der Politischen Äquidistanz der Forschung am Beispiel Austrofaschismus’, in *Österreich 1933–1938. Interdisziplinäre Annäherungen an das Dollfuß-/Schuschnigg-Regime*, ed. by Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal, Christiane Rothländer, and Pia Schölnberger (Köln/Vienna: Böhlau, 2012), pp. 257–272 (p. 269).

¹⁹ Muhlack, p. 128.

3. State of Research

In the following, I want to give an overview of the state of research on the illegal period of the Austrian Nazi movement – nota bene not on Nazism in general or its rule in Austria, but only on the often rather disregarded illegal times. This overview is inevitably incomplete due to restricted time capacities and thus should primarily give an impression on papers that were most relevant for this thesis.

Given the exceptional status and high importance of Nazism in both historical scholarship and in depictions in popular science and infotainment one might be inclined to think that research on Nazism has at least sufficiently covered all major aspects of the Austrian Nazi movement as well. However, in particular its illegal period is to a large extent still a research desideratum as Hans Schafranek points out in his helpful research report on Austrian Nazism in the illegal period – which is one of the main foundations of this chapter.²⁰

Schafranek finds that while studies on the time of Nazi rule in Austria (March 1938 until May 1945) are numerous, the illegal phase at large has until today in fact very seldom been at the centre of scientific research. Besides comprehensive studies with regional focus on certain federal states²¹, it has rather been dealt with en passant and used as introduction to the main topic of National Socialist rule in Austria.

When primarily working on the illegal period for once, historians have often strongly focussed their attention on events and dates in general and on the July coup in particular as pinnacle and priority that should sufficiently cover the complex developments of the illegal period. One of the first comprehensive studies on this topic was done by Gerhard Jagschitz in “*Der Putsch*” of 1976 which up to this day offers interesting insights.²² Other more recent prominent studies with a similar emphasis

²⁰ Hans Schafranek, ‘Österreichische Nationalsozialisten in der Illegalität 1933-1938. Ein Forschungsbericht’, in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 105–137.; See also Lauridsen, pp. 49–51.

²¹ For studies on the history of the Nazi movement in several federal states see e.g.:

Carinthia: Dirk Elste, Alfred; Hänisch, *Auf dem Weg zur Macht. Beiträge zur Geschichte der NSDAP in Kärnten von 1918 bis 1938*. Wien 1997.; Erwin Steinböck, ‘Kärnten’, in *Österreich 1918-1938. Geschichte Der Ersten Republik*. (Vienna, 1997).; Erwin Steinböck, ‘Kärnten’, in *Österreich 1918-1938. Geschichte Der Ersten Republik*, ed. by Kurt Weinzierl, Erika; Skalnik, 1983, pp. 801–840.; Styria: Eduard G. Staudinger, ‘Zur Entwicklung des Nationalsozialismus in Graz von seinen Anfängen bis 1938’, in *Graz 1938 (=Historisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Graz 18-19)*, ed. by Friedrich (et al.) Bouvier (Graz, 1987), pp. 31–74.; Stefan Karner, ‘“... Des Reiches Südmark”. Kärnten und Steiermark im “Dritten Reich” 1938-1945.’, in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos (et al.) (Vienna: ÖBV & hpt, 2000), pp. 292–325.

Upper Austria: Harry Slapnicka, *Oberösterreich Zwischen Bürgerkrieg und „Anschluß“ (1927-1938)* (Linz, 1975).; Thomas Dostal, ‘Das “Braune Netzwerk” in Linz. Die Illegalen Nationalsozialistischen Aktivitäten Zwischen 1933 und 1938’, in *Nationalsozialismus in Linz*, ed. by Fritz Mayrhofer and Walter Schuster (Linz: Archiv der Stadt Linz, 2001), pp. 21–136.

Tyrol and Vorarlberg: Michael Gehler, ‘Tirol Zur Zeit des Juli-Putsches Der Nationalsozialisten Im Jahre 1934’, in *Historische Blickpunkte. Festschrift Für Johann Rainer*. (Innsbruck, 1988), pp. 159–172.; Harald Walser, *Die Illegale NSDAP in Tirol und Vorarlberg* (Vienna, 1983).

²² Gerhard Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich* (Graz/Vienna/Cologne: Styria, 1976).

include Hans Schafranek's very detailed study "*Sommerfest mit Preisschießen*"²³ and three works of Kurt Bauer, in particular his 2003 "*Elementar-Ereignis*"²⁴ and his meticulous recount of 2014 called "*Hitler's Zweiter Putsch*"²⁵. The third study of Bauer with a focus on the July coup would be his 2017 book on the 1934 "culminations of violence"²⁶, by which he means the mostly Social Democrat uprisings in February and the National Socialist attempt for an overthrow of government in July 1934. In a similarly integrated way, Gerhard Botz has dealt with National Socialist violence in the illegal period in his standard work of 1976 on violent encounters in Austrian politics from 1918 to 1934.²⁷ In addition to the comprehensive approach of the book, Botz' greatest merit lies in the included, very extensive chronicle on (mostly NS) terror attacks, uprisings and other violent political clashes and acts.²⁸ Besides his studies on political violence, Botz also worked on the early history of Austrian National Socialism and, based on the central database on NSDAP members in Berlin, especially on the social composition of the NSDAP electorate and members prior to the "*Anschluss*".²⁹ For the latter though, Bauer's and Schafranek's already mentioned more recent works on the Putsch, Bauer's³⁰ additional one and in particular the shared work of Bauer, Botz and Meixner³¹ on the social structure of the Nazi movement and Jürgen Falter's studies³² seem to offer more accurate and comprehensive findings.

Besides the Putsch itself, the illegal period up until today shows large research gaps. As Hans Schafranek and others point out, a comprehensive study on the Austrian NSDAP and in particular its relations to other National Socialist organisations in Austria (especially to SA & SS) is still missing³³ –

²³ Hans Schafranek, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934*. (Vienna: Czernin, 2006).

²⁴ Kurt Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934* (Vienna: Czernin, 2003).

²⁵ Kurt Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934* (St. Pölten/Salzburg/Wien: Residenz, 2014).

²⁶ Kurt Bauer, 'Die Kulminationen der Gewalt: Februar und Juli 1934', in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 217–226.

²⁷ Gerhard Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1976).

²⁸ The chronicle can be found in Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 258–279.

²⁹ See e.g. Gerhard Botz, 'Die österreichischen NSDAP-Mitglieder. Probleme einer quantitativen Analyse aufgrund der NSDAP-Zentralkartei im Berlin Document Center', in *Die Nationalsozialisten. Analysen faschistischer Bewegungen*, ed. by Reinhard Mann (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980), pp. 98–136.; Gerhard Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', *Historical Social Research, Supplement*, 28 (2016), 214–240. Originally published in 1981.; For one of Botz' few English articles see Gerhard Botz, 'The Changing Patterns of Social Support for Austrian National Socialism (1918-1945)', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvet, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 202–225.

³⁰ Kurt Bauer, 'Arbeiterpartei? Zur Sozialstruktur der illegalen NSDAP in Österreich.', *Zeitgeschichte*, 29.5 (2002), 259–272.

³¹ Gerhard Botz, Kurt Bauer, and Wolfgang Meixner, *Die Sozialstruktur der illegalen NS-Bewegung in Österreich* (Vienna: Ludwig Boltzmann-Institut für Historische Sozialwissenschaft, 2011).

³² Jürgen W. Falter and Dirk Hänisch, 'Wahlerfolge und Wählerschaft der NSDAP in Österreich 1927-1932: Soziale Basis und parteipolitische Herkunft', *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung. Supplement*, 2013, pp. 233–259. Originally published in 1988.; For a less Austria-focused study see Jürgen W. Falter, *Hitlers Wähler* (Munich: Beck, 1991).

³³ Winfried R. Garscha, 'Nationalsozialisten in Österreich 1933-1938', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938.*, ed. by Emmerich Talos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 100–120 (pp. 101f.); Schafranek, 'Österreichische Nationalsozialisten in der Illegalität 1933-1938. Ein Forschungsbericht', pp. 105-108, 129f.

and so are, with the noteworthy, rather recent exception of Herbert Blatnik³⁴, studies on the Nazi movement's structures and communication networks in the underground and the methods and results of its infiltration of Austrian institutions.³⁵ Among other things, this paper as well aims at shedding at least some light on these questions.

Part of the explanation for these still existing research gaps is the formerly strong focus on diplomatic correspondence as source which simply does not cover illegal networks and structures sufficiently. For the latter, auto-biographic documents and police and judiciary records are revealing and thus extensive archival research necessary. This research, however, is of course also subject to external impediments, such as blocking periods on archive collections that in parts only expired in recent years.³⁶

A very ambitious and proficient project strongly based on an extensive archival research is Christiane Rothländer's 2012 study on the beginnings of the Viennese SS, which therefore is also the most important secondary source of this thesis.³⁷ Rothländer meticulously retells the early development of the SS in Vienna from its foundation and functions within the Nazi movement to its structures and leadership up to its role in National Socialist terrorism, the illegal period and the July coup. Particularly interesting for the thesis at hand is a short chapter (around seven pages) on intelligence activities in Vienna in general and on the intelligence service of the Austrian *Landesleitung* in particular.³⁸ This chapter is one of only two references to this particular intelligence network that I came across in scientific literature and thus was very useful for this thesis.

The second mention of the intelligence service can be found in a rather unexpected place – a book on Erich Frauwallner, a prominent scholar in the fields of Buddhist studies. As Jakob Stuchlik points out, Frauwallner was an early member of the NSDAP and interestingly contributed to the very intelligence service that is at the centre of my thesis.³⁹

Besides the already mentioned works of Botz, Jagschitz and others, the earlier development of Austrian Nazism as research field also has to be attributed to non-German speaking scholars, primarily

³⁴ Herbert Blatnik, 'NS-Kommunikationsnetze und Infiltration, Propaganda und Terror nach 1933', in *Vom NS-Verbot zum >>Anschluss<<. Steirische Nationalsozialisten 1933-1938*, ed. by Hans Schafranek and Herbert Blatnik (Vienna: Czernin, 2015), pp. 125–193.

³⁵ Hans Safrian, 'Tabuisierte Täter. Staatliche Legitimationsdefizite und Blinde Flecken der Zeitgeschichte in Österreich.', in *Kontroversen um Österreichs Zeitgeschichte: Verdrängte Vergangenheit, Österreich-Identität, Waldheim und die Historiker.*, ed. by Gerhard Botz and Gerald Sprengnagel (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 1994), pp. 527–555 (pp. 531–533).; Schafranek, 'Österreichische Nationalsozialisten in der Illegalität 1933-1938. Ein Forschungsbericht', pp. 105-108., 129f.; Lauridsen, pp. 49–51.

³⁶ Martin Burkhardt, *Arbeiten im Archiv* (Paderborn et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006), pp. 82–86.

³⁷ Christiane Rothländer, *Die Anfänge der Wiener SS* (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 2012).

³⁸ Rothländer, pp. 429–436.

³⁹ Jakob Stuchlik, *Der arische Ansatz. Erich Frauwallner und der Nationalsozialismus* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009).

to Bruce Pauley and his 1981 study “Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis”. With it, Pauley offers a broader view on the Austrian Nazi movement aside its later years in power which especially at that time was a rare achievement.

Another English-speaking study from that time would be Francis Carsten’s “The First Austrian Republic 1918-1938”⁴⁰ from 1986 which especially incorporates British sources, a more recent one John Lauridsen’s “*Nazism and the Radical Right in Austria 1918-1934*” of 2007.⁴¹ The main value of the latter lies in the profound localisation of the NSDAP and its sub-organisations in a wide array of far-right networks and political associations (societies, fraternities, sports and gymnastic clubs and so on) which formed a sort of breeding ground for Austrian Nazism.⁴² This political environment will be an important recurring topic throughout this thesis as these links to various networks are a major foundation of the work of the particular intelligence service discussed here.

In general, due to the relatively small size of both country and scientific community, Austrian history is not always the most appealing to international historians. This is also openly confirmed by Lauridsen who moreover argues that the political dimension is more important in Austrian historiography than elsewhere, making it harder for outsiders to succeed.⁴³ These two explanations are supported by the state of research on illegal Nazism in Austria as well. The vast majority of studies were conducted by Austrians, a substantial minority by German historians and only a few rare exceptions by historians of non-German speaking origin.

I will hence shortly mention a few other important studies of Austrian historians before proceeding to the used archival sources.

Gerhard Jagschitz did several other insightful studies in the 1970s, 80s and 90s of which I want to mention three that focus on Austrian Nazism before the takeover and are thus of particular importance for this thesis.⁴⁴ Relevant and helpful studies with a similar focus were more recently (2005) also done by Winfried Garscha and his article on National Socialists in Austria from 1933 to

⁴⁰ Francis Ludwig Carsten, *The First Austrian Republic 1918-1938. A Study Based on British and Austrian Documents*. (Aldershot: Gower/Maurice Temple Smith, 1986).

⁴¹ Lauridsen.

⁴² In a short chapter on the national camp in Austria, Martin Moll attempts the same in a recent (2017) article. Martin Moll, ‘Das nationale Lager’, in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 183–191.

⁴³ Lauridsen, pp. 52–54.

⁴⁴ Gerhard Jagschitz, ‘Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten’, in *Österreich, Deutschland und die Mächte. Internationale und österreichische Aspekte des ‘Anschlusses’ vom März 1938*, ed. by Gerald Stourzh and Brigitta Zaar (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), pp. 229–270.; Gerhard Jagschitz, ‘Illegale Bewegungen während Der Ständischen Ära 1933-1938.’, in *Revolutionäre Bewegungen in Österreich*, ed. by Erich Zöllner (Vienna: ÖBV Wien, 1981), pp. 141–262.; Gerhard Jagschitz, ‘Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934’, in *Das Jahr 1934: 25. Juli. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 8. Oktober 1974*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1975), pp. 9–20.

1938⁴⁵ and in form of a monography by Manfred Scheuch⁴⁶. Scheuch's study in particular provides a profound overview of the relations between Austrofascism and Austrian Nazism at that time.⁴⁷ In doing so, he updates and expands Ludwig Jedlicka's important works on this topic. However, Jedlicka's works were still helpful due to their emphasis on the influence of international relations on the Austrofascist regime and its course of action against the Nazi movement.⁴⁸

From the vast literature on the Austrofascist period in general, I only want to mention three authors: Particularly important for this thesis was Emmerich Tálos' and Wolfgang Neugebauer's comprehensive volume from 2005 "Austrofaschismus. Politik – Ökonomie – Kultur"⁴⁹ with insightful articles of various authors: apart from the already mentioned article of Winfried Garscha, Wolfgang Neugebauer's article on the repressive Austrofascist state apparatus outlines the government's measures against the political opposition on both sides.⁵⁰ A similar attempt has been carried out by Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal in even more detail and with a stronger juridical focus in her study on penal law, police and judiciary as instruments of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg regime, which forms the foundation of chapter III.5. on "prosecution and its legal circumstances".⁵¹

⁴⁵ Winfried R. Garscha, 'Nationalsozialisten in Österreich 1933-1938', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938.*, ed. by Emmerich Talos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 100–120.

⁴⁶ Manfred Scheuch, *Der Weg zum Heldenplatz. Eine Geschichte der Österreichischen Diktatur 1933-1938* (Vienna: Kremayr & Scheriau, 2005).

⁴⁷ As does Robert Kriechbaumer in a wider scope. Robert Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945* (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 2001).

⁴⁸ Ludwig Jedlicka, 'Der außenpolitische Hintergrund der Ereignisse vom Frühsommer 1934 bis Oktober 1934', in *Das Jahr 1934: 25. Juli. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien Am 8. Oktober 1974*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1975), pp. 46–57.; Ludwig Jedlicka, 'Die Auflösung der Wehrverbände und Italien Im Jahre 1936', in *Das Juliabkommen von 1936. Vorgeschichte, Hintergründe und Folgen. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 10. und 11. Juni 1976*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1977), pp. 104–118.; Ludwig Jedlicka, *Vom alten zum neuen Österreich. Fallstudien zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 1900-1975*. (St. Pölten: Niederösterreichisches Pressehaus, 1977).

⁴⁹ Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938* (Vienna: LIT, 2005).

And also Tálos' expanded update on the Austrofascist system from 2013. Emmerich Tálos, *Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem* (Vienna: LIT, 2013).

⁵⁰ Wolfgang Neugebauer, 'Repressionsapparat und -Maßnahmen 1933 - 1938', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 298–319.

⁵¹ Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', in *Vom Majestätsverbrechen zum Terrorismus. Politische Kriminalität, Recht, Justiz und Polizei zwischen Früher Neuzeit und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Karl Härter and Beatrice de Graaf, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2012), pp. 271–319.

4. Source materials and their specific origins

Because the thesis at hand is largely based upon archival sources, a few reflecting words on the sources' origins, their limitations and reservations seem necessary.

First of all, I want to give a short overview of the two major source materials. These are:

1. Trial records of criminal proceedings against illegal National socialists from the period of around 1932 up to 1936
2. *Gauakten* – the remaining archival sources of the *Gaupersonalamt*⁵² of the *Gau* Vienna, id est archival records of the period of National Socialist rule

Both of these source materials with their specific origins in deeply antidemocratic and non-constitutional systems provide historians with a demanding challenge. Hans Schafranek justifiably points out that historians often tend to accept claims of source material with questionable background if the material concerns National Socialists. They would, however, be much more cautious in uncritically accepting these claims if they had been made for Social Democrats, Communists, Conservatives or other, generally less detestable political forces.⁵³ The scientific accuracy, however, demands us to critically reflect the flaws and problematic tendencies of our source material in all cases, without distinction of the political orientation of the sources' protagonists.

In the example of the Austrofascists and the Austrian National Socialists we therefore have to emphasize: even if we deal with trials and documents from the legal prosecution against National Socialists - a group of people that would later use their achieved power in Austria and elsewhere to unleash the inconceivable crime of the Holocaust and other genocidal mass murders – we nevertheless have to point out and reflect upon grave flaws in the criminal proceedings against them and the fact that fundamental constitutional principles were repeatedly discarded and gradually abolished by the prosecuting Austrofascist state. This actually trivial realisation is much less self-evident in historical scholarship as one should think which is why I want to strongly emphasise and urge readers to reflect upon this.

This reflection process also proved to be one of the biggest challenges in writing this thesis as the first of the two major bodies of source material consists of Austrofascist case records and police files. These documents stem from investigations and criminal cases against members of the illegal Nazi movement which had been forbidden on 19th June 1933. They were primarily found in the Municipal and

⁵² ~Office of personnel (management) of a specific *Gau*

⁵³ Schafranek, 'Österreichische Nationalsozialisten in der Illegalität 1933-1938. Ein Forschungsbericht', pp. 105f.

Provincial Archives of Vienna (*Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv*) and contained a variety of different documents from the illegal period: protocols of the court hearings, testimonies of defendants and witnesses, reports of police investigations and house searches, registers of found evidence, confirmations of defendants' committals and transfers, official party correspondence as well as personal correspondence of National Socialists and much more – the largest case record consists of over 1000 pages of documents. I first came across most of these records in an internship for the "*Verein zur Erforschung der Repressionsmaßnahmen des österreichischen Regimes 1933-1938*"⁵⁴ in Vienna, a research body that focusses on research on victims of political repression under the Austrofascist regime.

In some instances, the trial records were later expanded by files of post-war trials of the so-called *Volksgерichte*⁵⁵ and thus also contained documents from the period of National Socialist rulership in Austria and the post-war denazification attempts.

The activities of the Nazi movement at the time of the trials were very diverse and ranged from propagandist and publishing activities to massive waves of terror attacks and assaults in the whole of Austria to the infiltration of Austrian institutions like the jurisdiction and the police force by members of Nazi secret services.

Hence, the Nazi movement had to be regarded as an existential threat to the Austrofascist regime and, given its pan-German and totalitarian ideology and its close ties to Nazi Germany, to the very survival of an independent Austrian state. Especially in retrospective, one might thus be inclined to support any measure taken against them, no matter the anti-constitutional inclinations and the authoritarian and partly fascist turn they themselves induced. Nevertheless, it is important to consider that the source material on the legal prosecution of the Austrian Nazi movement originates from a system that at that point of time is in itself deeply antidemocratic and has already largely abolished several key constitutional norms, as will be elaborated in detail in chapter III.5. on the legal circumstances of prosecution.

Via gravely interfering in and establishing control over the judiciary and the unchecked expansion of both judicial and legislative competences of the executive branch in the security forces and the government, the Austrofascist regime de facto abolished the separation of power – a key principle of a democratic state of law.⁵⁶ Therefore, its biased institutions did not provide political opponents with

⁵⁴ Website accessible under: <http://www.repression-1933-1938.at/site/home> [accessed 19.08.2019]
Thanks again for this opportunity on this occasion.

⁵⁵ The *Volksgерichte* were special post-war courts established for the legal processing of Nazi crimes

⁵⁶ Rath, John; Schum, pp. 251f.; Tálos, 'Das Austrofascistische Herrschaftssystem', pp. 401–403.

a due process whatsoever. Consequently, we have to consider that trial records of that time show the results of investigations of a deeply biased police force and the politically motivated jurisprudence of a judicial system that has come almost entirely under governmental control – both key features of any authoritarian or fascist system. As a result, these documents inevitably exhibit extensive flaws and biases as source material for historical research which prejudices the credibility, validity and explanatory power of the claims made based upon them.

As one way to counteract these inherent flaws of Austrofascist source material, Marschallek suggests the usage of “perpetrator sources”, id est sources of the National Socialists themselves.⁵⁷ These of course have their very own limitations and have to be dealt with respectively. However, via the combination of both sources and later investigations (for example of the post-war *Volksgerichte*) we can aim for an integrated view and thus distil reliable claims and increase their validity.

Hence, the second important source material used in this thesis are the Gauakten – the remaining archival sources of the *Gaupersonalamt* of the *Gau* Vienna, in Austria mostly stored at the Austrian State Archives (*Österreichisches Staatsarchiv*), in the sub-department of the Archive of the Republic. These sources contain the remains of the archival records on several National socialist organisations in this particular *Gau*. The majority of the material therefore dates back to the period of Nazi rulership over Vienna, hence the time from 1938 to 1945. However, in the sources we can also find important information on the illegal period of Nazism in Austria.⁵⁸

First of all, the protagonists themselves often refer to their past as “*Illegalen*” (=member in the illegal period) in the Nazi movement, be it in applications for jobs, organisations, honours or compensation payments for both allegedly and factually suffered harm in the illegal period. In order to emphasise their dedication for Nazism and their claimed extraordinary spirit of sacrifice many illegal Nazis boasted at length about their alleged services for the movement in the period of illegality. Moreover, at times these very detailed, though often exaggerated accounts were scrutinised by Nazi officials respectively double-checked and contrasted with testimonies of witnesses – with occasionally surprising and embarrassing results.

In this way, these self-descriptions and the related inquiries in some instances can fill the voids of the official archival remnants that naturally offer more information on the period of National Socialist rulership in Austria.

⁵⁷ Schafranek, ‘Österreichische Nationalsozialisten in der Illegalität 1933-1938. Ein Forschungsbericht’, pp. 105f.

⁵⁸ In some cases, the archives (either the WSTLA or the Staatsarchiv) also added documents from trials against Nazi perpetrators from after 1945 to the files.

Secondly, after the Nazi takeover in Austria the times as illegal National Socialist were included in official documents, such as the personal files, that now often covered the person's career in the illegal period as well.

Thirdly, functionalists like Martin Broszat emphasise the inherent tendency for competition within and between National Socialist institutions which Nazism as a specific form of rule exhibits. These led to permanent internal conflicts which found its way into the sources and strongly impaired the movement's functioning.⁵⁹

The Austrian branch of the Nazi movement was in no way an exception to this assessment, but with the Austrian *Führerstreit*⁶⁰ experienced an existential conflict from the beginning of the 1920s on. The party ban even worsened the situation as a new layer of potential dispute arose between representatives of the movement in Austria and those who had fled to Germany – in addition to the already existing rift between Austrian and German National Socialists.⁶¹ Furthermore, in particular the relations between SA and SS and the July coup respectively intrigues and treason before and during it were the source of huge conflicts.⁶² Therefore, even after the "*Anschluss*" and Nazism's rise to power in Austria, scores had yet to be settled and old feuds between Nazi rivals were still simmering. These internal fights were fought both covertly via intrigues and calumnies and openly in public correspondence, in front of political boards and party courts – in the latter ways being traceable in the archival sources.

Apart from these two major bodies of source material⁶³, archival sources of several other provenances were consulted as well, such as, inter alia: sources on the history of the NSDAP in Austria in both the

⁵⁹ Martin Broszat, *Der Staat Hitlers. Grundlegung und Entwicklung seiner Inneren Verfassung* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000), pp. 69, 79f., 164–167.; Jagschitz, 'Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten', pp. 230f.; Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 698f., 707f.

⁶⁰ ~leadership dispute

⁶¹ Broszat, p. 69.; Dostal, pp. 43f.; Garscha, pp. 118f.; Jagschitz, 'Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten', pp. 241f.; Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Von der "Bewegung" zum Apparat. Zur Phänomenologie der NSDAP 1938 bis 1945.', in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and others (Vienna: ÖBV & hpt, 2000), pp. 88–122 (pp. 89f.); Hans Schafranek, *Söldner für den Anschluss. Die Österreichische Legion 1933-1938* (Vienna: Czernin, 2011), p. 9.

⁶² Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 30, 35f.; Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', pp. 236f.; Broszat, pp. 69, 164–167, 282.; Dostal, p. 25.; Wolfgang Graf, *Österreichische SS-Generäle* (Klagenfurt/Ljubljana/Vienna: Hermagoras, 2012), p. 75.; Jagschitz, 'Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934', pp. 10f., 18f.; Rothländer, pp. 158–170.; Schafranek, *Söldner für den Anschluss. Die Österreichische Legion 1933-1938*, pp. 132f.; Schafranek, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934.*, pp. 9, 33–36, 69-71, 76–80, 86, 205, 224, 229–231.

See also reports of several involved people on the July coup and the alleged reasons for its failure:

Fridolin Glass' report: Schafranek, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934.*, pp. 228–231.; Konrad Rotter's report: Ibid., pp. 232–255.; Fritz Hamburger's report: Ibid., pp. 261–266.; An analysis of Otto Wächter's report: Hellmuth Auerbach, 'Eine Nationalsozialistische Stimme zum Wiener Putsch vom 25. Juli 1934', *Vierteljahreshefte Für Zeitgeschichte*, 12.2 (1964), 201–218.; See also Otto Wächter, Antrag auf Eröffnung des Ehrenverfahrens vor dem Schiedhof, Stellungnahme Otto Wächter, 18.06.1938, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.

⁶³ If in a footnote several references stem from the same archival material, I followed the order of the archival material. This means that documents that are listed first also appear first in the archival material.

state and the municipal archive and the Documentation Centre of the Austrian Resistance (*DÖW*⁶⁴) in Vienna, protocols of the Austrian Council of Ministers from January 1933 to September 1934 (State Archive), and records of the German *Bundesarchiv* in Berlin (Federal Archive), here in particular the central register of NSDAP members. All primary sources of course will be listed below in the bibliography (»chapter V.2.)

Via combining all of these sources, one can obtain a plethora of information on certain aspects of National Socialist activity in Austria. Nevertheless, the source material on the illegal period of Austrian Nazism remains challenging and in parts inevitably fragmentary, especially for three reasons:

The first is rather obvious and lies in the inherent secrecy of an illegal movement's activities. Given the criminal prosecution against them it is self-explanatory why the illegal Nazi movement aimed to appear as little in institutional documentation as possible.

The second one is less self-evident, though also convincing and lies in "*Hitler's extraordinarily unbureaucratic style of rule*"⁶⁵, as Ian Kershaw expressed it. Kershaw argues that a certain void of official documents on key topics, decisions, events and also people can be explained by Hitler's distinctive way of exerting power. He often issued rather vague and unspecific orders and hence left Nazi officials and institutions much room for manoeuvre. In doing so, he, probably both intentionally as well as unintentionally, encouraged a certain boldness, proactivity and eagerness among National Socialists on all levels of hierarchy and caused a profound disregard for the official chains of command and bureaucratic procedures.⁶⁶ On the one hand, this particular style of rule produced an opaque clutter of competences, which we will later also discover in the field of intelligence.

On the other hand, it reduced official documentation and thus the archival legacy. Kershaw's analysis refers to the National Socialist system in general, but his observation is very relevant for the Austrian branch of Nazism and, in particular, for its time as illegal movement as well. Further aggravated by the ban of National Socialist organisations, the formalization of hierarchies within the Nazi movement was partly incomplete or at least exercised only to some extent. Consequently, the division of competences and responsibilities was often unclear and ranks and titles did not necessarily correlate with factual functions and positions and especially not with actual influence and power. A prime example for this

⁶⁴ *Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes*

Its records however, are primarily focussed on the period of Nazi rule respectively on victims of Nazism in general.

⁶⁵ Kershaw, p. 4.

⁶⁶ Broszat, pp. 423f., 427.; Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 698f.; Peter Longerich, 'Tendenzen und Perspektiven der Täterforschung.', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 2007, 3–7 (p. 5).; Hans Safrian, 'Österreichische Täter Im Nationalsozialismus', in *Österreichischer Zeitgeschichtetag 1995. Österreich – 50 Jahre Zweite Republik*, (Innsbruck/Vienna: Studienverlag, 1997), pp. 225–227 (pp. 226f.).

is Theodor Habicht, who in theory as *Landesinspekteur*⁶⁷ was subordinate to *Landesleiter*⁶⁸ Alfred Proksch⁶⁹. In fact, however, he was the one in charge and to a large extent eclipsed Proksch.⁷⁰

Moreover, the observed fervour of certain officials and the resulting disregard for formalised procedures often happened without affirmation of higher authorities – and their actions are hence less likely to appear in official correspondence.

The third reason is very simple: a lot of archival documents from the Austrofascist period were simply destroyed – first in the course of the National Socialist takeover in Austria in 1938 and then during the Second World War and the demise of the “Third Reich”, both deliberately by National Socialists and accidentally by wartime destruction.⁷¹

I have tried my best to take these specific origins and flaws of the used sources into consideration and to reflect on them in a thorough and scientifically accurate way. Nevertheless, the scope of this thesis forced me to concentrate on particular source materials and to restrict my archival research in some areas in order to finish it in an adequate time. In particular, the records of the German Federal Archive would deserve way more attention than I was able to give them during a short five-day trip to Berlin. In Austria, additional source material of the police archives and the DÖW and further trials of the *Volksgерichte* would have been very interesting to consult but had to be left out due to restricted time capacities.

Therefore, the thesis at hand naturally is of a different quality and extent in this regard than a dissertation thesis or a project of an academic team could be. I ask all readers to take these limitations into account.

⁶⁷ ~Inspector of the Austrian NSDAP

⁶⁸ ~Director of the Austrian NSDAP

⁶⁹ Broszat, p. 69.

⁷⁰ Jagschitz, ‘Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934’, p. 10.; Bruce F. Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 69–72, 223f.

⁷¹ Bruce F. Pauley, ‘Nazis and Heimwehr Fascists: The Struggle for Supremacy in Austria, 1918-1938’, in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*. (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 226–238 (pp. 235f.).

II. Contextualisation

1. The development of the Austrian Nazi movement until the July Coup⁷²

The roots of Austrian Nazism lie in the DAP, the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*⁷³ which was founded in 1903 in Northern Bohemia, back then part of the Habsburg Empire. Gerhard Botz describes the party in its beginnings as “*pan-German reform party*”⁷⁴ that was closely associated with the trade unions of the German speaking minority of Bohemia and did not gain any particular attention outside of its core area in today’s Czech Republic.⁷⁵ The year 1918 then proved to be a turning point. First, the party added the apposition “National Socialist” to its name and thus was called *Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei*⁷⁶ (DNSAP) – nota bene, before the German Nazi party did the same in 1920. Secondly, the collapse of the Habsburg Empire induced it to leave the nascent Czechoslovakia and move to Austria.⁷⁷

In Austria, it remained a small local party which did not achieve any particularly remarkable successes. However, the rise of Hitler at the beginning of the 1920s largely affected the DNSAP. The contacts between the parties intensified and the Austrian DNSAP adopted methods and structures from its German counterpart in the NSDAP. For example, in 1922 a paramilitary formation similar to the German SA was established and the party in general gradually developed from a pan-German middle-class reform party into a radical, antidemocratic, violently anti-Marxist right-wing force.⁷⁸ After the failure of Hitler’s Munich coup in 1923 though, tensions about the orientation of the party intensified and in particular regarding the question whether it should remain an independent Austrian party or whether it should join the Hitler movement in Munich and Germany. During the Austrian *Führerstreit*, the party therefore was eventually split into three camps: a relatively moderate, German national camp of Walter Riehl, an Austrian National Socialist camp around Karl Schulz and a Hitler camp consisting of mostly young, very radical and fanatic supporters of Hitler’s course that promoted the

⁷² For a concise overview of the history of Austrian Nazism see e.g. Jagschitz, ‘Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten’.; Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 656–736. or “Part two: NSDAP’s Precursors and Development 1926-1934” in Lauridsen, pp. 273–430.

⁷³ =German Worker’s Party

⁷⁴ Original quote: “*Deutschnationale Reformpartei*”. Botz, ‘Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)’, p. 219.

John Lauridsen refers to “*DAP/DNSAP [as] social reformist party with its basis in the volkisch labour movement*”. Lauridsen, p. 446.

⁷⁵ Botz, ‘Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)’, pp. 218f.; Lauridsen, pp. 276f.

⁷⁶ =German National Socialist Worker’s Party

⁷⁷ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 15f.; Botz, ‘Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)’, p. 219.; Jagschitz, ‘Von der “Bewegung” zum Apparat. Zur Phänomenologie der NSDAP 1938 bis 1945.’, p. 89. Lauridsen, pp. 282f.

⁷⁸ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 15–17.; Botz, ‘Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)’, pp. 220f.; Jagschitz, ‘Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934’, pp. 9f.

unification with the German NSDAP.⁷⁹ The *Führerstreit* resulted in deep divisions in the Austrian Nazi movement that continued to have an effect throughout its existence.

After years of crippling quarrels, ultimately the supporters of an alignment with Hitler's NSDAP prevailed: an actual branch of the German NSDAP was founded in 1926⁸⁰ and over the next years largely absorbed the other two movements of Schulz and Riehl and on a wider scale "*the whole fascist potential of the German National camp*"⁸¹.

However, at first the party remained basically insignificant and in the general election in 1927 only received 0,02% of the votes. It but slowly increased in popularity and in 1930 reached 3%.⁸² The Austrian NSDAP then only rose to real significance in Austria after the German Theodor Habicht had been appointed as *Landesgeschäftsführer*⁸³ in July 1931 (from summer 1932 on as *Landesinspekteur*) and induced comprehensive reforms of the party.⁸⁴ Under his aegis, the development of the NSDAP became increasingly dynamic and the party achieved its first major successes in 1932 at the federal respectively municipal elections in Vienna (~17%), Lower Austria (~14%) and especially Salzburg. In Salzburg the NSDAP reached almost 21% and in doing so became the third strongest party in the state parliament.⁸⁵ Backed by support from the German Nazi party, the Austrian NSDAP from 1932 on thus started a dynamic "*phase of mass mobilisation*"⁸⁶, as Kurt Bauer described it, and became a major force in and threat to the political system of Austria.⁸⁷

When analysing the research on the history of Austrian Nazism, we can identify four main reasons for its massive rise at the beginning of the 1930s. The depicted developments also strongly shaped the

⁷⁹ Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', pp. 221f.; Jagschitz, 'Von der "Bewegung" zum Apparat', p. 89.; Bruce F. Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 45f.; Erwin A. Schmidl, 'Die NSDAP in Österreich bis zum "Anschluss" 1938', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 193–204 (p. 194).

⁸⁰ The Austrian Hitler movement was first legally established as "*Nationalsozialistischer Arbeiterverein*" [National Socialist Workers Association] in May 1926 and then soon was transferred into the Austrian NSDAP. It incorporated much of the earlier leaders, but fewer members and was directly brought under the authority of the German NSDAP and Hitler. Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', p. 222.

⁸¹ Original quote: "*[D]iese Richtung war es, die in sich das gesamte faschistische Potential des deutsch-nationalen Lagers aufzog.*" Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', p. 223. See also Jagschitz, 'Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934', pp. 9f.

⁸² Schmidl, p. 127.

For a closer look at the election results of the Austrian NSDAP see graph "The electoral successes of the NSDAP in Austria 1927-1933" ("*Die Wahlerfolge der NSDAP in Österreich 1927-1933*") in Falter and Hänisch, p. 238.

⁸³ ~General Secretary of the Austrian NSDAP

⁸⁴ Broszat, pp. 69f.; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, pp. 69–72.; Schafranek, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934.*, p. 14.

⁸⁵ Alfred Ableitinger, 'Politik in Österreich 1918 bis 1933', in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 17–48 (p. 31); Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 17. Carsten, p. 163.; Dostal, p. 26.; Falter and Hänisch, pp. 238f., 241f.

⁸⁶ Original quote: "*Phase der Massenmobilisierung ab 1932*". Bauer, 'Arbeiterpartei? Zur Sozialstruktur der illegalen NSDAP in Österreich.', p. 268.

⁸⁷ Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', pp. 217, 238.; Carsten, p. 162.; Dostal, pp. 26f.; Garscha, p. 101.

environment in which the intelligence service of the *Landesleitung* at the core of this thesis operated which is the reason why I want to address them.

1. First, **Theodor Habicht's reforms** largely increased the movement's military, infiltrating and propagandist clout.

In July 1931, an extensive centralisation of authority was induced via the establishment of an Austrian *Landesleitung* based in Linz as superior authority over the *Gau* administrations and *Gauleiter*. These had formerly been a constant source of disarray and conflict. Hence, Habicht curtailed their power and influence in favour of the new *Landesleitung*.⁸⁸ Activities regarding propaganda, intelligence or armament and terror attacks were now increasingly planned centrally by the *Landesleitung* and in general strongly professionalised and modernized.⁸⁹ For example, just as its German counterpart the Austrian Nazi movement excessively used the new medium of the radio to broadcast glorifying news, speeches and defamations against political opponents – often transmitted from German broadcasting stations.⁹⁰ In this way, the Austrian Nazi leaders and their political positions became known to a larger group of people.

Meanwhile, the Austrian SA became notorious for its brawls with and attacks on leftist forces and thus partly supported, partly replaced the *Heimwehr* as main force in the political and military fight against the left.⁹¹

Furthermore, based on the model of the German Nazi movement, the Austrian National Socialists organised huge ostentatious parades, at various occasions with support from speakers of the German party such as Hans Frank⁹², Joseph Goebbels or Hermann Göring.⁹³

⁸⁸ The reform of the *Landesleitung* was decided a few weeks before Habicht took over in Austria, but it was largely him that executed it. Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', p. 224.; Dostal, pp. 24f.; Jagschitz, 'Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934', pp. 9f.; Lauridsen, pp. 318f., 393f.; Schafraneck, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934.*, p. 14.; Schafraneck, *Söldner für den Anschluss. Die Österreichische Legion 1933-1938*, p. 9.

⁸⁹ Blatnik mentions a "Four months advertising plan" (*Viermonatswerbeplan*) that centrally planned the movement's propaganda for Styria. Blatnik, pp. 165–178.; See also Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis*, p. 17.; Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', p. 224.; Lauridsen, pp. 396–403.; Pauley, pp. 69–72, 102f..

⁹⁰ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 23, 198.; Carsten, p. 183.; Jedlicka, 'Die Auflösung der Wehrverbände und Italien im Jahre 1936', p. 49.; Pauley, pp. 102f., 114–121.; Schafraneck, *Söldner für den Anschluss. Die Österreichische Legion 1933-1938*, pp. 13–16.; Theodor Venus, 'Von der RAVAG zum Reichssender Wien', in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and others (Vienna: ÖBV & hpt, 2000), pp. 597–626 (pp. 597f.).

⁹¹ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, p. 190.; Gerhard Botz, 'Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic', *Historical Social Research Supplement*, 28 (2016), 133–159 (pp. 142f., 154).; Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', pp. 273f.

⁹² Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 20.; Rothländer, pp. 323f.

⁹³ Jagschitz, 'Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten', pp. 240f.; Pauley, 'Nazis and Heimwehr Fascists: The Struggle for Supremacy in Austria, 1918-1938', p. 59.

In combination with the myriad of National Socialist organisations and interest groups (for soldiers, students, workers, public servants, policemen, entrepreneurs etc. pp.) that pervaded Austria's economy and society, the Nazi party according to Pauley as a result addressed "*virtually every segment of Austria's population*"⁹⁴.

2. The second largely influential factor that increased the party's popularity was the grave **economic crisis** that Austria underwent at the beginning of the 1930s.⁹⁵

Austria's economy was pushed into a severe recession by the global economic crisis of 1929 and in particular by the collapse of the *Creditanstalt* in 1931, at that time nothing less than Austria's biggest bank.⁹⁶

The catastrophic economic situation intensified the widespread antisemitism (for example, the allegedly "Jewish" directors of the *Creditanstalt* were blamed for the recession⁹⁷) and especially contributed to the radicalisation of young men who were left without perspectives and jobs and – according to Sandgruber and Senft a result of the harsh economic austerity policy⁹⁸ – also without an adequate social security network.⁹⁹ Consequentially, the supporters of the Nazi movement were of a very young age, often unemployed and mostly unmarried: for the participants of the July coup, Kurt Bauer estimates that almost three quarters were unmarried and on average only 28.5 years old.¹⁰⁰ Among the participating workers, more than half were unemployed. Bauer therefore concludes that

⁹⁴ Pauley, pp. 102f. Also see Bauer, 'Arbeiterpartei? Zur Sozialstruktur der illegalen NSDAP in Österreich.', pp. 266–269.; Blatnik, p. 145.; Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', pp. 225f.; Stefan Eminger and Karl Haas, 'Wirtschaftstreibende und Nationalsozialismus in Österreich. Die Nazifizierung von Handel, Gewerbe und Industrie in Den 1930er Jahren', *Zeitgeschichte*, 29.4 (2002), pp. 153–176 (p. 153).

⁹⁵ For a concise overview of Austria's economy in the interwar period see Roman Sandgruber, 'Österreichs Wirtschaft 1918-1938 - Überblick und Weichenstellungen', in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 235–246.

⁹⁶ Ableitinger, pp. 29f.; Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 17, 198f.; Gerhard Botz, 'Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic', in *Historical Social Research Supplement*, 28 (2016), pp. 133–159 (pp. 136, 156f.); See also chapter 5.3.2.1. on the crisis of the Creditanstalt in Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 513–517.; Sandgruber, pp. 239f.

⁹⁷ Carsten, p. 164.; Angelika Königseder, 'Antisemitismus 1933-1938', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 54–65 (pp. 54f.); Peter Melichar, 'Who Is a Jew? Antisemitic Defining, Identifying and Counting in Pre-1938 Austria', *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 50.1 (2005), pp. 149–174 (pp. 151f.); Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 17.

⁹⁸ Sandgruber, pp. 239f.; Gerhard Senft, 'Neues Vom "Ständestaat"? Anmerkungen Zur Wirtschaftspolitik Im Austrofaschismus', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 243–256 (pp. 247–249).

⁹⁹ However, the devastating economic situation at times seems to be overused all too willingly as an excuse for Austria's deliberate plunge into first Austrofascist authoritarianism and then Nazi terror rule. Cf. Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 198f.

See Garscha, p. 116.; Jedlicka, Vom alten zum neuen Österreich. Fallstudien zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 1900-1975., pp. 197f.

¹⁰⁰ Kurt Bauer, 'Arbeiterpartei? Zur Sozialstruktur der illegalen NSDAP in Österreich.', in *Zeitgeschichte*, 29.5 (2002), pp. 259–272 (pp. 262, 265); Also see Bauer's comprehensive study on the age structure of National Socialists in preventive detention. Botz, Bauer, and Meixner, pp. 322–332.

In earlier studies, Botz arrives at similar results and states that half of the new members who joined the movement between 1926 and 1933 were 30 years or younger. Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', pp. 227f.

the Austrian Nazi movement to a large extent was carried by “*deprivileged adolescents*”, whose parents were often more moderate German Nationals which once more emphasises the shared roots of the various organisations on the political right.¹⁰¹

As a result of this young age, according to Bauer and also Botz’ earlier studies, the average National Socialist was venturesome, mobile and socially uncommitted. This encouraged a high degree of radicalism and acceptance of illegal actions which further became foundations of the movement’s strategy, identity and its appeal.¹⁰²

To a large extent, the rise of the Austrian Nazi movement in this way resembles the development of Nazism in Germany.¹⁰³ In both countries, unemployment rates and election results of the Nazi parties show a very close correlation – though in Austria slightly belated.¹⁰⁴ According to Emmerich Tálos, the unemployment figure rose from 240.000 in 1930 up to 560.000 in 1933¹⁰⁵ – hence, in the three most dynamic years of the rise of Nazism in Austria the unemployed figure more than doubled.¹⁰⁶

On another note, Eminger points out Nazism’s increasing appeal to entrepreneurs who hoped for economic recovery with the help of Germany. German national Industrialists – in particular in Styria and Carinthia, the strongholds of Austrian pan-Germanism – started to support the movement and in National Socialism wanted to see a political solution to the massive economic crisis. Among the supporters of Nazism was even Austria’s single biggest company, the Alpine Montan in Styria and also

¹⁰¹ Original quote: “*deprivilegierte Jugendliche*”. Kurt Bauer, ‘Arbeiterpartei?’, p. 263. See also Botz, Bauer, and Meixner, pp. 178–184. Due to the specific age structure of Nazi supporters, Bauer and Botz also regard the rise of Nazism as manifestation of a generation conflict. Bauer, ‘Arbeiterpartei? Zur Sozialstruktur der illegalen NSDAP in Österreich.’, p. 263.; Botz, ‘Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)’, p. 228.

¹⁰² Bauer, ‘Arbeiterpartei? Zur Sozialstruktur der illegalen NSDAP in Österreich.’, pp. 262f., 265f., 269.; Gerhard Botz, ‘Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic’, *Historical Social Research Supplement*, 28 (2016), pp. 133–159 (pp. 135f., 144f., 153f., 156–158). Botz, ‘Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)’, pp. 227f.; Broszat, p. 37.

¹⁰³ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis*, p. 17.; Falter, pp. 290f., 373f.; Falter and Hänisch, p. 234.

¹⁰⁴ Stefan Karner, “... Des Reiches Südmark”. Kärnten und Steiermark im “Dritten Reich” 1938-1945., in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and others (Vienna: ÖBV & hpt, 2000), pp. 292–325 (pp. 299f.); Merkl, p. 778.

For Germany, Jürgen Falter’s concise research reaches the conclusion that the developments of the unemployment rate and the results of the NSDAP were closely interlinked. According to him, in 1930 the unemployment rate was at 14,4% and the NSDAP reached 18,3%. In January 1932 it was 42,3% unemployment rate to 37,3% votes, in November 1932 39,6% to 33,1% and in 1933 52,4% to 43% which indicates a clear statistical correlation. Falter, p. 294.

The potentially explosive effects of the high unemployment rate was in parts also realised by the government. See contemporary protocols of the council of ministers: Ministerialrat Dr. Gross, Ministeralsekretär Dr. Seidl, Ministerrat, Ministerratsprotokoll Nr. 839, 04.01.1933, pp. 3f., 8, in OeStA/AdR MRang MR 1. Rep MRP, 839.

¹⁰⁵ Tálos, *Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem*, p. 397.

¹⁰⁶ Botz, ‘Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic’, pp. 135–137, 156–159.; Botz, ‘Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)’, pp. 225f.; Stefan Eminger and Karl Haas, ‘Wirtschaftstreibende und Nationalsozialismus in Österreich. Die Nazifizierung von Handel, Gewerbe und Industrie in Den 1930er Jahren’, *Zeitgeschichte*, 29.4 (2002), pp. 153–176 (p. 154).

the steel producer Böhler.¹⁰⁷ In the illegal period, these donors became even more important as in hope of a National Socialist takeover in Austria they provided the movement with a financial basis.¹⁰⁸

3. This hope was strongly connected to the **rise of Nazism in Germany**.

Hence, every major success of Hitler at the elections helped the Austrian Nazi movement as well and was extensively exploited in its propaganda, which also observed by the Austrian government.¹⁰⁹ The dissemination of Hitler's speeches and portrait pictures all across Austria should nurture the belief in his capacities and that he would soon take over power in Germany in which case National Socialists in Austria could strongly benefit – and maybe finally achieve the widely supported goal of German-Austrian unification.¹¹⁰ This idea of a common state with the Germans was very popular throughout the First Republic and within every major political camp in Austria.¹¹¹ However, the Austrian NSDAP was its most determined supporter and called for it the louder the more likely the German NSDAP's rise to power seemed – in contrast to both the Christian Social and the Social Democratic Worker's Party which eventually widely discarded the plan due to Hitler's rise.¹¹²

As a result of these circumstances, Hitler's eventual appointment as chancellor in January 1933 also fuelled the Austrian Nazi movement: firstly, because from that point on it enjoyed massive support from the German government. Hitler's (diplomatic, propagandistic, military and financial¹¹³) support for the Austrian National Socialists largely increased the movement's capacities and in particular strongly restricted the room of manoeuvre of the Austrian regime in its fight against the internal Nazi threat as an escalation of the German-Austrian conflict should be avoided.

¹⁰⁷ Eminger and Haas, pp. 153f., 166.; Stefan Karner, "... Des Reiches Südmark". Kärnten und Steiermark im "Dritten Reich" 1938-1945., in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and others (Vienna: ÖBV & hpt, 2000), pp. 292–325 (pp. 293f.); Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 140.

¹⁰⁸ Eminger and Haas, pp. 154, 166f.; Schmidl, pp. 193f.

¹⁰⁹ Ministerialrat Gross, Ministerialsekretär Seidl, Ministerratsprotokoll 851, 07.03.1933, in OeStA/AdR MRang MR 1. Rep MRP, pp. 847–855.

Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis*, p. 17. Jedlicka, 'Die Auflösung der Wehrverbände und Italien im Jahre 1936', p. 49.; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, pp. 120f.; Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', p. 275.

¹¹⁰ Bauer, 'Arbeiterpartei? Zur Sozialstruktur der illegalen NSDAP in Österreich.', p. 269.; Eminger and Haas, pp. 153f., 166f.; Hans Mommsen, 'Forschungskontroversen zum Nationalsozialismus', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 2007, 14–21 (p. 19).

¹¹¹ Marco Bertolaso, *Die erste Runde im Kampf gegen Hitler? Frankreich, Großbritannien und die österreichische Frage 1933/34. Eine Untersuchung der Außenpolitik der Westmächte in den ersten 18 Monaten des 'Dritten Reiches' auf der Grundlage diplomatischer Akten* (Hamburg: Kovac, 1995), pp. 45f.; Kriebbaum, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 167f.

¹¹² Bertolaso, pp. 47f.; Carsten, p. 180.; Hanns Haas, 'Der "Anschluss"', in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and others (Vienna: ÖBV & hpt, 2000), pp. 26–54 (pp. 28f.); Anton Staudinger, 'Zur "Österreich"-Ideologie des Ständestaates', in *Das Juliabkommen von 1936. Vorgeschichte, Hintergründe und Folgen. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 10. und 11. Juni 1976*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1977), pp. 198–240 (pp. 198f.); Gerald Stourzh, 'Die Aussenpolitik der Österreichischen Bundesregierung gegenüber der nationalsozialistischen Bedrohung', in *Österreich, Deutschland und Die Mächte. Internationale und österreichische Aspekte des 'Anschlusses' vom März 1938*, ed. by Gerald Stourzh and Brigitta Zaar (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), pp. 319–46 (pp. 321f.).

¹¹³ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 20, 23.; Blatnik, p. 178.; Botz, 'Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic', pp. 154f.

Secondly, the Austrian Nazi movement profited from Hitler's rise to power in terms of its own popularity in Austria: from the end of January until the ban of the party in the middle of June 1933 the number of Austrian NSDAP members¹¹⁴ basically exploded and exhibited an increase of over 60%, up to almost 70.000 members.¹¹⁵

4. A major reason for the strong inflow of new members was further that the Austrian Nazi movement had increasingly gained **supremacy in the influential pan-German camp** from the beginning of the 1930s on.

The reasons for this lay both within and outside Nazism itself. The ideological persuasiveness of its extreme yet simple political demands appealed to parts of the widely disillusioned population. The Nazi movement's ideology addressed the prevalent militarism, the rampant antisemitism in almost all branches and layers of society and political camps¹¹⁶ and the strong anti-Marxist sentiment which was deeply rooted in Austrian peasantry and bourgeoisie and at the core of the conservative and German national camps.¹¹⁷ At the same time, the Nazi movement differentiated from other right-wing forces in so far as that it was a strictly oppositional force. In doing so, Nazism represented a radical alternative to the ruling system that disastrously failed to solve the grave "*economic-political double crisis*"¹¹⁸, as Eminger and Haas accurately described it. The Nazi movement's aggressive attacks against the traditional elites and its pretended opposition to them in particular strongly distinguished it from the

¹¹⁴ See table 19 on the "Calculated growth of the Austrian NSDAP's membership 1926-1934" in Lauridsen, p. 326.

¹¹⁵ Ableitinger, p. 34.; Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 18.; Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', pp. 225f. Dostal, p. 93.; Schafranek, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934.*, p. 18.

For January 1933, id est before this boom, Lauridsen assesses the NSDAP's membership figures with around 43.000 in the total of Austria, distributed in the following way: Vienna 15.000, Lower Austria 13.000, Carinthia 6.500, Styria 5.500, rest of around 3.000 in the other federal states. Lauridsen, p. 323.

¹¹⁶ Martha Keil, "'Zwischenzeit': Jüdisches Leben in Österreich vom Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges bis zum 'Anschluss'", in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 301–311 (pp. 301f., 304).; Hansjörg Klausinger, 'Antisemitismus und die Österreichische Schule der Nationalökonomie an der Universität Wien, 1918-1945', *Zeitgeschichte*, 43.3 (2016), pp. 149–166 (pp. 149f., 160).; Königseder, pp. 54f., 58–60, 62–64.; Peter Melichar, 'Who Is a Jew? Antisemitic Defining, Identifying and Counting in Pre-1938 Austria', *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 50.1 (2005), 149–174 (pp. 173f.); Peter Melichar, 'Definieren, Identifizieren, Zählen. Antisemitische Praktiken in Österreich vor 1938', *Österreichische Zeitschrift Für Geschichtswissenschaften*, 17.1 (2006), 114–146 (pp. 117, 137 f.n. 24).; Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941-1944. Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens*, ed. by Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996), pp. 33f.

In this regard, Gerhard Botz demands „the acknowledgement of the internationally already well-known fact, that already before Nazism antisemitism was rooted stronger than in any other country to the West of our borders and that he has left its traces in contemporary society.” Original quote: „die Anerkennung der international ohnedies weithin bekannten Tatsache, daß der Antisemitismus in Österreich schon vor dem Nazismus wohl stärker verankert war als in jedem anderen Land westlich unserer Grenzen und daß er immer noch in der gegenwärtigen Gesellschaft deutliche Spuren hinterlassen hat” Gerhard Botz, 'Anschluss an die Vergangenheit. Überlegungen zum Zusammenhang von Verdrängung der NS-Vergangenheit und aktueller Krise von Zeitgeschichte, Antifaschismus und Demokratiebewußtsein in Österreich.', in *Jahrbuch 1987*, ed. by Österreichischer Bundesverlag (Vienna: Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes, 1987), pp. 23–41 (p. 37).

¹¹⁷ Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', pp. 217f.; Carsten, pp. 162–164.

¹¹⁸ Original quote: „ökonomisch-politische Doppelkrise“. Eminger and Haas, p. 153.

other main political force of the pan-German camp, the GDVP (*Großdeutsche Volkspartei*¹¹⁹). Until its rift with the Christian Socials in 1931, the GDVP had been in almost every coalition of the First Republic and was therefore denounced as “*Systempartei*”, as party of the hated system, as the National Socialists depicted it.¹²⁰ Similar can be said for the German national and radically anti-Marxist peasant party *Landbund*¹²¹ who was part of the Dollfuß ministry until spring 1934. It is also the case for the *Heimwehr*, who from 1932 on was part of the government via the *Heimatblock*¹²² and was thus strongly seen as force of the failing “system” as well.¹²³

As a result, the Austrian Nazi movement gradually and extensively absorbed every other political force of the pan-German camp. Accordingly, its electoral successes from 1932 on predominantly occurred at the expense of the GDVP¹²⁴, the *Landbund* and the *Heimwehr* whose more radical and pan-German supporters converted to Nazism in droves.¹²⁵ In addition, Hitler’s rise to power in Germany enormously added momentum to this development and further united the formerly strongly fragmented pan-German camp behind Nazism.¹²⁶ Eventually, the GDVP more or less surrendered to the growing power of the Nazi movement and in May 1933 entered an alliance (“*Kampfbündnis*”) with the Austrian NSDAP which in fact meant relinquishing its existence as independent political party.¹²⁷

For the Nazi movement and in particular its intelligence departments, the alliance with the GDVP provided new contacts within the Austrian authorities as among civil servants and even judges, many

¹¹⁹ ~Greater German People’s Party

¹²⁰ Botz, ‘Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic’, p. 142.; Kershaw, pp. 37f.

¹²¹ For an overview of the research on both GDVP and Landbund see Christian Klösch, ‘Zerrieben Zwischen Nationalsozialismus und Austrofaschismus. Landbund und Großdeutsche Volkspartei und Das Ende Der Deutschnationalen Mittelparteien Am Beispiel von Franz Winkler und Viktor Mittermann’, in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 87–104.

¹²² ~“Homeland bloc”

¹²³ Lauridsen, pp. 242f., 271f., 442f.; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, pp. 79f.

¹²⁴ Respectively of the Schober-Block, an alliance named after former chancellor Johann Schober which had participated in the parliamentary elections of 1930 but did not participate at the state elections in 1932. It consisted of the GDVP, the Landbund and other small right-wing parties, including the remains of the National Socialist group of Schulz. In 1932’s local elections, it was the GDVP alone which reached disastrous results. In Salzburg it lost almost 10% and now received less than 2%. Falter and Hännisch, pp. 246f. For the influential political figure Johann Schober see Hannes Leidinger, ‘Johann Schober - Kontinuitäten im Umbruch’, in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Karn (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 359–363.

¹²⁵ Ableitinger, p. 31.; Isabella Ackerl, ‘Das Kampfbündnis der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei mit der Großdeutschen Volkspartei vom 15. Mai 1933’, in *Das Jahr 1934: 25. Juli. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 8. Oktober 1974*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1975), pp. 21–35 (pp. 21, 23f.); Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 18f.; Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 12.; Falter and Hännisch, pp. 239, 246f., 249.; Klösch, pp. 91–93.; Moll, ‘Das nationale Lager’, pp. 188f.; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 79.

¹²⁶ Ableitinger, p. 35.; Ackerl, pp. 21f., 35.; Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 11.; Richard Voithofer, *Drum Schließt Euch Frisch an Deutschland an Die Großdeutsche Volkspartei in Salzburg 1920-1936* (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 2000), pp. 327f.

¹²⁷ Ackerl, pp. 21–24, 35.; Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 472–478.; Voithofer, pp. 327f.

were GDVP supporters. It also meant a new doorway to the bourgeoisie which had formerly supported the GDVP to a considerable extent.¹²⁸

Of course it would be too easy to draw a straight line from the origins of Austrian pan-Germanism and political antisemitism in Georg Schönerer's *Alldeutsche Vereinigung*¹²⁹ to the GDVP and then to the NSDAP. But it would also be intellectually incorrect to ignore certain continuities that existed from Schönerer to Franz Dinghofer and eventually to Habicht and Hitler.

A similar development as in the GDVP also unfolded in the *Heimwehr* whose strongest branch, the Styrian *Heimwehr* (*Steirischer Heimatschutz*), had gradually drifted towards Nazism as well – for example with the implementation of an “Aryan paragraph”¹³⁰ in June 1932¹³¹ – and in April 1933 (again) formed an alliance with the National Socialists too.¹³² Furthermore, high representatives of the *Landbund*, such as the ministers Franz Winkler and Robert Kerber, gradually intensified their contacts with the NSDAP leadership and, according to Andreas Huber's research, forwarded sensitive information from the council of ministers to Nazi officials such as Otto Wächter.¹³³ In general, it is important to note that the political affiliations at that time were often not that clear respectively characterized by a strong volatility. Especially among the various organisations and parties on the right the strong political dynamics induced supporters to change their affiliations or to sympathise with several organisations. Therefore, supporters of the Austrian Nazi movement did not necessarily need to be formal members of the party or its suborganisations. This is also a very important realisation for the many informants of the intelligence service of the *Landesleitung* who in no way were always formally aligned with the Nazi movement, but were often supporters of other parties, yet had a certain sympathy for Nazism.

¹²⁸ Ackerl, pp. 23, 35.; Carsten, p. 164.; Falter and Hänisch, p. 249.; Klösch, pp. 91f.; Moll, 'Das nationale Lager', pp. 183, 188f.; Neugebauer, 'Repressionsapparat und -Maßnahmen 1933 - 1938', pp. 300, 304f.

¹²⁹ ~pan-German union

¹³⁰ Original German term: “*Arierparagraph*”. An „Aryan paragraph“ was a deeply antisemitic clause that prevented “non-Aryans”, in particular people that were perceived as (alleged) Jews, from joining and participating in an organisation. They were widespread in many areas of Austria's society (by far not only in the far-right camp) and demonstrate the prevalence of Antisemitism in Austria at that time. See e.g.: Keil, pp. 301f., 304.; Melichar, 'Definieren, Identifizieren, Zählen. Antisemitische Praktiken in Österreich vor 1938', pp. 117, 137 f.n. 24.; Melichar, 'Who Is a Jew? Antisemitic Defining, Identifying and Counting in Pre-1938 Austria', pp. 173f.

¹³¹ Ableitinger, p. 31.; Kurt Bauer, 'Struktur und Dynamik des illegalen Nationalsozialismus in der obersteirischen Industrieregion 1933/34', 1998, p. 37.

¹³² Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 12.; Carsten, pp. 170f.; Martin Moll, '„>>Letzten Endes war der Steirische Heimatschutz sehr anständig und ordentlich<<. Das Aufgehen des Steirischen Heimatschutzes in der NSDAP: Von der Konfrontation zur Kooperation', in *Vom NS-Verbot zum >>Anschluss<<. Steirische Nationalsozialisten 1933-1938*, ed. by Hans Schafranek and Herbert Blatnik (Vienna: Czernin, 2015), pp. 13–41 (pp. 18–22, 26–33).; Schafranek, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934.*, pp. 16–21.

Walter Pfrimer, the leader of the Styrian Heimwehr, was also behind a failed coup in 1931. He already changed sides in May 1932 and joined the Nazi movement. Moll, '„>>Letzten Endes war der Steirische Heimatschutz sehr anständig und ordentlich<<. Das Aufgehen des Steirischen Heimatschutzes in der NSDAP: Von der Konfrontation zur Kooperation', p. 26.

¹³³ Andreas Huber, *Rückkehr erwünscht. Im Nationalsozialismus aus 'politischen' Gründen vertriebene Lehrende der Universität Wien* (Vienna: LIT, 2016), pp. 94–96, 140f.; See also Klösch, pp. 95–98.

Besides its rising political influence, the Austrian Nazi movement strongly increased its military potential too. It was under Habicht's lead as well that the Austrian Nazi movement launched and gradually intensified its terrorist activities and increasingly became a potent threat to not only the political opponents but also to national security.¹³⁴ The rising importance of terrorism as political tool marked the provisional decision of probably the major inner conflict within the Austrian Nazi movement: the dispute between an institutional-evolutionary and a violent-revolutionary approach that aimed for an escalation of the conflict between government and Nazi movement and ultimately aspired a violent takeover.¹³⁵ From Habicht's appointment to the July coup three years later, the revolutionary strategy largely prevailed and made terrorism a recurring threat in Austria.¹³⁶ The coup's failure and the massive political and diplomatic consequences it entailed then induced a strategy change towards an evolutionary approach that successfully prepared the July agreement 1936 and eventually, culminated in the National Socialist takeover in 1938.¹³⁷

The gradual intensification of National Socialist terrorism accelerated in 1932: in that year, the National Socialists were involved in 34 of 39 political acts of violence.¹³⁸ The first massive outburst of terror attacks then happened in May and June 1933 and led to over a hundred injured people and four deaths. In addition, bomb attacks on infrastructure – mainly bridges, railroads or cable lines – and official buildings – such as police or municipal offices – caused extensive damage.¹³⁹

These attacks further aggravated the already strained Austrian-German relations which is also true for economic sanctions that the German government implemented against Austria in May 1933. The sanctions were primarily targeted at Austria's important tourism industry which was heavily

¹³⁴ Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', pp. 272f.; Helmut Wohnout, 'Dreieck der Gewalt. Etappen des nationalsozialistischen Terrors in Österreich 1932–1934', in *Österreich 1934. Vorgeschichte - Ereignisse - Wirkungen*, ed. by Günther Scheffbeck (Vienna/Munich: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2004), pp. 78–90 (pp. 80f.).

¹³⁵ Jagschitz, 'Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten', pp. 241f.; Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 707f.; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 107.

¹³⁶ Jagschitz, 'Illegale Bewegungen während der Ständischen Ära 1933–1938', p. 157.; Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', pp. 275f.

¹³⁷ This was also observed by the Austrian council of ministers. "(...) *the German government would like to turn towards the cautious method of Papen [Hitler's ambassador to Austria Franz von Papen, author's note], after the brutal method of Habicht has failed.*" Original quote: „Man könne den Schritt der deutschen Reichsregierung nur so auffassen, dass man sich der vorsichtigen Methode Papens zuwenden wolle, nachdem die brutale Methode Habichts versagt habe.“ Ministerialrat Dr. Troll, Legationsrat Dr. Schmid, Ministerratsprotokoll Nr. 958 vom 27. Juli 1934, 27.07.1934. OeStA/AdR MRang MR 1. Rep MRP, 958.

See also Dostal, pp. 22f.; Garscha, p. 109.; Jagschitz, 'Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten', pp. 245f.; Pauley, 'Nazis and Heimwehr Fascists: The Struggle for Supremacy in Austria, 1918–1938', p. 228.; Schmidl, pp. 196f. Karl Stuhlpfarrer, 'Austrofaschistische Außenpolitik - Ihre Rahmenbedingungen und Ihre Auswirkungen', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933–1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 322–336 (p. 330).; Schafranek, *Söldner für den Anschluss. Die Österreichische Legion 1933–1938*, p. 315.; Schmidl, pp. 196f.

¹³⁸ Wohnout, 'Dreieck der Gewalt. Etappen des nationalsozialistischen Terrors in Österreich 1932–1934', p. 81.

¹³⁹ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 275f.

dependent on German tourists. They included the well-known *Tausendmark-Sperre*, an extraordinarily high fee (of 1000 *Reichsmark*) German tourists were obliged to pay in order to be allowed to enter Austria – the results were devastating as the numbers of tourists in Austria declined by a third.¹⁴⁰ In a ministerial meeting, Hitler explicitly reveals the measure's objective: the *Tausendmark-Sperre* should induce the “collapse of the Dollfuß ministry” and, after subsequent new elections, eventually, lead to the “inner *Gleichschaltung* of Austria”.¹⁴¹

This collapse should be achieved via a combination of military-terrorist, economic and diplomatic measures, as Neugebauer concludes: “this terror campaign [of May/June 1933, author's note] was embedded in a comprehensive concept of Hitler and his representatives which, besides excessive violence and a nationwide propaganda campaign, included massive political and economic pressure.”¹⁴²

Consequently, the Austro-German relations were at an absolute low and two particular terror attacks in the middle of June 1933 then finally induced the Austrian government to take severe action: after an assassination attempt on *Heimwehr* leader Richard Steidle on 11th June 1933 and a grenade attack on a Christian-German gymnastics club on June the 19th 1933¹⁴³, the Austrofascist regime decided to ban the National Socialist Party and its suborganisations on 19th June 1933.¹⁴⁴

Already some days earlier, house searches and arrests had been carried out throughout Austria and over a thousand National Socialists had been expelled to Germany – among them, also several leading officials such as Theodor Habicht (on the 13th of June).¹⁴⁵ Other leading officials and many ordinary

¹⁴⁰ Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 12.; Botz, ‘Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic’, p. 155.; Rothländer, p. 330.

¹⁴¹ Original quote: „1000-Mark-Sperre um „Zusammenbruch der Regierung Dollfuß“ herbeizuführen, um Neuwahlen zu erzwingen, die zur „innere(n) Gleichschaltung Österreichs“ führen mußten“ Adolf Hitler quoted according to Dieter A. Binder, ‘Alte Träume und neue Methoden. Das deutsch-österreichische Verhältnis als Produkt aggressiven Revisionismus von 1933 bis 1938’, in *Ungleiche Partner? Österreich und Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jh.*, ed. by Rolf Gehler, Michael; Schmidt, Rainer F.; Brandt, Harm-Hinrich; Steininger (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996), pp. 497–512 (p. 498).

¹⁴² Original quote: „... dass diese Terrorkampagne in ein umfassendes Konzept Hitlers und seiner Beauftragten eingebunden war, das neben der exzessiven Gewaltanwendung und einer das ganze Land erfassenden Propagandakampagne massiven politischen und wirtschaftlichen Druck umfasste.“ Wolfgang Neugebauer, ‘Die Anfänge des NS-Terrorismus in Österreich - Wurzeln, Motive, politische Hintergründe’, in *Österreich 1934. Vorgeschichte - Ereignisse - Wirkungen*, ed. by Günther Scheffbeck (Vienna/Munich: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2004), pp. 70–77 (p. 76).

¹⁴³ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 215–219.; Michael E. Holzmann, ‘... und steht die Legion auf dem ihr zugewiesenen Posten’. *Die Österreichische Legion als Instrument früher NS-Aggressionspolitik* (Berlin: LIT, 2018), p. 78.; Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes, pp. 275f.; Wohnout, ‘Dreieck der Gewalt. Etappen des nationalsozialistischen Terrors in Österreich 1932–1934’, p. 84.

Botz erroneously dates the grenade attack to the 19th of July, not June, which seems to have been copied by other historians. Kriebbaum, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, p. 695.

¹⁴⁴ Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, pp. 12f.

To be precise, one should mention that due to legal specifics the Austrofascists did not implement a ban of the party itself, but only a ban of activities for the benefit of the party – which in fact entailed very similar consequences though. Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 21.; Garscha, p. 100.

¹⁴⁵ Carsten, p. 183.; Garscha, p. 105.; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 108.

members (particular young and mobile ones) fled to Germany for the time being and often joined the *Österreichische Legion*¹⁴⁶, a military formation of Austrian National Socialists based in Bavaria whose deployment was a permanent threat to the Austrian regime. In total, Botz estimates the stunning number of over 10.000 (at least temporary) Austrian Nazi exiles in Germany.¹⁴⁷ The ban of the party and the accompanying measures therefore meant a huge blow for the Nazi movement.¹⁴⁸ As a first reaction to the changed circumstances, the *Landesleitung* relocated its headquarters from Linz to Munich.¹⁴⁹

Besides frequent rumours and threats of an imminent ban, the Austrian party leaders were nevertheless widely caught off guard by its imposition.¹⁵⁰ The Austrian NSDAP thus rapidly and partly hastily tried to transform its structures into an underground organisation and pursued a new two-fold strategy.

First, the movement professionalised and adapted its terrorist structures in order to keep up the pressure on the government¹⁵¹, despite the arrest, expulsion and flight of so many Nazi members. To make up for the missing manpower, the Nazis switched to a more selective form of terror: “*systemic bomb terror*”. According to Botz, “[d]uring the months of impending illegality and also after the NSDAP had been proscribed as a party, this particular form of violence replaced the other most frequent one so far, i.e. clashes between paramilitarily organised private armies.”¹⁵² Intensified bomb terror thus now basically fully replaced the former street or “collision terror” – “*Zusammenstoß-Terror*”¹⁵³, as Gerhard Botz called it in his influential book on political violence in the First Republic. In this way, the focus further shifted from the ostentatious propaganda rallies and mass brawls of the earlier period, with the SA as main protagonist, to stealthy, impactful and lethal terror attacks and assassinations, now in many cases carried out by SS commandos.¹⁵⁴ Hence, this strategy shift is connected to the intensifying struggle for power between Nazism’s two major armed organisations, which will repeatedly be of importance in the following.

¹⁴⁶ =Austrian legion

Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, p. 276.; Schafranek, *Söldner für den Anschluss. Die Österreichische Legion 1933-1938*, pp. 76f.

¹⁴⁷ Botz, ‘The Changing Patterns of Social Support for Austrian National Socialism (1918-1945)’, p. 215.; Bauer, ‘Arbeiterpartei? Zur Sozialstruktur der illegalen NSDAP in Österreich.’, pp. 262, 266.; Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 21.

¹⁴⁸ Blatnik, pp. 125–127.

¹⁴⁹ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 21.; Garscha, p. 105.

¹⁵⁰ Blatnik, pp. 125–127.; Dostal, pp. 43f.; Jagschitz, ‘Illegale Bewegungen während der Ständischen Ära 1933-1938.’, p. 156.; Rothländer, p. 331.

¹⁵¹ Garscha, pp. 104–106.; Rothländer, p. 377.

¹⁵² Botz, ‘Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic’, p. 143.

¹⁵³ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, p. 111.

¹⁵⁴ Botz, ‘Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic’, pp. 143, 153f.; Rothländer, p. 18.; Schafranek, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934.*, pp. 83–85.

In any case, after a few months of restructuring after the ban, Nazi terrorism in particular intensified again with a major terror wave around the turn of the year 1933/1934.¹⁵⁵

Secondly, the Nazi movement intensified its intelligence activities and the covert endeavours for the infiltration of Austrian authorities and organisations of the regime.¹⁵⁶ It also professionalised its intelligence structures to increase their resilience against the intensifying prosecution by the regime. Pauley concludes that “[s]pies for the Nazi movement were scattered throughout the entire Austrian bureaucracy. Secretaries to state ministers, assistants to police commissioners, underlings in Jewish-owned concerns, employees of regular news agencies, and so forth, were often dedicated Nazis who would carry what they had heard or read to central espionage offices, which in turn relayed the information to Germany.”¹⁵⁷

For this infiltration offensive, the intelligence service of the *Landesleitung* played a particularly important role. It was set up shortly after the party ban and established, maintained and connected a vast network of informants, agents and contributors that were covertly operating in various key institutions of the Austrian state – the jurisdiction, the security forces in both police and army, several governmental departments and ministries and even the Chancellor’s Office.

Besides that, the National Socialists established front organisations in the forms of sports and gymnastic clubs, choirs, alpinist associations and many more and took over other existing organisations – such as the pan-German society *Deutscher Klub*¹⁵⁸. These organisations now functioned as bases and vehicles of its underground activities, the smuggling of weapons and in particular the gathering and transmission of intelligence.¹⁵⁹

These countless links to both governmental and non-governmental institutions demonstrate the extensive National Socialist infiltration of Austrian institutions which was also essential for the preparations of the July coup. This attempt for a violent takeover can be regarded as preliminary climax of the persisting conflict between the Austrian Nazi movement and the Austrofascist regime which will be discussed in detail in the next and a later chapter (>>III.4.2.4.)

¹⁵⁵ Dostal, p. 47.; Garscha, pp. 104–106.

¹⁵⁶ Such as the “Fatherland’s Front” (*Vaterländische Front*), the *Heimwehren* or the “Voluntary Labour Service” (*Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst*). Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 23f.; Blatnik, pp. 149–151.; Jagschitz, ‘Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten’, pp. 243f.

¹⁵⁷ Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 142.

¹⁵⁸ See chapter „Der Deutsche Klub als NS-Refugium im Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime in Linda Erker, Andreas Huber, and Klaus Taschwer, ‘Von der „Pflegestätte nationalsozialistischer Opposition“ zur „äußerst bedrohlichen Nebenregierung“. Der Deutsche Klub vor und nach dem „Anschluss“ 1938’, *Zeitgeschichte* 2, 44 (2017), 78–97 (pp. 83–86). Dostal, pp. 32f.; Voithofer, p. 328.

¹⁵⁹ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 23f.; Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 13.; Blatnik, pp. 135, 139f., 142, 145.

2. Austrofascism and Austrian National Socialism

In the following, I want to take a short step back to situate the relations between Austrofascist regime and Austrian National Socialism in the contemporary political and economic environment.

As we have already heard, the last years of the First Austrian Republic – that historians normally end with Dollfuß' dictatorial shift in the years 1933 and 1934 – for most parts were a time of political turmoil, economic crisis and great ideological conflicts. Winfried Garscha and Gerhard Botz even go as far as to refer to these years as "*latent civil war*"¹⁶⁰, due to their conflict-ridden and violent daily reality. While these and the following remarks of course are a gross oversimplification and cannot do these turbulent and complex years justice, they are nevertheless essential to understand the difficult political, social, diplomatic and economic circumstances that first facilitated Austria's transition into an uncompleted imitation of Mussolini's fascist model in Italy¹⁶¹ and subsequently contributed to the country's gradual capitulation to the ideological and military persuasion that Nazism exerted – both in the form of internal pressure from the Austrian Nazi movement and in the form of economic and diplomatic pressure from Nazi Germany.¹⁶² This attested capitulation also manifested itself in certain antidemocratic decisions the conservative-fascist regime itself made. These remarks illustrate how the resilience against Nazi Germany's violent and non-violent attacks on Austria's status as independent state had for years been drained by huge internal chasms. They show how Nazism developed a self-generating dynamism which was strong enough to overpower any stabilising elements within society.¹⁶³ In doing so, some insight into the ambivalent and momentous relation between ruling Austrofascism and oppositional Austrian National Socialism should be provided.

First and foremost, the political and economic differences between Social Democrats and Conservatives over time had turned into an irreconcilable and hostile antagonism, with "*a general*

¹⁶⁰ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 161–227.; Botz, 'Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic', p. 142.; Garscha, p. 104.

¹⁶¹ Michael Gehler, 'Zwischen allen Stühlen - Österreichs Außenpolitik 1918-1938', in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 117–128 (pp. 121f.); Payne, p. 21.

Some historians, such as Kurt Bauer, tend to assess the fascist character of the Dollfuß' rulership as mere result of Mussolini's influence and demands. However, in my opinion this neglects the inherent drive to fascism that already in the 1920s intensified in parts of the Austrian conservative camp, in particular the *Heimwehren*. The Austrofascists thus did not need to be encouraged by anyone, neither from Germany nor from Italy, to establish an authoritarian dictatorship. The sad and outraging truth is that Austrian conservatives at one point in history willingly led the country into fascism.

Cf. Kurt Bauer, 'Dollfuß, Engelbert - Biographische Anmerkungen zu einer umstrittenen Persönlichkeit', in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 365–369 (p. 368).

For a more balanced assessment see Klingenstein, pp. 6f., 9–11.; Tálos and Manoschek, 'Zum Konstituierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus', pp. 21–23.

¹⁶² Botz, 'Introduction', p. 193. See also Stourzh.

¹⁶³ Botz, 'Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic', pp. 141f.

exacerbation of the climate of violence”¹⁶⁴. Eventually, frequent violent clashes between the armed organisations of the two camps culminated in the civil war-like fights of February 1934.¹⁶⁵

Consequently, the foundation for political understanding and constructive cooperation was widely shattered and the huge economic, social and political challenge of the transformation of Austria from a part of the Habsburg Empire to a small independent state was but inadequately met.¹⁶⁶

The gradually escalating conflict between the two major political forces in Austria was particularly aggravated by the authoritarian, antidemocratic turn that the ruling Austrofascist regime took. In the years 1933 and 1934 the coalition around Dollfuß step by step abolished the democratic principles on which the First Austrian Republic was built upon and established a single-party dictatorship.¹⁶⁷

As a result of the Austrofascists’ fight against any oppositional force, they brought about the catastrophically irreversible fragmentation of the Social Democratic camp. With the ban of the Social Democratic (in February 1934) and Communist (in May 1933) parties¹⁶⁸ and the destruction of the Republican Defence League (ban in March 1933/military defeat in February 1934), the Austrofascists not only rid themselves of a severe threat to their dictatorial rule, but thereby also willingly eliminated the most potent, determined and well networked forces in the internal and external struggle against Nazism.¹⁶⁹

Secondly, the aforementioned growing influence and frequent terror attacks of the Austrian Nazi movement and the related offensives from Nazi Germany constantly aggravated the conflict between National Socialists and the ruling conservative-fascist coalition. This prevented the country from ever coming to rest and recover from the wounds of the mentioned internal struggle and the grave economic crisis which the collapse of the *Creditanstalt* and the Great Depression had brought about.

¹⁶⁴ Botz, ‘Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic’, p. 151.

¹⁶⁵ Ableitinger, pp. 24–32.; Botz, ‘Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic’, pp. 151, 158.; Lauridsen, p. 85.

¹⁶⁶ Rath, John; Schum, p. 249.; Sandgruber, pp. 239f.

¹⁶⁷ This will be further elaborated in chapter III.5. on the legal development in these years.

Ableitinger, pp. 34f.; Gerhard Botz, ‘The Short- and Long-Term Effects of the Authoritarian Regime and of Nazism in Austria: The Burden of a “Second Dictatorship”’, *Historical Social Research Supplement*, 28 (2016), 191–213 (p. 192).; Neugebauer, ‘Repressionsapparat und -Maßnahmen 1933 - 1938’, pp. 299–307.

¹⁶⁸ For an overview of the history of the Austrian Social Democratic (Worker’s) Party in Austrofascism and in particular on the state of research see Paul Dvorak, ‘Die Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie 1930-1938. Ein Forschungsüberblick’, in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Lucile Wenninger, Florian; Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 17–40.

For an overview of the Austrian Communist Party see Manfred Mugrauer, ‘Die KPÖ im Kampf gegen die austrofascistische Diktatur’, in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Lucile Wenninger, Florian; Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 41–68.

¹⁶⁹ Neugebauer, ‘Repressionsapparat und -Maßnahmen 1933 - 1938’, p. 299.; Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 275, 289.; Rothländer, p. 343, 346.; Pia Schöllnberger, ‘Wöllersdorf - Die Anfänge’, in *Jahrbuch 2010*, ed. by Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (Vienna, 2010), pp. 190–211 (pp. 210f.).

It is important to note that throughout the 1930s, the relations between National Socialists and Austrofascists vacillated between rapprochement and attempts at conciliation on the one hand and confrontation and de facto covert and open war on the other hand. Talks about a settlement and even potential cooperation and coalitions between high officials of both sides were repeatedly held, up until the very week of the July coup. Examples include the talks between Habicht and Dollfuß in May 1933 about a potential National Socialist joining of Dollfuß' government¹⁷⁰, very similar talks in September the same year¹⁷¹ and various soundings between both Fey and Starhemberg and high National Socialist officials¹⁷² – as will be elaborated in chapter III.4.3.1.

In addition, in certain points an explicit ideological closeness existed between Austrofascism and Nazism. Besides the already mentioned anti-Marxist and antidemocratic positions, both also featured misogynist and (in the case of Nazism only partly) anti-modernist, reactionary convictions.¹⁷³ Via reforms such as the *“Doppelverdienerverordnung”*¹⁷⁴ and even parts of the new May constitution, women were reduced to their role as mothers and carers and were largely excluded from both the political sphere and the labour market.¹⁷⁵ According to Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann's interesting analysis on the role of women and gender relations in the Austrofascist system, Austrofascism thus advocated for a *“reformulation of gender relations at the expense of women”*¹⁷⁶.

In between these two mentioned poles of attempted cooperation and ideological closeness on the one hand and fierce opposition and violent clashes on the other hand, with the rise of Austrian Nazism a strong political rivalry emerged as well.

¹⁷⁰ Carsten, p. 183.

¹⁷¹ Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, p. 60.

¹⁷² Jagschitz, 'Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten', p. 242; Schafranek, *Söldner für den Anschluss. Die Österreichische Legion 1933-1938*, pp. 151, 333, f.n. 848.

¹⁷³ Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann, 'Der "Christliche Ständestaat" als Männerstaat?', in *Austrofascismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 254–280 (pp. 254–256, 259, 277).; Bauer, 'Dollfuß, Engelbert - Biographische Anmerkungen zu einer umstrittenen Persönlichkeit', p. 368.; Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 11f., 200.; Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', pp. 230–232.; Johanna Gehmacher, 'Kein Historikerinnenstreit. Fragen einer frauen- und geschlechtergeschichtlichen Erforschung des Nationalsozialismus in Österreich', *Zeitgeschichte*, 22.3/4 (1995), 109–23 (pp. 114f.); Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, pp. 101f.; Karin M. Schmidlechner, 'Frauen in Österreich Zwischen 1918 und 1938', in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 313–19 (pp. 213–15).

Karin Stögner also did an interesting analysis on similarities between antisemitism and anti-feminism. Karin Stögner, 'Über Einige Gemeinsamkeiten von Antisemitismus und Antifeminismus', in *Jahrbuch 2005*, ed. by Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (Vienna, 2005), pp. 38–51.

¹⁷⁴ ~Provision on double-income earners

¹⁷⁵ Bandhauer-Schöffmann, pp. 254, 257–59, 277f.; Gabriella Hauch, 'Vom Androzentrismus in der Geschichtsschreibung. Geschlecht und Politik im autoritären christlichen Ständestaat/"Austrofascismus" (1933/34-1938)', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 351–380 (p. 352-354).; Schmidlechner, pp. 313–315.

¹⁷⁶ Original quote: „eine zu Lasten von Frauen gehende Reformulierung des Geschlechterverhältnisses“. Bandhauer-Schöffmann, p. 258.

Especially from 1932 on, this inner-right-wing rivalry for radical and fascist-leaning supporters between the *Heimwehr* and other radical parts of the Austrofascist regime and the Nazi movement, particularly the SA, strongly intensified. Hence, the struggle against Nazism not only had to be fought against an external enemy in Hitler Germany, but particularly against the bloody terror, cunning infiltration and radical ideological persuasiveness of a fifth column in form of the Austrian Nazi movement – which of course was heavily supported by Hitler.¹⁷⁷ As elaborated earlier, this rise of the Nazi movement in both Germany and Austria was strongly aided by the catastrophic economic crisis. The conflict between Austrofascists and Austrian Nazis was thus transformed into a fight for ideological hegemony with the pivotal question of who could bring back stability, order and economic prosperity.

One questionable Austrofascist strategy to counter the violently antidemocratic radicalism of the Nazis was the aggressive abolition of democratic principles on their own behalf. With introducing partly Nazi-like policies, the Austrofascists pursued a two-fold strategy. They first and foremost intended to weaken and suppress any political opposition that could threaten their dictatorship, which after the decisive civil war of February 1934 and the suppression of the Social Democrats seemed largely achieved. Secondly, they aimed at maintaining and regaining support among Austrians who were disillusioned with democracy and prevent them from joining the Nazi movement – Nazism should be “überhitlert”, “overhitlered”, to quote a well-known expression.¹⁷⁸ However, it is hard to assess to which extent this claim is not only a retrospective excuse for the Austrofascist transition into authoritarianism – an excuse that mainly diverts from the fascist ambitions among Austrian Conservatives that for years had been kindled widely independent from Nazism.¹⁷⁹

Heimwehr

As ideological and military spearhead of this antidemocratic development the *Heimwehr* played a pivotal although ambivalent role in this strategy, especially due to an ideology that in several key aspects was similar to Nazism. At this point, it should be emphasised that political relations at that time often featured a certain ambivalent, volatile and dynamic character with quickly changing,

¹⁷⁷ Garscha, pp. 104, 107, 118.; Tálos and Neugebauer, pp. 411f.

¹⁷⁸ Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, p. 610.

¹⁷⁹ Rothländer, p. 336.; Franz Schausberger, ‘Ignaz Seipel im Spannungsfeld zwischen Gott und Staat’, in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 353–63 (pp. 354–56).; Georg-Hans Schmit, ‘“Im Namen Gottes, des Allmächtigen”: Christlich - Deutsch - Berufsständisch. Ausgewählte Aspekte über den Stand und die Perspektiven der Forschung über das Christlichsoziale Lager in den Jahren 1929 bis 1938’, in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 141–58 (p. 141).

adaptable political tactics in relations to others as a result – this is true for a variety of constellations, be it Austrofascist – National Socialist relations, relations between *Heimwehr* and Nazism respectively *Heimwehr* and regime or individuals' relations to political movements as well, as will be emphasised in later remarks on e.g. the *Heimwehr* leaders Starhemberg and Fey.

The *Heimwehr* was a union of various smaller and regional paramilitary, right-wing formations throughout Austria. Therefore, the plural usage in *Heimwehren* is common as well and in a way might actually be more accurate in so far as it better emphasises the internal federalist structure and diversity of the organisation and its sub-divisions.

Just as the SA¹⁸⁰, the *Heimwehren* essentially identified themselves as anti-left force, as fighters “against the disintegration of our people by the Marxist class warfare”¹⁸¹, to quote their most well-known political manifestation, the “Korneuburg Oath” (*Korneuburger Eid*) from May 1930. Politically, they demanded a radical antidemocratic transformation of Austria and “rejected the Western democratic parliamentarianism and the party state”¹⁸². Beyond these two key ideological positions – anti-Marxism and anti-parliamentarism¹⁸³ – the *Heimwehr's* political agenda was in a way characterised by a lack of agenda, a certain ideological vagueness and politically pluralistic heterogeneity.¹⁸⁴ This vagueness and ideological flexibility enabled it to serve as oppositional melting pot for a wide range of people who were, in one way or another, discontented with the circumstances and the ruling system – in doing so, it could garner about 300.000 members at its peak in 1929.¹⁸⁵ This oppositional character, the *Heimwehr's* internal heterogeneity and the internal struggle between its different camps and leaders are essential for the understanding of the ambivalence of both its role in the Austrofascist regime and its relation to Nazism. In fact, one result of its strong inner diversity were non-stop disputes for its state-wide leadership among the several regional leaders (such as, inter alia, Starhemberg, Fey, Pfrimer and Steidle) and their respective camps.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁰ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, p. 190.

¹⁸¹ Original quote: „Wir kämpfen gegen die Zersetzung unseres Volkes durch den marxistischen Klassenkampf und liberal-kapitalistische Wirtschaftsgestaltung.“ The Korneuburg Oath from the 18th of May 1930 quoted according to Mark Allinson, *Germany and Austria since 1814* (London / New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 77.

¹⁸² Original quote: „Wir verwerfen den westlichen demokratischen Parlamentarismus und den Parteienstaat!“ Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ableitinger, p. 27.; Lauridsen, pp. 182f.; Moll, ‘Das nationale Lager’, pp. 187f.

¹⁸⁴ Lauridsen mentions the following key ideological ideas: antisocialism (pp. 182f.), anti-parliamentarism (pp. 183-186), antisemitism (pp. 186-188), militarism (p. 188) and “the corporatist concept” (pp. 189-194). Lauridsen, pp. 180-195.

For a short overview of the *Heimwehr's* ideology also see Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 587-595.

¹⁸⁵ Ableitinger, p. 26.; Jedlicka, *Vom alten zum neuen Österreich. Fallstudien zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 1900-1975.*, p. 208.; Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 551-555.; Moll, ‘Das nationale Lager’, pp. 187f.; Tálos and Manoschek, ‘Zum Konstitutierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus’, pp. 7f.

¹⁸⁶ Lauridsen, pp. 206-209.; Martin Moll, ‘>>Letzten Endes war der Steirische Heimatschutz sehr anständig und ordentlich<<. Das Aufgehen des Steirischen Heimatschutzes in der NSDAP: Von der Konfrontation zur Kooperation’, in *Vom NS-Verbot zum >>Anschluss<<. Steirische Nationalsozialisten 1933-1938*, ed. by Hans Schafranek and Herbert Blatnik (Vienna: Czernin, 2015), pp. 13-41 (pp. 17-19, 22).

The strongest camp within the *Heimwehren* was throughout its existence the catholic-clerical one for which religion was an essential part of the political program.¹⁸⁷ However, besides that there was also a strong pan-German camp – in particular in Styria and Carinthia – that generally saw religion rather reserved or partly even hostile. Ideologically, this part of the *Heimwehr* was closest to Nazism and from the beginning of the 1930s on gradually and increasingly defected to the Austrian Nazi movement.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, within the *Heimwehr* existed a legitimist camp as well which strived for a reestablishment of the Habsburg Monarchy, in this way further illustrating this claimed heterogeneity.¹⁸⁹

Despite the unambiguous contempt for parliamentary democracy, which was one of the few ideological brackets that all different camps shared, in fall 1930 the *Heimwehren* established a political arm – the *Heimatblock* – and on 7th October 1930 it joined the short-lived coalition of chancellor Vaugoin (Christian Social Party) for the first time. This decision was largely controversial and by far not supported by all parts of the *Heimwehr*. Several *Heimwehr* divisions, such as the Viennese *Heimwehr* under Emil Fey and the Lower Austrian *Heimwehr* under Julius Raab (the future chancellor of the Second Austrian Republic (1953-1961)), refused to participate and entered electoral alliances with the Christian Social Party instead.¹⁹⁰

In spring 1932, the *Heimatblock* joined government again – inter alia to avoid new elections that would most definitely have brought a massive victory for the NSDAP – and supported Engelbert Dollfuß' coalition consisting of the Christian Social Party, the *Heimatblock* and the *Landbund*, a small right-wing farmer party.¹⁹¹

A few words on this enormously influential coalition seem necessary: It is important to note here that the abolition of democracy in Austria and its way into an authoritarian dictatorship was promoted by a very complex, diverse and fragile coalition, with hugely differing intentions, strategies and agendas and thus an enormous inner strife. This coalition was led by Engelbert Dollfuß and based upon a

¹⁸⁷ Botz, 'Introduction', p. 98.

¹⁸⁸ Moll, '>>Letzten Endes war der Steirische Heimatschutz sehr anständig und ordentlich<<'. Das Aufgehen des Steirischen Heimatschutzes in der NSDAP: Von der Konfrontation zur Kooperation', pp. 17f., 22.; Bruce F. Pauley, 'Nazis and Heimwehr Fascists: The Struggle for Supremacy in Austria, 1918-1938', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*. (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 226–238 (p. 226).

¹⁸⁹ Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 175f., 178f.; Moll, 'Das nationale Lager', p. 113.; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, pp. 101f.; Johannes Thaler, 'Legitimus. Ein unterschätzter Baustein des autoritären Österreich', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 69–86 (p. 80). Legitimist demands were in particular supported by members of the former nobility. In general, former k.u.k. elites, such as former aristocrats and officers of the Habsburg army, were very influential among the Heimwehren and in particular made up a substantial part of the Heimwehr's higher ranks. Ableitinger, p. 27.; Pauley, 'Nazis and Heimwehr Fascists: The Struggle for Supremacy in Austria, 1918-1938', p. 27.; Thaler, p. 80.

¹⁹⁰ Ableitinger, pp. 29f.; Scheuch, pp. 27f.; Walterskirchen, 'Ernst Rüdiger Fürst Starhemberg als ambivalenter politischer Akteur', p. 373.; Gudula Walterskirchen, *Starhemberg. Oder die Spuren der >>30er Jahre<<* (Vienna: Amalthea Signum, 2002), pp. 63, 66f.

¹⁹¹ Ableitinger, p. 31.

delicate balance between different interests and interest groups – from the Christian Social Party¹⁹² and its somehow opportunistic-pragmatic power policy to the contradicting economic interests of major stakeholders (such as the peasantry and the entrepreneurship)¹⁹³, from the strong influence of Catholic beliefs and the Catholic Church to the fascist radicalism of the *Heimwehr* movement, from monarchists and former *k.u.k.* elites¹⁹⁴ to violently antisemitic German nationals with hardly any distinction to National Socialists.¹⁹⁵

With the implementation of the Fatherland's Front in May 1933, that partly incorporated some relevant movements, such as the *Heimwehr*, and replaced others, such as the political parties in the Christian Social Party and the *Heimatblock*, the regime tried to find a balancing and unifying element and to centralise power – with mixed results.¹⁹⁶

Especially the relationship between the *Heimwehren* as the proto-fascist paramilitary organisation of this alliance and its partly more moderate exponents always was and remained a turbulent and ambivalent one, defined and shaped by the *Heimwehren's* contradicting positions of 1. cooperation, 2. competition and 3. confrontation of the ruling system, that I want to elaborate shortly in the following.

First of all, the *Heimwehr* was one of the very foundations of the takeover and rule of the Austrofascist system. Over years, it had undermined the parliamentary-democratic system and assailed and disrupted the political opposition. In doing so it played a key role in creating a chaotic-hostile, violent and threatening atmosphere on the streets and in the political arena – an atmosphere which in the end made Dollfuß' coup beginning in March 1933 seem acceptable or even desirable to sufficient parts of the country's elites and citizens.

Apart from that, its political arm, the *Heimatblock*, provided Dollfuß with an overall though fragile majority (of just one seat!¹⁹⁷) in Parliament. Moreover, by including the popular *Heimwehr* in the

¹⁹² For an analysis on the Christian Social party and the research on it see Schmit.

¹⁹³ For an analysis of Austrofascist economic policies see Senft.

¹⁹⁴ Moll, '„>Letzten Endes war der Steirische Heimatschutz sehr anständig und ordentlich<<. Das Aufgehen des Steirischen Heimatschutzes in der NSDAP: Von der Konfrontation zur Kooperation', p. 23.

¹⁹⁵ Botz, 'Introduction', pp. 197f.; Bracher, p. 496.; Hanisch, pp. 69f.; Jedlicka, Vom alten zum neuen Österreich. Fallstudien zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 1900-1975., pp. 217f.; Königseder, pp. 59f., 62f.; Robert Kriechbaumer, 'Die Christlichsoziale Partei 1918 bis 1933/34', in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 137–150 (pp. 137f.).

¹⁹⁶ Scheuch, pp. 71f., 224.; Emmerich Tálos and Walter Manoschek, 'Aspekte der politischen Struktur des Austrofascismus: (Verfassungs-)Rechtlicher Rahmen - Politische Wirklichkeit - Akteure', in *Austrofascismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 124–60 (pp. 145f., 151, 158f.).

Due to time and space restrictions, the Fatherland's Front is only dealt with en passant in this thesis. For a short overview of this organisation see Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 610–655.

¹⁹⁷ Bauer, 'Dollfuß, Engelbert - Biographische Anmerkungen zu einer umstrittenen Persönlichkeit', p. 367.; Tálos and Manoschek, 'Zum Konstitutierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus', p. 15.

coalition, Dollfuß, in addition, tried to ensure a substantial degree of support among the population. (=cooperation)

Secondly: however, within this heterogeneous coalition the *Heimwehren* were a permanent source of unrest.¹⁹⁸ As already expounded, the *Heimwehr* became popular as radical and pronouncedly oppositional alternative to the major parties and portrayed itself in stark antagonism to the ruling system. Its participation in Dollfuß' government therefore seemed like a deception to parts of its electorate which as a result joined the National Socialists in even greater numbers than before. In order to counter this, the *Heimwehr* incessantly advocated for an even more radical, fascist-like political course of the government – for example, the constitutionally highly problematic preventive detention was to a large extent a request of the *Heimwehren* and Emil Fey.¹⁹⁹

Hence, the *Heimwehren* have to be understood not only as Dollfuß' coalition partner, but also as inner-governmental opposition and explicit political rival of his Christian Social party. With this ambiguous position towards and strong influence on the regime, they without a doubt became a crucial driving force behind Austria's gradual transition into an authoritarian dictatorship. (=competition)

Thirdly, the *Heimwehren* were also one of the biggest threats to the ruling system – bizarre as this may sound, as in principle they were an essential part of it themselves. Nonetheless, throughout the period of Austrofascist rule, the *Heimwehr's* sense of revolutionary, radical and violent drive towards fascism repeatedly brought the *Heimwehren* (or to be more precise: the more radical fractions of the *Heimwehren*) in overt opposition to the ruling system that they themselves belonged to. For the fiercely anti-Marxist and antidemocratic *Heimwehren*, the policies and orientation of the government was never radical enough. Consequently, a *Heimwehr* takeover was a realistic scenario all through its period of existence and was, in fact, attempted with the so-called "Pfrimer-Putsch" in September 1931 – which failed miserably though.

However, the threat of a putsch remained and with it the *Heimwehr* radicals continued to put constant pressure on the ruling government that consequently aimed to satisfy their main demands in order to keep them on board, in line and the government intact. Especially in the early period of Dollfuß' rule and in critical moments later on – such as the February uprisings – the regime strongly depended on the *Heimwehren* which were thus granted major political positions, such as the office of the vice chancellor or, widely irresponsibly, the security agendas.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Bracher, p. 496.

¹⁹⁹ Neugebauer, pp. 313–315.; Scheuch, pp. 66–70.; Schölnberger, pp. 191, 194, 196f.

²⁰⁰ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, p. 143, 186.; Jedlicka, *Vom alten zum neuen Österreich. Fallstudien zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 1900-1975.*, p. 281.

Besides their demands for a more radical course, several divisions of the *Heimwehren* were affiliated with the German national camp as well as stated above. Hence, they opposed Dollfuß' indeed inconsistent path in the "national question" as he promoted the Austrian belonging to the German "*Volksgemeinschaft*" but at the same time insisted on Austria's national independence from the German "Third Reich" – a momentous ideological dead end.²⁰¹

Another major point of conflict between government and *Heimwehren* was the struggle about supremacy over the armed forces of the Austrofascist regime – both the official forces in the army (the *Bundesheer*) and the police and the informal ones in the various paramilitary troops and organisations. The *Heimwehr* was by far the most influential one among the latter and due to its political positions (in particular in the ministry for security agendas) had also gained extensive influence over army and police. Botz even goes as far as identifying a "*merging complex of Heimwehr fascism and state executive*"²⁰² Over time, this influence became too large for the Christian Social Party and it induced the gradual disempowerment of the *Heimwehr*, as mentioned earlier inter alia with the introduction of the Fatherland's Front that should establish a mass organisation in which the *Heimwehr* was meant to be only of secondary importance.²⁰³

In addition, referring to my previous argument, parts of the *Heimwehren* increasingly drifted towards and aligned with Nazism. This further alienated the *Heimwehren* from the ruling government which, in contrast, had to continually intensify its efforts in the ever-escalating fight against Nazism. As a result, sections of the *Heimwehren* ultimately defected to the National Socialists, such as the *Steirischer Heimatschutz*²⁰⁴ (=confrontation)

As noted earlier, some of the *Heimwehr's* and Austrofascism's core ideological positions were strikingly close to Nazism which is an important part of the explanation on why the *Heimwehr* in particular and the whole regime in general were that susceptible to National Socialist persuasion.²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ Bertolaso, pp. 43f., 47f.; Botz, 'The Short- and Long-Term Effects of the Authoritarian Regime and of Nazism in Austria: The Burden of a "Second Dictatorship"', p. 194.; Haas, pp. 28f. See also chapter 4.4. on the Austria ideology of the Austrofascists in Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 171–181.; Anton Staudinger, 'Zur "Österreich"-Ideologie des Ständestaates', in *Das Juliabkommen von 1936. Vorgeschichte, Hintergründe und Folgen. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 10. und 11. Juni 1976*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1977), pp. 198–240 (pp. 198–201, 238–240).; Stourzh, pp. 331–334.

²⁰² Original quote: „verschmelzender Komplex von Heimwehrafaschismus und staatlicher Exekutive". Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, p. 186.

²⁰³ Ableitinger, pp. 34f.; Jedlicka, *Vom alten zum neuen Österreich. Fallstudien zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 1900-1975.*, p. 271.; Tálos and Manoschek, 'Zum Konstituierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus', pp. 7f.; Tálos and Manoschek, 'Aspekte der politischen Struktur des Austrofascismus: (Verfassungs-)Rechtlicher Rahmen - Politische Wirklichkeit - Akteure', pp. 145, 151f., 154–157.

²⁰⁴ ~"Styrian Home Guard"

²⁰⁵ Klingenstein, pp. 6–8, 10f.

Just as Nazism, the *Heimwehr* and the conservative-fascist regime at large promoted an authoritarian, militarist, jingoist-chauvinist and violently anti-Marxist body of thought.²⁰⁶ Both supported key fascist conceptions such as the “*Führerprinzip*” (leader principle)²⁰⁷ or the idea of the “*Volksgemeinschaft*” as self-contained and exclusionary single entity. According to (not only) the *Heimwehr*’s belief, Austrians were constructed as part of the “*Deutsche Volksgemeinschaft*”²⁰⁸ as well which saw them in line with the German national views that the Nazis promoted. Furthermore, this “*Volksgemeinschaft*” was imagined as “natural” and superior body, with the collectivist belief of its primacy over any individual being at the cornerstone of the *Heimwehr*’s worldview.²⁰⁹

These characteristics doubtlessly represent distinctive similarities to Nazism and emphasise the shared roots and ideological closeness between the two movements’ ideologies.

In striking consistency with this partially subversive and fascist orientation of the *Heimwehr* movement, its relationship with Nazism has to be described as volatile and repeatedly dubious.

In accordance with the above elaborated positions of the *Heimwehr* towards the ruling regime, interestingly we can again identify the very same three relations between the *Heimwehren* and the Austrian Nazi movement: 1. cooperation, 2. competition and 3. confrontation.

First: Due to the outlined ideological closeness and a common enemy in the left, it is not surprising that in various cases, divisions of the *Heimwehr* and the illegal Nazi movement cooperated or even formed alliances, as in the example of the Styrian *Heimatschutz*.

This can also serve as explanation on why even some of the *Heimwehr*’s highest representatives maintained close contact to the Austrian Nazis and in some instances cooperated with them – as we shall in particular see in the remarks on Ernst Starhemberg and Emil Fey in the chapter on National Socialist networks (III.4.3.1.). (=cooperation)

Secondly: However, this closeness also made conflicts inevitable. The *Heimwehr* with its appeal as an in essence extra-parliamentary and non-democratic, militaristic movement was in intense competition to the Austrian Nazis who could be classified in a similar way. As expounded earlier, the rise of Nazism

²⁰⁶ Nazism’s small national bolshevist wing around the Strassers was soon marginalized and persecuted and thus does not change the bigger picture of the Nazi movement’s radical anti-Marxism.

Broszat, p. 33. See also Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, p. 190.; Botz, ‘Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic’, p. 142.

²⁰⁷ Interestingly, the *Heimwehr*’s federal leader was nevertheless elected – probably mainly due to the federalist structures of the *Heimwehr*. Lauridsen, pp. 443–445.

²⁰⁸ ~German national community

²⁰⁹ Anton Staudinger, ‘Austrofaschistische “Österreich”-Ideologie’, in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 28–52 (pp. 48f.).

at the beginning of the 1930s intensified the movements' competition and led to a strong influx away from the *Heimwehren* and to Nazi organisations such as the SA.

The growing power of the Nazi movement was evident on the streets as well: the National Socialist "*brachial organisations*"²¹⁰ – its violent, paramilitary formations, at that time in particular the SA – increasingly terrorised the streets and to a certain extent replaced the *Heimwehr* as main antagonists of the Social Democrats and their Republican Defence League.²¹¹

For the *Heimwehren*, the Nazi movement hence was not only growing competition at the ballot box, but in addition a powerful rival in the struggle for fighters in paramilitary formations. The National Socialists thus did not just entice away voters but at the same time reduced the *Heimwehr's* military potential as well on which its political clout was largely based upon. The *Heimwehr's* decline in both members and political relevance that can be observed from around 1930 on is hence strongly linked to the largely simultaneous rise of the Nazi movement.²¹² (=competition)

Thirdly: As a result, it is only logical that the existing rivalry between *Heimwehr* and Nazi organisations – respectively between Austrofascism and Nazism in the bigger picture – also led to violent clashes between the armed forces of the two sides²¹³ culminating in several National Socialist assassination attempts at *Heimwehr* leaders.²¹⁴ Basically all major *Heimwehr* leaders sooner or later became target of a National Socialist plot or actual attack: Steidle was severely wounded on 11th June 1933²¹⁵, for Fey plans existed, inter alia, in summer 1933²¹⁶ and for Starhemberg in February 1934.²¹⁷ Apart from that, National Socialist infiltration of *Heimwehr* structures became a real problem over time as sensitive internal information was transmitted to the Nazi movement on an increasingly large scale.²¹⁸

While there were striking ideological similarities between the two movements (and the two dictatorial systems in general), at least one major distinction has to be addressed: religion. Just as the Austrofascist system as a whole, the *Heimwehren* for the most part were strictly, in a sense even

²¹⁰ Original quote: "*Brachialorganisationen*" – a very accurate term of Rothländer for SA & SS. Rothländer, p. 162.

²¹¹ Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', pp. 273f.

²¹² Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 182–184.

²¹³ See various incidents in Botz' chronicle of acts of political violence between 1918–1934 in Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 259–278.

²¹⁴ Moll, '„>Letzten Endes war der Steirische Heimatschutz sehr anständig und ordentlich<<. Das Aufgehen des Steirischen Heimatschutzes in der NSDAP: Von der Konfrontation zur Kooperation', p. 15.

Also see the listed violent incidents between Heimwehr and National Socialists in Botz' chronicle of political violence in the First Republic: Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 258–279.

²¹⁵ Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', pp. 275f.; Wohnout, 'Dreieck der Gewalt. Etappen des nationalsozialistischen Terrors in Österreich 1932–1934', p. 84.

²¹⁶ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, p. 276.

²¹⁷ Walterskirchen, *Starhemberg. Oder die Spuren der >>30er Jahre<<*, pp. 40f.

²¹⁸ Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904–1945)', p. 233.

violently Catholic – accordingly, Botz describes them as “*the fascist movement of the Catholic segment*”.²¹⁹

In the Korneuburg Oath, the *Heimwehr* members swore “*to know three authorities: the belief in god, one’s own hard will and the word of his leaders*”²²⁰ This strongly distinguished them from the generally areligious and partly even antireligious Nazi movement.²²¹ Consequently, the Nazi followers in Austria were to a considerable rate – clearly above average of the total population – Protestants.²²² In this way, the ideological confrontation between *Heimwehren* and Austrofascism on the one hand and Nazism on the other hand featured a religious, inter-confessional layer as well. (=confrontation) We can therefore conclude that, similarly to the regime’s relationship to the *Heimwehren*, the patterns in *Heimwehr*-Nazi relations ranged from cooperation to competition to confrontation and overt opposition – and as a result of that, so did the relationship between the Austrofascist government around Dollfuß and the Austrian Nazis as a whole.

These rather vague assessments will in the following be further developed and above all exemplified in the remarks on National Socialist network’s among and relations to the *Heimwehren*.²²³

²¹⁹ Botz, ‘Introduction’, p. 198.

²²⁰ Original quote: „*Jeder Kamerad (...) kenne drei Gewalten: den Gottglauben, seinen eigenen harten Willen und das Wort seiner Führer.*“ Korneuburg Oath quoted according to Allinson, p. 77.

²²¹ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 198.; ; Jagschitz, ‘Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten’, pp. 233f.; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 99.; Stanley G. Payne, ‘The Concept of Fascism’, in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*. (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 14–25 (pp. 20f.); Scheuch, p. 71.; Michaela Sohn-Kronthaler, ‘Die Katholische Kirche Als Innenpolitischer Faktor 1918-1938’, in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 151–159 (pp. 151–157); Anton Staudinger, ‘Zur “Österreich”-Ideologie des Ständestaates’, p. 239.

²²² An evaluation of National Socialists in preventive detention showed a rate of around 13% of protestants, compared to only around 4% in the total population. See graph on „Confession of National Socialist preventive detention inmates in comparison to the Austrian population” (*Konfessionszugehörigkeit der NS-Anhaltgeftlinge im Vergleich zur österreichischen Gesamtbevölkerung*) Botz, Bauer, and Meixner, p. 345.; See also Bauer, ‘Arbeiterpartei? Zur Sozialstruktur der illegalen NSDAP in Österreich.’, p. 269.

²²³ See chapter III.4.3.1

3. National Socialist intelligence networks in Austria

In the following, I will provide an overview of the intricate field of National Socialist intelligence in Vienna in order to create an understanding for the structures at work here. I also want to give an impression on the challenges that presented themselves during my research and the inherent restrictions of its results as the chaotic and often dubious interplay between competing organisations further complicated and impeded my understanding of structures that in addition were supposed to remain hidden in the first place.

One of the major conflicts within the Nazi movement is of importance in the context of this thesis as well: the ongoing and smouldering conflict between SA, SS and the political organisation, the NSDAP. This conflict was prevalent on all levels of the organisation, from the small regional groups to the *Gauleitungen* (as can be seen in the failed coup of July 1934) to the highest ranks – which is apparent in the Röhm purge.²²⁴ As a result, it can also be traced in the domain of intelligence and induced the major organisations to establish their own intelligence services, thus creating fragmented and partly chaotic intelligence structures in Austria.

These National Socialist intelligence structures are characterized by a general sense of distrust and competition between different actors, a myriad of competing organisations and unclear and duplicate competences – typical characteristics of the system that functionalists influentially described as “*polycratic rulership*”²²⁵. Consequently, in 1933 Vienna a complex and opaque web of several National Socialist intelligence services and networks was operating, with many-faceted connections between each other that in parts are very hard to penetrate due to their illegal character and moreover is still widely under-researched. One of the very few comprehensive contributions on this field is Christiane Rothländer’s aforementioned study on “The Beginnings of the Viennese SS” from 2012 which, almost exclusively, features a short chapter on the covert intelligence organisations of the Nazi movement in Vienna in the illegal period. Therefore, her findings are one of the main foundations of the following remarks.

Soon after the ban of the party and most of its related organisations on the 19th of June 1933, the now illegal Austrian Nazi movement endeavoured to adapt its intelligence networks to the new circumstances and enable them to resume their tasks. It can be seen as typical of the aforesaid polycratic National Socialist system that each major political organisation, the SA, the SS and the

²²⁴ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 28.

²²⁵ Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933-1944* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2009), p. ix.

NSDAP, maintained its own intelligence service. These three services were definitely also the most important ones within the wide network of intelligence in Vienna that overall was strongly dominated by SA and SS.²²⁶

While the intelligence services of the SS (led by Ludwig Stigler)²²⁷ and the political organisation (led first by Otto Begus and then by Otto Bersch) worked closely together nevertheless²²⁸, the secret service of the SA was rather isolated and became even more so over time as tensions within the Nazi movement and especially between SA and SS grew.²²⁹ As in various other parts of the National Socialist movement, this duplicate form of gathering, processing and transmitting information can barely be called efficient and is generally rather characterised by an atmosphere of suspicion than by a cooperative use of means.

The Viennese SA leader (*Unterführer*) Johann Donner vividly describes this prevalent atmosphere between the organisations in general and their intelligence services in particular: *"The intelligence service [of the Landesleitung, Author's note] can only expect help of the SA, (...) if the SA does not perceive the intelligence service as spy organisation against itself, that only sees suspicious things, assumes the bad and thusly makes itself hated."*²³⁰ Noticeably, this remark was made on 23rd July 1934, so only a few weeks after the Röhm purge and only two days before the failed coup attempt. Therefore, it also paints an insightful picture of the distrustful atmosphere between the SA and the political organisation on the verge of the most important operation of the Austrian Nazi movement – and gives a hint on the reasons for its failure which was eventually indeed strongly connected to the deception of several SA leaders, especially of Hermann Reschny.²³¹

Besides these three major services, a myriad of smaller networks operated as well. These included another small network of the political party that was established at the beginning of 1934, based in Budapest and led by SS leader Carl Pichl which did not get particularly important though.²³²

²²⁶ Jagschitz, 'Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten', pp. 172–180.

²²⁷ Rothländer, pp. 428f.

²²⁸ This was also observed by the police in the criminal proceedings against Otto Begus. Besondere Disziplinarkommission beim Bundeskanzleramt, Disziplinarsache Otto Begus, 30.10.1933, pp. 2f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

²²⁹ Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, pp. 81, 92.

²³⁰ Original quote: „Der ND kann nur dann mit einer tätigen Mithilfe der SA rechnen, (...) wenn die SA im ND nicht mehr eine Spitzelorganisation gegen sich selbst erblickt, die nur Verdächtiges sieht, Schlechtes annimmt und sich dadurch verhaßt macht." SA-Unterführer Johann Donner, quoted according to Rothländer, p. 435.

²³¹ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 30.; Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, pp. 226, 231.; Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, pp. 92f.; Jagschitz, 'Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934', pp. 17–19.; Schafranek, Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934., pp. 9, 69–71, 76–80, 86, 205, 224.

²³² Rothländer, pp. 435–440.

The smaller networks were often headed by individuals that also served as informants for the organisations' services²³³, such as the policemen Alfred Baubin²³⁴ and Konrad Rotter²³⁵. Both operated their own intelligence networks with the help of fellow policemen they had recruited. Baubin's network consisted primarily of policemen from the office service and by and by advanced toward the SS while Rotter recruited among policemen in enforcement positions and was affiliated with the SA.²³⁶ Besides networks extending through important parts of the police forces, the Nazis were also well networked within the *Heimwehr*, as we have already heard, and the Austrian army, the *Bundesheer*. According to Rothländer, the Austrian Nazis had made the recruitment of *Bundesheer* soldiers one of their main objectives in early 1933 – with substantial success.²³⁷ Despite actions of the government to remove Nazi sympathizers from the armed forces²³⁸, they were permanently able to maintain a certain influence within the army.

Another key institution of the Austrian state that was heavily infiltrated by the illegal Nazis and their intelligence services was the judiciary branch. The Austrian Nazi movement strongly recruited itself from the urban petty bourgeoisie and the new middle-class(es) in general, which to a considerable extent consisted of public officials and civil servants in government agencies and courts.²³⁹ Hence, illegal Nazis were serving as court ushers, clerks, attorneys and in some instances even as judges, and used these positions to provide the various National Socialist intelligence networks with sensitive information. An enquiry of the Security Directorate Graz in August 1934 can illustrate the enormous extent of the infiltration, even among judges: according to this enquiry, around half of the 107 district judges (in Styria) were affiliated with the National Socialists. The assessments of some judges included

²³³ Another example of an informant that then started to autonomously send information directly to the *Landesleitung's* head office in Munich is Paul Heigl. For his services in the illegal period he was rewarded after the "*Anschluss*": Heigl became the head of the Austrian National Library as which he served from 1938 until his suicide shortly before the capitulation of the "Third Reich". Rothländer, p. 435, f.n. 1926.

²³⁴ In 1932 Baubin had founded a police suborganisation of the National socialist federation of civil servants (NSB – Nationalsozialistischer Beamtenbund) and established the so-called "Polizeisturm", a network of Nazi informants and among the office staff of the police forces. In early 1934, the "Polizeisturm" was then incorporated into the newly established SS-Standarte 89, the unit that would lead the attack on the Bundeskanzleramt and kill the Austrian Chancellor Dollfuß during the July coup.

²³⁵ Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, pp. 9, 94.; Schafranek, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934.*, p. 233.

Rotter was the main developer of the military plan for the July coup. Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 28.; Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 9.

²³⁶ Rothländer, pp. 406, 411–413, 582.

²³⁷ Blatnik, pp. 157f.; Rothländer, pp. 405f., 411f.; Carsten, pp. 162f, 173.; Rothländer, p. 405.

²³⁸ For example, already on the 9th of June 1933, hence even some days before the official ban of the Nazi party, the *Deutscher Soldatenbund*, the national-socialist cell among the Austrian army, was dissolved and about 1000 soldiers were dismissed for their political affiliations. Blatnik, pp. 157f.; Rothländer, p. 405.

²³⁹ Ackerl, p. 35.; Bauer, 'Arbeiterpartei? Zur Sozialstruktur der illegalen NSDAP in Österreich.', pp. 263f.; Gerhard Botz, 'Introduction', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*. (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget), pp. 192–201 (p. 198).; Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', pp. 217f., 220f., 230, 233f.; Botz, 'The Changing Patterns of Social Support for Austrian National Socialism (1918-1945)', pp. 221f.; Falter and Hänisch, p. 249.

very telling formulations: one *“only associates with National Socialists”*, one *“is referred to as secret National Socialist leader”* and another one is even *“unequivocally subversive”*²⁴⁰

Rothländer therefore emphasises the strong political bias of many judges and scandalous acquittals of National Socialists – in some instances judges even condoned Hitler salutes and National Socialist uniforms in court.²⁴¹

As a result, countless potential informants and contacts were available for the National Socialist intelligence agents.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Original quotes: „*verkehrte nur mit Anhängern der NSDAP*“, „*wird als geheimer nat[ional].soz[ialistischer] Führer bezeichnet*“, „*unbedingt staatsfeindlich eingestellt*“ Blatnik, p. 159.

²⁴¹ Rothländer, pp. 229–232, 234f.

²⁴² The judiciary and other infiltrated institutions will get particular attention in chapter III.4.1.

III. The intelligence service of the Austrian NSDAP

1. Overview

The intelligence service of the Austrian NSDAP *Landesleitung* was set up shortly after the ban of the major National Socialist organisations in Austria on the 19th of June 1933. It was an important element of the Nazi movement's response to the ban and its new strategy in the illegal period.

As the federal police direction correctly concluded already in January 1935, the *"intelligence service had been established in order to provide representatives of the illegal NSDAP with information from spheres in the economy and politics as well as from offices and to deliver according reports via the "Deutsche[] Revisions- und Treuhandgesellschaft" in Munich (...) to the so-called "Landesleitung Oesterreich" of the NSDAP in Munich and to other leading emigrants."*²⁴³

For reasons of secrecy, the Munich and German parts of the intelligence service were operating under the concealment of a front organisation called *"Deutsche Revisions- und Treuhandgesellschaft (m.b.H)"* ("German auditing and trust company LLC").²⁴⁴ While this front organisation was already identified, the dimension of the intelligence service's activities and its actual relation to the NSDAP were not yet known.

In general, it is important to note that the intelligence service's activities were in no way restricted to its core tasks of gathering, processing and transmitting intelligence. It also played a considerable role for the terrorist activities of the Nazi movement and its attempted coup d'état.

Besides that, it functioned as a sort of lobbying network which tried to use its ties to Austria's political, religious, military, and economic elites to strengthen the National Socialist influence in Austria.

Members of the network, particularly its first director Otto Begus, were closely affiliated with leading figures of the Austrofascist regime, such as *Heimwehr* leader and Minister of the Interior Ernst Starhemberg.

Moreover, some of its contributors, such as the Viennese ethnologist Erich Frauwallner, served as link to the powerful clergy and lobbied for a reconciliation between the national and the catholic camp. Frauwallner was also part of the Nazi delegation around *Landesinspekteur* Habicht that from 1932 on

²⁴³ Original quote: „Dieser Nachrichtendienst war zu dem Zwecke eingerichtet worden, um Mitteilungen aus Kreisen der Wirtschaft und der Politik sowie aus Aemtern für die Funktionäre der illegalen N.S.D.A.P. zu verschaffen und entsprechende Berichte im Wege der "Deutschen Revisions und Treuhandgesellschaft" in München, Briennerstrasse No. 55, der sogenannten "Landesleitung Oesterreich" der N.S.D.A.P. in München und anderen führenden Emigranten zu liefern." Mitteilung Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, An die Staatsanwaltschaft Wien I, 11.01.1935, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

²⁴⁴ Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, Scheickl Robert; Missbrauch der Amtsgewalt, 27.03.1935, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Mitteilung Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, An die Staatsanwaltschaft Wien I, 11.01.1935, p. 1, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Otto Bersch, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 30.11.1936, p. 1, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/343.264.

held talks with high-level representatives of Austrian Catholicism, such as inter alia, future chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg and cardinal Innitzer²⁴⁵.

Ties to economic elites on the other hand included personal relations of Otto Wächter whose wife was the daughter of a Styrian steel magnate.²⁴⁶ Furthermore, informants within the Austrian National bank repeatedly provided Otto Bersch and the intelligence service of the *Landesleitung* with internal sensitive information according to research of Oliver Rathkolb.²⁴⁷

Overall, the intelligence service can hence be seen as part of a broad networking offensive that the Austrian Nazi movement started under Habicht's lead to garner support among the Austrian elites. In addition, the intelligence service also played a role in the production (printing) and dissemination of propaganda material, normally in the form of leaflets. All these involvements will subsequently be at the core of chapter III.4.²⁴⁸

Name

In contemporary police reports, the intelligence service is often referred to via personalized names of important figures of the network. This is due to the fact that at that time, the authorities were not aware of the official character of the organisation and its links to the *Landesleitung* and political party which additionally shows the success of the *Landesleitung's* cover-up.

As a result, it is normally named after its directors or – before they had been identified – via a cover name. In the sources of the contemporary police investigations, the service is thus referred to under one of the following names: “*Nachrichtendienst*²⁴⁹ *Begus*” (first director), “*Nachrichtendienst Bersch*” (second director), at times also *Begus-Bersch*, or “*Nachrichtendienst Benesch*” – after Otto Bersch's cover name “*Benesch*”.

However, in internal contemporary remarks or later accounts all involved people and contributors refer to the network as the intelligence service of the *Landesleitung*, id est of the Austrian NSDAP. Therefore, this is also the term that Christiane Rothländer uses in her study and that seems most reasonable and accurate to me as well.

²⁴⁵ Innitzer's relationship to Nazism remained highly questionable throughout the following years of Austrofascism and the Nazi dictatorship, to say the least. Stefan Karner, 'Vom "Anschluss" zum Reichspogrom 1938 - Der Nationalsozialismus an der Macht', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 65–98 (p. 88).; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 217.

²⁴⁶ Marta Marková, *Auf Knopfdruck. Vienna Postwar Flair* (Vienna: LIT, 2018), p. 12.

²⁴⁷ Oliver Rathkolb, Theodor Venus, *Reichsbankanstalten 1938-1945 am Beispiel der Reichsbankhauptstelle Wien* (Österreichische Nationalbank, 2013), p. 12.

²⁴⁸ Otto Bersch, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 30.11.1936, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/343.264.

²⁴⁹ ~intelligence service

In the intelligence service, the Austrian NSDAP *Landesleitung* set up its own source for intelligence that should make it more independent of the already existing Nazi intelligence networks which were mainly dominated by the SA and increasingly the SS. The establishment of this particular intelligence service thus has to be contextualized in front of the permanent internal struggle between political party, SS & SA.²⁵⁰

To a large extent, the intelligence service was a project of Otto Gustav Wächter, a leading official of the Austrian NSDAP *Landesleitung* and later the political head of the July coup. Wächter initiated the establishment of the intelligence service and dominated it until the devastating blow to the whole Austrian Nazi movement that was the failure of the July coup. It was Wächter as well who chose and commanded the service's leadership circle. In early summer 1933, shortly after the ban of Nazi organisations in Austria, he commissioned police officer Otto Begus to establish and lead the network. Just a few months later however, in September 1933²⁵¹, Begus was dismissed as policeman and sentenced to half a year in prison when his activities for Nazi intelligence were detected. After his release he fled to Germany in March 1934²⁵² and resumed working for the intelligence service, now as head of its Munich department.

Begus' detention was a hard blow for the intelligence network as it was thereby left without a director very soon after its establishment and while still largely in the development phase. In the following interim period, other leading members of the network – especially Fritz Thaler and to a lesser extent Wächter and Rudolf Pavlu – filled in. However, in spring 1934 Fritz Thaler had to flee to Germany as well to avoid detention and therefore, Wächter chose Otto Bersch as the network's new director.

A key aspect for the understanding of the intelligence service and its development can be grasped here. Throughout the roughly two years of its existence, the intelligence service repeatedly experienced intensified pressure on the part of the investigating authorities. Recurring waves of arrests against known National Socialists were an ongoing threat to large parts of its members and caused a permanent, high fluctuation among its contributors in general and its inner circle in particular. In contrast to that, some high-level National Socialist leaders, such as Otto Wächter, seemed to have been largely spared from prosecution, despite his known importance for the NS movement. This again raises doubts about the thoroughness of the criminal proceedings against the illegal National Socialists and supports the claim of historians such as Holtmann and Neugebauer who state that the Austrofascist regime showed rigour against the rank and file of the Nazi movement, but

²⁵⁰ Jagschitz, 'Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten', pp. 172–180.; Rothländer, p. 429.

²⁵¹ Besondere Disziplinarkommission beim Bundeskanzleramt, Disziplinarsache Otto Begus, 30.10.1933, pp. 1–4, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/119.579.

²⁵² Rothländer, p. 432.

rather spared its actual leaders – according to Neugebauer, in parts due to sympathy for Nazism among judges and because of pressure from Germany.²⁵³ In any case, besides destabilising prosecution, a rather high fluctuation and mobility was in general characteristic of the on average rather young members of the illegal Nazi movement, as Bauer and Botz point out.²⁵⁴ As a consequence of these two aspects, the intelligence service severely lacked stability and consistency and was thus repeatedly shaken by internal and external volatile dynamics which reduced its clout.

These assessments are also underpinned by the intense but short period (four to five months) of Otto Bersch as head of the intelligence service, in which the majority of its recorded activities in the sources took place. In this time, the intelligence service quickly expanded and thrived because it was able to take advantage of the enormously enlarged membership base that the Austrian Nazi movement had garnered.²⁵⁵ Despite the ban of the leading Nazi organisations in June the same year, the intelligence service could count on supporters in a wide range of Austrian institutions and considerably contributed to the broad offensive that the Nazi movement carried out from spring 1934 on.²⁵⁶ This large-scale offensive was part of the preparations for the July coup and culminated in this attempted violent overthrow of the Austrian government. Among other things, the intelligence service used its ties to the Austrian customs office in order to facilitate National Socialist arms smuggling into Austria and thus contributed to the major terror wave of spring and early summer 1934²⁵⁷ and the armament of commandos for the July coup. For this purpose, the network also tried to establish links to French extremist groups and to French and British arms dealers as the police discovered in documents obtained during a raid at one of the network's main protagonists (Robert Scheickl)²⁵⁸. This shows the intelligence service's (and leading *Landesleitung* officials such as Otto Wächter's) high aspirations for international relevance and also illustrates a certain optimistic zeal among Austrian Nazism at the time, in spring and early summer 1934.

The failure of the coup, however, put an abrupt, yet only temporary end to the rise of the Austrian Nazi movement. For the intelligence service though it turned out to be an enormous setback of which it should never really recover and can hence be regarded as the beginning of its end – as will be elaborated in detail in chapter III.6.

²⁵³ Everhard Holtmann, 'Zwischen "Blutschuld" und "Befriedung": Autoritäre Julijustiz.', in *Das Jahr 1934: 25. Juli : Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien Am 8. Oktober 1974*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1975), pp. 36–45.; Neugebauer, p. 305–307.

²⁵⁴ Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', p. 227.

²⁵⁵ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 17f.

²⁵⁶ Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', p. 277.

²⁵⁷ Garscha, p. 106.

²⁵⁸ Bundespolizeidirektion Wien, Meldung Hausdurchsuchung und Anhaltung Robert Scheickl, 9.8.1934, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

2. Structure and functioning

Both geographically and structurally, the network had two centres: Vienna and Munich. The network was always strongly focussed on and concentrated in Vienna, where the majority of relevant Austrian authorities were located and most of the network's collaborators and leading figures were operating. Munich on the other hand was not only very relevant for German intelligence, but also the headquarters of the Austrian *Landesleitung* from June 1933 on²⁵⁹ and as a result served as the main hub for most Austrian intelligence destined for authorities in Nazi Germany. As stated above, the German parts of the intelligence service were operating under the concealment of a front organisation called "*Deutsche Revisions- und Treuhandgesellschaft (m.b.H)*" (German auditing and trust company LLC).²⁶⁰ Understandably, the involvement of Hitler in Austrian domestic policy via his support for the Austrian Nazi movement was a permanent source of diplomatic tensions.²⁶¹ Therefore, the obscuring instrument of the *Treuhandgesellschaft* was devised in order to conceal the network's links to authorities of the German NSDAP and government. This precautionary measure should minimize the expectable Austrian and international indignation if this high-level intelligence service was to be discovered. The existence of the *Treuhandgesellschaft* was not even denied in police interrogations, for example by Otto Begus after his second arrest in August 1934. However, he depicted it as sort of rating agency, stating that the „*Treuhandgesellschaft is in a sense a company for information on the creditworthiness of various commercial enterprises at home and abroad*”²⁶² This can probably be seen as deliberate strategy – via depicting it as harmless institution the authorities' attention should be deviated from it.

For similar reasons of secrecy, it is important to note that the intelligence service usually used code names when referring to informants and members to disguise their identities.

Besides the two centres Vienna and Munich, the intelligence service had informants in the Austrian *Gaue* as well.²⁶³ However, the archival sources only scarcely provide information on these. The reasons here might be that members in the province were probably less likely to be captured – and thus to

²⁵⁹ Pauley, p. 108.

²⁶⁰ Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, Scheickl Robert; Missbrauch der Amtsgewalt, 27.03.1935, 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Mitteilung Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, An die Staatsanwaltschaft Wien I, 11.01.1935, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35. Otto Bersch, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 30.11.1936, p. 1, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/343.264.

²⁶¹ Bertolaso, pp. 252f.; Broszat, p. 279.

²⁶² Original quote: „*Die Treuhandgesellschaft ist auch eine Art Auskunftsunternehmen über die Bonität verschiedener kaufmännischer Unternehmungen des In- und Auslandes.*“ Mitteilung Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, An die Staatsanwaltschaft Wien I, 11.01.1935, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

²⁶³ Bundespolizeidirektion Wien, Meldung Hausdurchsuchung und Anhaltung Robert Scheickl, 9.8.1934. In: WSTLA-2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

appear in the police files and trial records. An important reason for this probably is that most major targets of the intelligence service were located in the capital or at most in the rural centres – not in the country side. This can also be stated for major investigative bodies which specifically targeted the political opposition, such as the Directorate General for Public Security (*Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit*) which was based in Vienna. Therefore, the activities of Nazi intelligence outside of the major Austrian centres were less threatening as well as less closely monitored. Both partly as consequence of the above and in addition, Nazi infiltration of governmental authorities such as the *Gendarmerie* (as the police forces were called outside of major cities) was even more prevalent in some rural areas.²⁶⁴ This further hampered the determined prosecution of illegal National Socialists and reduced its archival documentation.²⁶⁵

Structurally, the intelligence service can be imagined as superordinate amalgamation of and umbrella organisation for various, often interlinked, networks that each operated in a certain region or a certain organisation. It is important to note here that the intelligence service incorporated mostly already existing networks – hence, in most cases it did not establish new structures but rather served as umbrella organisation which utilized and connected existing ones.²⁶⁶

While in these numerous networks it had a vast number of informants in use all around Austria (and partly in Germany), my findings indicate that the intelligence service was actually operated and directed by a very small group of people. In the next chapter on its key actors, I will identify eight protagonists that, according to my current knowledge, can be regarded as the most important ones. This small group of people, that in the following I will refer to as core group, pulled the strings and was at the very centre of the intelligence network. It is on top of the network's inner three-level hierarchy which we simplistically can deduce from the findings in the archival sources. The core group was supported by a larger facilitating group of couriers, middle men and assistants that constitute the second layer of the inner hierarchy. Thirdly, an extensive network of informants and contributors, with varying degrees of affiliation to the intelligence service and the Nazi movement in general, stretched across multiple tiers of the Austrian state and institutions, utilized access to sensitive information and submitted it to the intelligence service.

²⁶⁴ Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', pp. 307f.

²⁶⁵ Blatnik, p. 156.; Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Zwischen Befriedung und Konfrontation. Zur Lage der NSDAP in Österreich 1934 bis 1936', in *Das Juliabkommen von 1936. Vorgeschichte, Hintergründe und Folgen. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 10. und 11. Juni 1976*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1977), pp. 156–187 (p. 179).

²⁶⁶ Rothländer, pp. 429–436.

As already shortly addressed above, these informants were not necessarily convinced National Socialists, but often only sympathised with Nazism or even just wanted to do a favour for a befriended National Socialist which enormously expanded the number of potential informants for the intelligence service.

In accordance with my earlier remarks on extended internal conflicts within the Nazi movement, it is important to note, that the procedures and cooperation within the intelligence service were also in no way always harmonious or even purposive which strongly shaped its functioning and efficiency. For example, the intelligence service's founder, Otto Wächter, never fully gave the service's direction out of his hand – despite assigning actual directors of it in Otto Begus and Otto Bersch. Throughout its existence, Wächter always reserved the right to directly report extraordinarily important information to his superiors in the Austrian *Landesleitung* – notwithstanding the strict protocol and fixed chains of command for the transmission and distribution of information. In this way, he partly disregarded security measures that had been devised for intelligence related procedures and also undermined the position of the service's directors he himself had appointed. As a consequence, the service's contributors at times were not sure whom to contact, the official heads of the network Begus and Bersch or its actual wirepuller Otto Wächter.²⁶⁷

A similar example for a certain dysfunctionality is the competitive relationship between the two mentioned directors of the network themselves: Otto Begus and Otto Bersch. Begus had been obliged to flee to Germany after he was arrested for his contribution to the intelligence service and from spring 1934 on headed the German department of the intelligence service. Nevertheless, he did not share his informants with his successor as head of the service in Vienna, Otto Bersch – and vice versa.²⁶⁸ This shown distrust towards each other led to certain duplicities, confusion and overlapping regarding the internal competences. It thus impeded the aspired professionalisation and centralisation and consequently, a higher efficiency and safer work and operational approach.²⁶⁹

How these obstructive conflicts contributed to the intelligence service's soon following downfall is hard to assess, but they certainly exemplify the strong influence of personal animosities and individual ambitions prevalent in many layers of the "Third Reich". Part of the explanation for this peculiarity can

²⁶⁷ Rothländer, p. 432.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 435f.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 432, 435.

be found within the polycratic National Socialist system which did not necessarily reward a group's or institution's contributions but rather tended to acknowledge individual feats and accomplishments.²⁷⁰

Despite these exceptional deviations from the normal procedures, we can nevertheless identify a common pattern of how the intelligence service functioned in practice, based on the majority of recorded instances that I came across in the archives.

First, an informant in one of the many infiltrated organisations or institutions obtained a certain information. The informant, usually male²⁷¹, then submitted this information to the intelligence service – either via a courier/middleman (such as Franz Riegler²⁷² or Franz Haider) or personally to a member of the service's core group.

At the centre of the intelligence service in Vienna, several of its key members were occupied with the evaluation and procession of incoming information. This work was normally done in either Bersch's or Scheickl's flat or in a secret office that had been set up in a premise in the fourth district and disguised as atelier. If the particular submitted information was regarded as relevant, it was included in one of the weekly reports that the head of the intelligence service drew up.²⁷³ These reports were then disseminated among the most important members of the intelligence service and the *Landesleitung* and transmitted to the Munich department of the service. The transmission to the front organisation in the *Treuhandgesellschaft* in Germany normally was carried out by couriers who often crossed the border near Kufstein, Tyrol.²⁷⁴ In Munich the report was then handed over to the network's personnel there (from spring 1934 on, mostly to its former director Otto Begus²⁷⁵) and of course to the

²⁷⁰ Broszat, pp. 423f., 427.; Kriechbaumer, *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, pp. 698f.; Longerich, p. 5.

²⁷¹ As stated above, according to the sources the intelligence service was an almost exclusively male circle. I did not find a single reference to a female informant and only one reference to a female National Socialist (Maria Brandsteidl – see chapter III.4.1.) in the archival sources and the literature.

For the violent activities of the movement, Botz states that "[b]ecause of the conflicting parties' paramilitary forms of organisation, women and girls are involved in this type of violence only in exceptional instances". Botz, 'Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic', p. 144.

This certainly also influenced women's involvement in the intelligence field which was in a close relation to the armed activities. However, this in no way means that there simply were no women involved. It is possible and probably even likely that a substantial number of female informants contributed to the intelligence service as well, but that they were significantly less likely to be observed, discovered and captured and therefore do simply not appear in the sources. However, this is highly speculative and hard to validate. In general, female contribution to the Austrian Nazi movement, especially in the illegal period, has to be considered a research desideratum. Rothländer, p. 20.

²⁷² NSDAP membership number #6171344; admission 19.05.1838 [01.05.1938]. BArch (former BDC), NSDAP Mitgliederkartei, Franz Riegler.

²⁷³ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Franz Hörwarthner Fortsetzung, 19.2.35, p. 5, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

²⁷⁴ Stuchlik, pp. 95, 103.

²⁷⁵ Theo Habicht, Zeugnis Otto Begus, 09.04.1937, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

Landesleitung and often subsequently also to German authorities.²⁷⁶ At times, information of Austrian Nazi intelligence networks were even published in Munich/Bavarian newspapers.²⁷⁷

In conclusion, we can thus state that the intelligence service was involved in every major step of the process: from the establishment, maintenance and expansion of the network of informants, to the acquisition, collection and processing of relevant information to the transmission to the *Landesleitung* and selected recipients in Germany – all of these activities will be further elaborated in chapter III.4. on the service's "activities and networks".

²⁷⁶ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Franz Hörwarthner Fortsetzung, 19.2.35, pp. 5f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

²⁷⁷ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien - Hauptverhandlung gegen Dr. Benno Breitenberg-Zennenberg, Zeugenaussage Dr. Alois Tomek, Volksgericht am 28.11.47, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.14., trial record VG 215_55.

3. The core group

Based on the extensive information in archival sources and so far scarce findings in literature I identified a group of eight leading figures within the intelligence service, which I refer to as core group. In the following I will briefly introduce these eight and give a short account on their background and their respective functions in the network, as far as the current state of knowledge allows.

3.1. Otto Gustav Wächter²⁷⁸

The core group is headed by the mastermind and initiator behind this particular intelligence network, Otto Gustav Wächter.

Wächter was *Hauptabteilungsleiter*²⁷⁹ of the departments for state-building²⁸⁰ and economy and one of the most important political leaders of the Austrian Nazi movement.²⁸¹ He joined both the NSDAP (first in 1923, then for the second time in 1930²⁸²) and the SS (in 1932) and had worked as a lawyer in Vienna for several years.²⁸³ Wächter especially defended many indicted National Socialists and was often referred to as the “*party lawyer*”²⁸⁴. This position as legal and defence counsel of the Austrian NSDAP and SS further increased his influence within the Nazi movement.

In August 1931 he attended a course of the *Reichsführerschule*²⁸⁵, an elite school for future leaders of the movement, and indeed rose through the ranks. After the ban of the Nazi party in June 1933 he

²⁷⁸ Otto Gustav Wächter

Date of birth: 08.07.1901

Profession: Lawyer

Memberships: NSDAP xx.04.1923/24.10.1930 (#301.903)

SA xx.09.1923

SS spring 1934 (#235.338)

Code name: Oskar Wartenberg (used after flight to Germany)

Flight to Germany: 28.07.1934 (to CSR)/02.08.1934 (Germany)

See Otto Wächter, Personalfragebogen NSDAP, 25.06.1938, pp. 2f, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/130.802.; Flüchtlingshilfswerk, Ausweis Nr. 4301, Oskar Wartenberg, 11.04.1935, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/130.802.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, An Legal Division, Headquarter d. USFA, Otto Wächter, 20.05.1946, in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_50.; Otto Wächter, Lebenslauf, 05.11.1935, pp. 1f., in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_50.; BArch (former BDC), NSDAP Mitgliederkartei, Otto Wächter.

²⁷⁹ ~Senior head of department

Bundesministerium für Inneres, Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit, Gauakt Wächter Otto Gustav, 31.08.1948, p. 2, in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_50.

²⁸⁰ Of the so-called “*Organisation II, Staatsaufbau*”.

²⁸¹ Otto Wächter, Lebenslauf, 05.11.1935, pp. 1f., in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_50.

²⁸² Wächter had left the movement during the internal conflict about the movement’s orientation (*Führerstreit*). Otto Wächter, Personalfragebogen NSDAP, 25.06.1938, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/130.802.

²⁸³ Pohl, pp. 77, 422.

²⁸⁴ See Otto Wächter, Personalfragebogen NSDAP, 25.06.1938, pp. 3f., in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/130.802.; Rothländer, pp. 72, 135, 178–80, 210.; Archiv für publizistische Arbeit (Intern.Biogr.Archiv), Dr. Otto Wächter (Gouverneur des Distriktes Galizien), 26.3.1942, in BArch (former BDC)-NS-5-VI-17751.

²⁸⁵ Otto Wächter, Lebenslauf, 05.11.1935, pp. 1f., in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_50., Otto Wächter, Personalfragebogen NSDAP, 25.06.1938, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/130.802.; Distriktstandortführer Dr. Wächter, in Krakauer Zeitung, Nr. 169, 22.07.1941, in BArch (former BDC)-NS-5-VI-17751.

held three important positions. First, he served as illegal *Gauleiter* of the *Gau* of Vienna.²⁸⁶ Secondly, he was appointed “*special representative of the Austrian Landesleitung in political negotiations with the Austrian authorities and parties*”²⁸⁷. On the one hand, this appointment bears witness to Wächter’s good relations to leading Austrofascists – particularly to then Vice chancellor Emil Fey²⁸⁸ and also to the minister of the interior Robert Kerber.²⁸⁹ On the other hand, it of course further intensified his communication with leading figures of the ruling regime and consequently enhanced his value for the Nazi movement as well.²⁹⁰

Thirdly, he became the authorised representative of *Landesinspekteur* Theodor Habicht in the summer of 1933 and thus the deputy and right hand of the most important figure in Austrian Nazism at that time.²⁹¹

Apart from that, Wächter was among the main conspirators of the attempted coup of July 25th, 1934 and was assigned the political part of the undertaking’s organisation. Therefore, he can be considered as one of the highest-ranking leaders in the whole Austrian Nazi movement.

After the party ban in June 1933, Wächter saw the necessity for a new NSDAP-controlled intelligence service and hence ordered Otto Begus to establish and lead this new intelligence network.

3.2. Otto Begus²⁹²

In Otto Begus Wächter chose a staunch fighter for the third camp as the head of the new intelligence service who, in some aspects, distinctively resembled himself. Just as Wächter, he was part of the SS and NSDAP branches of the Nazi movement and in 1935 even became part of the staff of the Reichsführer SS.²⁹³ Besides that, he had studied law as well before he joined the police forces in 1926.

²⁸⁶ Staatsanwaltschaft Wien, Amtsvermerk Otto Wächter, 05.12.1945, in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_50.; Urheber unbekannt, Bericht Otto Wächter, 10.07.1946, pp. 1f., in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_50.

²⁸⁷ Original quote: „Sonderauftragtrager der LL [=Landesleitung, author’s note] Österreich in den politischen Verhandlungen mit den öst. Regierungsstellen und Parteien“ Otto Wächter, Personalfragebogen NSDAP, 25.06.1938, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.

²⁸⁸ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, Strafsache Dr. Gustav Wächter, Zeugenvernehmung Huebner Hans, 10.04.1946, p. 2, in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_50.

²⁸⁹ Huber, pp. 94–96, 140f.

²⁹⁰ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 36f.

²⁹¹ Rothländer, p. 429.

²⁹² Otto Begus

Date of birth: 25.09.1899

Profession: Policeman

Memberships: NSDAP xx.04.1933 (#3,354.998)

(In contrast, Rothländer states that Begus informally entered the party already in 1932 but was only officially acknowledged in 1934. Rothländer, p. 583.)

SS summer 1933 (#189.613)

Arrested: 2x; 18.09.1933-06.03.1934, 11.08.1934-12.02.1935

Flight to Germany: 12.03.1934

Otto Begus, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 25.9.1935, p. 1–4, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.; Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, Scheickl Robert; Missbrauch der Amtsgewalt, 27.03.1935, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Rothländer, p. 583.

²⁹³ Ibid., p. 3.; NSDAP-Flüchtlingshilfswerk, Bewerbungsfragebogen Otto Begus, 24.9.1935, p. 2, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

Furthermore, both were part of the radical-revolutionary wing of the party and are described to have shared certain character traits – both preferred bold and partly even foolhardy action over dry theory and cumbersome strategy. This can be seen in Wächter's participation in rather risky operations²⁹⁴ or the enormously overoptimistic and imprudent plan for the July coup that Wächter had supported – a momentous misjudgement which he later tried to justify in front of a party court.²⁹⁵ Begus, on the other hand, was involved in Nazi assassination plots on Dollfuß that were eventually discarded in favour of the large-scale attempt of an overthrow of the ruling government, the July coup.²⁹⁶

Shortly before Begus established the new intelligence service, he had been transferred back to the Viennese police (*Landespolizeidirektion Wien*) in April 1933 which proved to be very useful for the service.

For Wächter, Begus as the head of the newly founded intelligence network combined upon himself several important features:

1. Within the Nazi movement, both had a similar orientation – videlicet towards SS and the NSDAP. With Begus as ally Wächter expanded his network within the SS that he had rightly anticipated as quickly growing force within Nazism in general at the beginning of the 1930s. Wächter's rapprochement to the SS and away from the SA which he had at first joined during his first period within the Nazi movement in 1923²⁹⁷, peaked in his admission to the SS in 1932.
2. As a police officer in a Viennese police department, Begus had direct access to relevant information and could himself already be regarded as an enormously valuable source for the network. Besides other things, Begus used his position to gather information on the political affiliation of policemen.²⁹⁸
3. In doing so, he could identify potential supporters of the Nazi movement and attempt to recruit them. Already prior to his involvement in the intelligence service, he together with Fritz Thaler had established an extended network of informants within the police forces.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁴ Such as the operation to free SS leader Josef Fitzthum. Otto Wächter, Personalfragebogen NSDAP, 25.06.1938, pp. 3f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.; Rothländer, p. 397.

²⁹⁵ Hellmuth Auerbach analysed Wächter's justifications which he had sent to this party court. See Hellmuth Auerbach, 'Eine nationalsozialistische Stimme zum Wiener Putsch vom 25. Juli 1934', *Vierteljahreshefte Für Zeitgeschichte*, 12.2 (1964), pp. 201–218. See also Otto Wächter, Antrag auf Eröffnung des Ehrenverfahrens vor dem Schiedhof, Stellungnahme Otto Wächter, 18.06.1938, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.

²⁹⁶ Bundesministerium für Inneres, Aktenvermerk Otto Begus, o. D., pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

²⁹⁷ Wächter had been a member of the SA in his first period in the Nazi movement that ended in 1924. After he had joined the party for the second time in 1930 however, he clearly affiliated with the SS and became a member of it two years later. Consequently, in the ongoing dispute between SA, SS and Political Organisation (NSDAP) he was considered a definite representative of the latter two. Wächter early might have anticipated the following developments that saw a gradual loss of power of the SA and a spectacular rise of Himmler's SS and thus might have seen better perspectives in affiliating with the SS. Jagschitz, 'Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934', pp. 177f.; Pohl, p. 77.

²⁹⁸ Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, Scheickl Robert; Missbrauch der Amtsgewalt, 27.03.1935, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

²⁹⁹ Rothländer, p. 430.

4. In addition, he was a very well networked man outside the police forces as well. He was a personal acquaintance of *Heimwehr* leader Ernst Starhemberg (see chapter III.4.3.1) and had served as his adjutant during Starhemberg's first short-term appointment as minister.³⁰⁰ Apart from that, he had been a long-standing member of the pan-German "Bund Oberland" and in some instances was able to make smart use of his connections to former comrades of World War I, as we will hear later.³⁰¹ In this way, Begus provided valuable connections to the network.

As a result of the above, he was able to repeatedly provide useful intelligence to the Nazi movement, such as crucial disclosures on impending police raids, protocols of police and court proceedings or aforementioned political assessments of fellow policemen in Vienna. This severe abuse of his position within the Austrian executive power was detected in September 1933. In the following disciplinary proceedings further interesting details of his collaboration with the Nazi movement and his ties to Austrian decision-makers (such as Starhemberg) were revealed which will be at the core of the later chapter on the intelligence service's links to the *Heimwehr*. Consequentially, he was dismissed and sentenced to half a year in prison. After release from prison he managed to flee to Germany – Munich – and resumed working for the intelligence service in a leading position from there. As we will hear later, he also assumed an important role for the July coup.³⁰²

With Begus in jail and out of action for the time being, from autumn 1933 on Begus' right hand Fritz Thaler together with Wächter and his close confidant Rudolf Pavlu stepped in for some months until a new, permanent head for the intelligence service was found in spring 1934 – Otto Bersch.³⁰³

3.3. Otto Bersch³⁰⁴

This time, Wächter chose someone in a less delicate, exposed and probably also monitored position than a policeman as head of the intelligence network: the accountant Otto Bersch. Bersch worked as

³⁰⁰ Bundes-Polizeidirektion Wien, Einberufung in das BKA Otto Begus, 07.10.1930, in OeStA/AdR BKA BKA-I Präs PA Kt. 375 Begus Dr. Otto.; Bundeskanzleramt, Dienstenthebung Dr. Otto Begus, 01.12.1930, in OeStA/AdR BKA BKA-I Präs PA Kt. 375 Begus Dr. Otto.; Rothländer, p. 583

³⁰¹ Rothländer, p. 430, f.n. 1895.

³⁰² Theo Habicht, Zeugnis Otto Begus, 09.04.1937, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.; Besondere Disziplinarkommission beim Bundeskanzleramt, Disziplinarsache Otto Begus, 30.10.1933, pp. 1–4, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

³⁰³ Rothländer, p. 432.

³⁰⁴ In some instances, also in the literature, misspelled as Persch or Bersch.

This misspelling also found its way into the literature. For example Erker, Huber, and Taschwer, p. 85.; Stuchlik, p. 95.

Otto Bersch

Date of birth: 28.07.1898

Profession: Accountant

Memberships: NSDAP 01.03.1933 (in some instances also indicated with 01.05.1933 or even a date in 1938) (#6143340)

Arrested: 09.08.1934-09.12.1934

Flight to Germany: 01.04.1935

Code name: Benesch

Otto Bersch, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 02.12.1936, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/343.264.; Magistratsabteilung 52 Wien, Auskunft Otto Bersch, o. D, in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4., trial record VG 215_55.; Franz von Papen, An das Auswärtige Amt in Berlin, Betreff

senior accountant for the weapon and vehicle producer Steyr, a perfectly inconspicuous profession, and had been endorsed by Hanns Blaschke, another confidant of Wächter who later became mayor of Vienna (1943-1945).³⁰⁵ Prior to his time in the Nazi movement, in the years 1931 and 1932, he had been part of the *Heimwehr* of Linz.³⁰⁶ Bersch then started to work for the economic department (department IV)³⁰⁷ of the Austrian NSDAP *Landesleitung* in May 1933³⁰⁸ and Wächter also knew him from the *Deutscher Klub* ("German Club"), one of the most influential among the many networks of the pan-German, national camp in Austria (see chapter III.4.3.3.). In court Bersch testified that Wächter had commissioned him in the spring of 1934, allegedly in May, to lead the intelligence service.³⁰⁹ In the following months, Bersch directed the quick expansion of the network and its greatly intensifying activities until the spectacular failure of the July coup and the following detection of the network put an abrupt end to the intelligence service's expansion. In August 1934, Bersch was put in jail for four months and shortly after his release from police detention he managed to go into hiding. In April 1935, he fled to Germany in order to evade the criminal proceedings that had been started against him and one of his most important collaborators, Robert Scheickl. Bersch later had to face allegations (primarily put forward by Rudolf Pavlu) that he compromised members of the network due to negligence (evidence was found at Bersch's home) and that he incriminated some in his confessions to the police.³¹⁰ Pavlu claimed that Bersch was only released due to his cooperation with the police and the intervention of the Italian foreign minister Fulvio Suvich who was a friend of Bersch's American wife, Maud Bersch-Baker.³¹¹ It is hard to assess how accurate these accusations are, but Bersch's early release does indeed seem strange when compared to the treatment of his companion Scheickl who was taken into preventive and pretrial detention to avoid his escape.³¹²

Betragen Persch, 30.03.1935, in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4., trial record VG 215_55.; BArch (former BDC), NSDAP Mitglieiderkartei, Otto Bersch.

³⁰⁵ Huber, p. 95.; Bauer, *Hitlers Zweiter Putsch*, p. 16.

³⁰⁶ Otto Bersch, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 30.11.1936, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/343.264.

³⁰⁷ *Amt für Wirtschaft, Hauptabteilung IV der Landesleitung*. See Otto Bersch, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 02.12.1936, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/343.264.

³⁰⁸ Otto Bersch, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 02.12.1936, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/343.264.

³⁰⁹ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Otto Bersch, 20.2.35, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Staatsanwaltschaft Wien I, Anklageschrift gegen Robert Scheickl und Otto Bersch, 21.05.1935, p. 8, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Otto Bersch, NSDAP Personal-Fragebogen Otto Bersch, 30.06.1938, p. 3, in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. – Gauakten, trial record VG 215_55.

³¹⁰ Rothländer, p. 436.

³¹¹ Herbert Parson, An Gauleiter Alfred Frauenfeld, Betreff Parteimitgliedschaft Otto Bersch, 11.01.1937, p. 2, in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. – Gauakten, trial record VG 215_55.; Herbert Parson, An die Reichsleitung der NSDAP Mitgliedschaftsamt, Betreff Otto Bersch, 05.11.1937, pp. 1f. In. OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/343.264.

³¹² Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Urteil gegen Robert Scheickl, 25.6.1935, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

3.4. Robert Scheickl³¹³

This said Robert Scheickl brings us to the second layer of essential figures of the network, below its initiator (Otto Wächter) and its two leaders (Otto Begus and Otto Bersch).

Scheickl worked as a trainee lawyer at the Criminal Court of Vienna (*Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien*) and in July 1933 was assigned to department 26 (XXVI)³¹⁴, one of the political departments of the court. These new departments were established in early 1933 as juridical instrument for the regime's fight against the opposition and therefore primarily dealt with transgressions of a political nature.³¹⁵

As a result of their political scope, they largely dealt with the illegal National Socialists. In his position at the political department, Scheickl thus in many cases had access to documents from trials against Nazi terrorists. In his service for the court he was also in contact with Otto Wächter, who acted as defence lawyer for countless indicted illegal National Socialists. On various occasions throughout the first half of 1934, Otto Wächter instructed Scheickl to make copies of important documents – e.g. testimonies, attorney's assessments, police reports etc.–from the criminal files and to pass them on to the *Landesleitung*. Besides his covert activities at court, he headed the press and propaganda section of the economic department (IV) of the Austrian *Landesleitung*.³¹⁶

Moreover, Scheickl's flat was used as a hub for intelligence from all around Austria, verifiably for informants from Styria, Upper Austria and Carinthia.³¹⁷ Together with Bersch or Rudolf Pavlu, Scheickl processed the incoming information and sent it to Munich (where Otto Begus now functioned as recipient).

³¹³ In various instances also misspelled as Scheikl.

Robert Scheickl

Date of birth: 23.05.1902

Profession: Lawyer (trainee lawyer)

Memberships: NSDAP 01.04.1933 (#1.450.156)

Arrested: 09.08.1934-18.09.1935

Flight to Germany: xx.09.1935

Code name: Schindler

Miscellaneous: Member of the NSV (Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt - National Socialist People's Welfare) and RSB (Reichsbund der Deutschen Beamten - ~Reichs Association of German civil servants), Member of a fraternity

Gendarmeriepostenkommando Neumarkt i. H., Scheickl Robert, Verbrechen nach §11 des VG, 27.02.1947, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.14., trial record Vr 8121-46.; NSDAP Gauleitung Wien - Referat Alte Garde, Fragebogen Robert Scheickl, 17.01.1939, pp. 1f., in AT-OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/316.453.; Robert Scheickl, NSDAP Personalfragebogen Robert Scheickl, 30.06.1938, p. 2, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/316.453.; Bundesministerium für Inneres, Abteilung 2, Staatsbürgerschaft Scheickl Robert, 01.02.1955, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/316.453.

³¹⁴ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Urteil gegen Robert Scheickl, 25.6.1935, p. 3, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.;

Staatsanwaltschaft Wien I, Anklageschrift gegen Robert Scheickl und Otto Bersch, 21.05.1935, pp. 1f.

³¹⁵ For more details on these special political departments see chapter III.5. on "Prosecution and its legal circumstances". See also Karina Wächter, *Politik und Strafjustiz in den Jahren 1933 und 1934 - Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Landesgerichtes für Strafsachen Wien I.*, Diplomarbeit (Vienna, 2013), pp. 96–103.

³¹⁶ Robert Scheickl, NSDAP Personalfragebogen Robert Scheickl, 30.06.1938, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/316.453.

³¹⁷ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Franz Hörwarthner, 19.2.35, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Franz Hörwarthner Fortsetzung, 19.2.35, p. 3, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35, p. 5. Bundespolizeidirektion Wien, Niederschrift der Einvernahme von Robert Scheickl, 17.8.1934, p. 1, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

Just as in the case of Bersch, Scheickl's contribution to the intelligence service ended with his detention shortly after the July coup.

3.5. Rudolf Pavlu³¹⁸

Rudolf Pavlu was one of Wächter's closest associates, his chief of staff (*Stabsleiter*) in the *Landesleitung* and a loyal companion throughout his career.³¹⁹

As official in a public healthcare fund he was perfectly inconspicuous. This might be one of the reasons why Pavlu was one of the relatively few members in the inner circle of the network that were able to avoid police capture. In the intelligence service, he served as Wächter's right hand and was particularly responsible for the procession and transmission of intelligence from the Austrian *Gaue* to Germany.³²⁰ Apart from that, he was behind the so-called warning service (*Warnungsdienst*) which used intelligence from police insiders to inform party members about imminent arrests or police raids. In this way, the timely hiding of both people and documents should be enabled.³²¹

3.6. Julius Meerganz-Medeazza³²²

As stated above, Wächter was eager to preserve his influence in the intelligence service and assigned leading positions to several of his personal intimates – another one of these was Julius Meerganz-Medeazza. He was Wächter's trainee lawyer (*Konzipient*) and, due to safety reasons, often the first contact person for intelligence service members in interactions with Wächter. Before working for Wächter he had served as clerk at various courts in his Tyrolean homeland and at the Viennese Court

³¹⁸ Date of birth: 15.07.1902

Profession: Public official

Memberships: NSDAP 1931 (#444 208)

SS summer 1938

Herbert Parson, An die Reichsleitung der NSDAP Mitgliedschaftsamt, Betreff Otto Bersch, 05.11.1937, pp. 1f. In: OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/343.264.; Klaus-Peter Friedrich, *Polen. September 1939-Juli 1941* (München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2011), p. 587, f.n. 10.

³¹⁹ Rothländer, pp. 433f.

³²⁰ Stuchlik, p. 95.

³²¹ Blatnik, p. 161.; Rothländer, p. 436.

³²² (Mis)spelled in a variety of ways: Meerganz von Medeazza, Medazza, Meerganz-Edler von Medeazza,...

Reichswirtschaftsminister, gez. Dr. Günther, Vorschlag Ehrenmedaille des 13. März 1938, 24.02.1939, in OeStA/AdR HBbBuT BMfHuV Präs Auszeichnungsanträge MeerganzvonMedeazza Julius Dr. Zl 11949/1939 Kt. 408

Date of birth: 05.12.1906

Profession: Lawyer (trainee lawyer)

Memberships: NSDAP xx.xx.1932

SA until (!) June 1933

Flight to Germany: 19.08.1934

Code name: Dr. Innsbrucker, in Germany then Julius Menzinger

Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 15.06.1936, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.; NSDAP-Flüchtlingshilfswerk, Alfred Rodenbücher; An den Herrn Polizeipräsidenten, Betreff Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, 19.07.1935, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.; Gauleitung Wien, Personalamt, Hauptstelle für politische Beurteilung, Politische Beurteilung Meerganz von Medeazza, 26.02.1940, pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.

for Civil Matters (*Landesgericht für Zivilrechtssachen Wien*)³²³. Meerganz-Medeazza was director of the aforementioned economic department (department IV) of the *Landesleitung* and thus an essential link between the intelligence service and the *Landesleitung*. In addition, he was legal advisor of the Viennese SA and the director of the Austrian National Socialist association of German Lawyers³²⁴. Interestingly, in his position in the department IV of the *Landesleitung* Meerganz-Medeazza was Bersch's (and Scheickl's) superior, which again emphasises the complex and blurred hierarchy within the illegal Nazi movement as on the other hand, Bersch as head of the intelligence service was Meerganz-Medeazza's superior in the intelligence network.

3.7. Fritz Thaler³²⁵

This also exemplifies some of the structural difficulties the network encountered which were further aggravated by the inexperience of the majority of its members. They generally had no expertise in intelligence work – with one major exception: Fritz Thaler. Before joining the intelligence network, Thaler had attended the Consular Academy (*Konsularakademie*)³²⁶ in Vienna, the major Austrian institution for future diplomats at that time, and in 1928 had founded the American-European information agency (AMEIA).³²⁷ He then became a contact man for the intelligence service of the German ministry of the Reichswehr in Berlin.³²⁸ Thaler was thus the only one with professional experience in the operation of an information network and thanks to his service for the Reichswehr served as a direct link to German intelligence.

Besides that, together with Begus he had already set up an extensive intelligence network within the Viennese police forces, using the connections to the police he had established as a trainee lawyer.³²⁹ Moreover, he had worked as Starhemberg's press officer³³⁰ and consequently was excellently networked within the *Heimwehr* and selected branches of the government of which the *Heimwehr*

³²³ Geschäftsabteilung des Präsidenten des Landesgerichtes für ZRS, Verwendungsausweis betreffend Rechtsanwaltsanwärter Dr. Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, Abschrift, 18.2.1935, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

³²⁴ *Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen*

³²⁵ In some instances also misspelled as Thaller

Date of birth: 25.09.1899

Profession: Professional agent/lawyer (trainee lawyer)

Memberships: NSDAP 01.06.1933 (#3.290.002)

Flight to Germany: spring 1934

Franz Haider, Niederschrift Zeugenaussage Franz Haider, 07.06.1934, p. 1, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.; Rothländer, p. 429, f.n. 1888.

³²⁶ The Konsularakademie is the predecessor of today's Diplomatic Academy of Vienna.

³²⁷ "Amerikanisch-Europäische Informations-Agentur" Rothländer, pp. 429f.

³²⁸ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Dr. Josef Wojtech, 23.2.35, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

³²⁹ Rothländer, p. 430.

³³⁰ Ibid., p. 429.

was a part of – particularly the security forces that from October 1932 and Fey's appointment as state secretary for security agendas were under central authority of Emil Fey.³³¹

It is therefore easy to see why Thaler was chosen to assist Begus in the establishment of the intelligence service of the *Landesleitung* in spring 1933 and after Begus' detention in September 1933 jumped in as head of the network on an interim basis.³³² In spring 1934 he was detained, but presumably could again make use of his connections within the Viennese police. Thanks to the willing assistance of the police officers on duty, he was able to escape and flee to Germany. There he continued to work in the intelligence field and joined Begus at the Munich department of the intelligence service.³³³

3.8. Franz Hörwarthner³³⁴

The last member of the service's core group is the one that is strongly connected with its large-scale collapse in summer 1934–Franz Hörwarthner.

Hörwarthner had worked for the Austrian army from 1928 to 1933 and had been part of the *Deutscher Soldatenbund*³³⁵, a National Socialist network within the Austrian army.³³⁶ In June 1933, the network was discovered and disbanded. Some of its members (though by far not all), such as Hörwarthner, were dismissed and in spring 1934 formed the backbone of Fridolin Glass' *SS-Standarte 89*.³³⁷

In the intelligence service, Hörwarthner had various roles: he served as the service's *Kanzleileiter*³³⁸ and as courier, as contact man to informants in the army and also assisted Bersch with the composition of weekly intelligence reports.³³⁹ In these positions, Hörwarthner was acquainted with almost all core members of the intelligence service as well as with sensitive internal information – such as the code names that numerous key members used in their internal communication. After the mass arrests of

³³¹ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 186, 206f.; Walterskirchen, *Starhemberg. Oder Die Spuren der >>30er Jahre<<*, p. 65.

³³² Rothländer, p. 432.

³³³ Ibid., p. 433.

³³⁴ In some instances also misspelled as Hörwarther

Date of birth: 09.05.1909

Profession: Soldier/unemployed

Memberships: NSDAP xx.xx.1930

Arrested: 26.07.1934

KZ imprisonment: 15.03.1938

Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Franz Hörwarthner Fortsetzung, 19.2.35, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Kreisgericht Wien, Beschluß Hörwarthner Franz, 08.04.1941, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921.; Gauhauptstellenleiter Franz Kamba, An die Kanzlei des Führers der NSDAP, Betreff Ignaz Hörwarthner, 06.06.1940, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921

³³⁵ ~German Soldiers' Association

³³⁶ Ida Hörwarthner, Gnadengesuch um Enthaftung ihres Gatten, Franz Hörwarthner, 15.07.1938, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921.

³³⁷ Schafranek, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934.*, pp. 33–35.

³³⁸ ~head of chancellery. Rothländer, p. 434.

³³⁹ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Franz Hörwarthner Fortsetzung, 19.2.35, pp. 5f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

illegal Nazis in the wake of the July coup, these code names were the last obstacle that prevented the police from uncovering vast parts of the intelligence network.

Hörwarthner was among the arrested and decided to cooperate with the authorities. He agreed to uncover the intelligence service's members' code names and thus enabled the police to identify and imprison over 40 of its members – including Begus, Bersch and Scheickl.³⁴⁰ For his cooperation with the police, in the eyes of the Nazi movement an unforgivable betrayal³⁴¹, Hörwarthner was arrested just a couple of days after the “*Anschluss*” and had to spend several years as prisoner in the KZ Buchenwald.³⁴² This example of his cooperation with the police also illustrates the aforementioned challenges with which the sources' specific origins provide us with. Hörwarthner's wife and father claim that he was physically abused in his interrogations.³⁴³ It is impossible to determine whether this is a self-serving assertion that was brought forward by his relatives to exculpate his collaboration with the police or whether he was indeed unlawfully treated in order to extract information on the intelligence service and its members and contributors. The latter does not seem very likely to me, as it is not a common allegation against Austrofascist authorities in both the literature and the source material. However, it might still be possible due to the Austrofascists' frequent violations of the rule of law and underlines the extra cautiousness with which sources of Austrofascist provenance should be approached.

³⁴⁰ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Dr. Franz Mayer, 4.3.35, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Otto Bersch, 20.2.35, p. 5, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, Hauptverhandlung gegen Dr. Benno Breitenberg-Zennenberg, Volksgericht am 28.02.48, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.14., trial record VG 215_55.

³⁴¹ 38f. Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien - Hauptverhandlung gegen Dr. Benno Breitenberg-Zennenberg, Zeugenaussage Dr. Alois Tomek, Volksgericht am 28.11.47, pp. 1f., in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. – Gauakten, trial record VG 215_55.; Stellvertreter Gauleiter, An Gauleiter Alfred Frauenfeld, Betreff Parteimitgliedschaft Otto Bersch, 11.01.1937, pp. 1f., in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. – Gauakten, trial record VG 215_55.

³⁴² Kreisgericht Wien, Beschluß Hörwarthner Franz, 08.04.1941, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921.; Gauhauptstellenleiter Franz Kamba, An die Kanzlei des Führers der NSDAP, Betreff Ignaz Hörwarthner, 06.06.1940, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921.; Gaupersonalamt, Schiedsverfahren Ignaz Hörwarthner, 26.05.1940, pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921.; Ida Hörwarthner, Gnadengesuch um Enthaftung ihres Gatten, Franz Hörwarthner, 15.07.1938, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921.

³⁴³ Gaupersonalamt, Schiedsverfahren Ignaz Hörwarthner, 26.05.1940, pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921.; Ida Hörwarthner, Gnadengesuch um Enthaftung ihres Gatten, Franz Hörwarthner, 15.07.1938, p. 2, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921.

4. Activities and networks

As this thesis' subtitle should already indicate, the intelligence service offers insights into various dimensions of illegal National socialist activity at the time. On the following pages, I will thus outline the intelligence service's involvement in these different areas and most notably present concrete actions and endeavours to exemplify its contribution. Furthermore, I shall situate the intelligence service in an intricate web of networks and interest groups. These networks in Austria's society, its institutional structures and authorities constituted the environment for its activities and facilitated them in the first place.

It has to be repeated that these remarks cannot provide final results and I want to emphasise again that they simply cannot do given the clandestine and confidential character of the whole intelligence network and its tasks. Especially when it comes to informants, we have to consider that a multitude of sources and contributors existed and that for the majority of these very likely no written record exists due to the inherent secrecy of these relations and the opaqueness of National Socialist intelligence structures. The list of informants' names and related networks is thus in no way exhaustive and the roughly 100 contributors of the intelligence service that I came across during my research can only enable a small glimpse into its networks. I urge all readers to please consider these reservations. In addition, members of the intelligence service were at the same time also members of other organisations – of the *Landesleitung*, the SS, the SA, other intelligence networks etcetera – and as a result, in many instances it is impossible to assess for which of these functions a person performed a certain action or contacted a certain person. Therefore, I chose to consider an action of a specific individual as action with relevance for the intelligence service as the service was connected to that action via the particular individual as member.

Obviously, the intelligence service's major contribution to the Austrian Nazi movement was information. However, the provided information was used in several different domains of National socialist activity and made the intelligence service an important player in areas other than its main task of intelligence.

In an attempt to categorize these different domains in which the intelligence service contributed I have identified **three major fields of activity** already shortly addressed above in the overview.

1. Infiltration of state institutions
2. Violence and terrorism
3. Networking and propaganda

It is important to note that these fields were highly interlinked and overlapping, both personally and structurally. The presented distinction is thus somewhat artificial. However, it should serve a certain reduction of complexity and make the service's manifold activities comprehensible and manageable.

4.1. Infiltration of state institutions

Without a doubt, activities for the infiltration of key institutions of the Austrian state were the primary occupation of the intelligence service. The most relevant institutions in this regard were the judiciary and the police forces. Especially the pervasion of the Austrian police (and armed) forces with Nazi informants and members had been made a priority since the ban of the Nazi organisations.³⁴⁴ This should in particular hinder law enforcement which was of paramount importance to further increase or at least maintain the Nazi movement's numerical, political and military strength, despite its illegal character and intensified prosecution on the part of the authorities.³⁴⁵ To put it simply, National Socialists should be kept out of jail through the help of networks in the police and the judiciary. The intelligence service of the Austrian *Landesleitung* played a pivotal role in this strategy that also served as a way of self-protection, as in several cases the service's networks were working against their own prosecution.

To achieve this objective, legal and illegal methods were applied. For both methods, the strikingly high rate of people with a legal background among the Nazi movement proved to be very helpful³⁴⁶ – for which the intelligence service can also serve as example as five of its eight core members had studied law (Wächter, Begus, Scheickl, Meerganz-Medeazza and Thaler)

This legal and illegal fight against prosecution was indivisibly interlinked and went hand in hand – and the intelligence service's mastermind Otto Wächter can be seen as personification of this close connection and its main facilitator. Besides serving as the “party lawyer” and thus as lawful and legal representative of countless National Socialists in court, as initiator of the intelligence service he incited extensive abuse of office and advanced and commissioned the further Nazi infiltration of the police and judicial system.

Within the former, the network of informants among the Viennese police forces established and maintained by Otto Begus and Fritz Thaler was of paramount importance while at court, Robert

³⁴⁴ Jagschitz, ‘Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten’, p. 246.; Rothländer, p. 405.

³⁴⁵ Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 230.

Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 307f.; Rothländer, p. 305.

³⁴⁶ Ackerl, p. 35.; Bauer, ‘Arbeiterpartei? Zur Sozialstruktur der illegalen NSDAP in Österreich.’, pp. 263f.; Gerhard Botz, ‘Introduction’, in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*. (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget), pp. 192–201 (p. 198).; Botz, ‘The Changing Patterns of Social Support for Austrian National Socialism (1918-1945)’, pp. 221f.

Scheickl proved to be Wächter's most productive informer. Moreover, illegal Nazis and informants for the intelligence service could be found even among higher ranks of the judiciary, such as the public prosecutors – as in the very telling case of Johann Powalatz that will be recounted in detail below.

Beforehand a few remarks on Begus' and Thaler's networks within the police forces.

Otto Begus' career in the Austrian police was already shortly touched upon above. Begus was from South Tyrol and in 1926 started his police career for the federal state government of Tyrol.³⁴⁷ At the initiative of *Heimwehr* leader Waldemar Pabst, a very influential figure of the rise of the right in major parts of Europe in the interwar period³⁴⁸, Begus was transferred to the police department of Vienna in 1929.³⁴⁹ A year later he became adjutant of the minister of the interior Ernst Starhemberg.³⁵⁰ This already exemplifies his close ties to various forces on the radical right, especially the *Heimwehr*, as will be further elaborated below in the remarks on the intelligence service's links to the *Heimwehr*.

Begus' first spell as policeman in Vienna lasted from March 1929 until October 1930 when he joined Starhemberg's ministry.³⁵¹ After Starhemberg's short term (only around two months) as minister ended, Begus was transferred to police departments in Carinthia and Upper Austria. It was not before April 1933³⁵² that he could transfer to Vienna again and, once more with help of Fritz Thaler, reconnect and intensify contacts to already existing, extended Nazi networks among the policemen – such as the group "Gersthof II" of Konrad Rotter.³⁵³

Begus did not waste any time to use his new position at the *Landespolizeidirektion Wien*³⁵⁴ for the benefit of the Nazi Movement. He extensively forwarded sensitive information to the National Socialists and, despite his promotion in July 1933³⁵⁵, was arrested as Nazi informant in September – not even half a year after his transfer to Vienna and just a few months after his appointment as head of the intelligence service. The "Special Disciplinary Commission at the Chancellor's Office"³⁵⁶ came to the conclusion that Begus *"in the months of August and September 1933 has transmitted information of political nature and also information on official internal procedures to supporters of the National Socialist Party and thusly intentionally promoted subversive and anti-government endeavours"*³⁵⁷.

³⁴⁷ NSDAP-Flüchtlingshilfswerk, Fragebogen 2 Beamte - Otto Begus, o.D., p. 1, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

³⁴⁸ Rothländer, p. 338.

³⁴⁹ NSDAP-Flüchtlingshilfswerk, Fragebogen 2 Beamte - Otto Begus, o.D., p. 1, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.; Rothländer, p. 429.

³⁵⁰ Bundes-Polizeidirektion Wien, Einberufung in das BKA Otto Begus, 07.10.1930, in OeStA/AdR BKA BKA-I Präs PA Kt. 375 Begus Dr. Otto.

³⁵¹ NSDAP-Flüchtlingshilfswerk, Fragebogen 2 Beamte - Otto Begus, o.D., p. 1, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

³⁵² Begus also finally joined the party in the same month. Otto Begus, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 25.9.1935, p. 2, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

³⁵³ Rothländer, p. 430, f.n. 1894.

³⁵⁴ Viennese police department

³⁵⁵ NSDAP-Flüchtlingshilfswerk, Fragebogen 2 Beamte - Otto Begus, o.D., p. 2, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

³⁵⁶ *Besondere Disziplinarkommission beim Bundeskanzleramt*

³⁵⁷ Original quote: „Polizeikommissär Dr. Otto Begus ist schuldig des Dienstvergehens nach §2. Absatz 1 (...), begangen dadurch, dass er in den Monaten August und September 1933 Nachrichten politischer Natur sowie auch Nachrichten über dienstliche Vorgänge

Consequently, he was fired and under arrest from September 1933 until March 1934. After his release, *Landesinspekteur* Habicht commissioned him to flee to Germany and appointed him as head of the intelligence service's Munich department.³⁵⁸ As stated in the next chapter, he returned in July 1934 to assume a rather prominent though not yet fully clarified role during the July coup. A few days after its failure he was arrested while carrying a copy from an espionage case against Weinrich, Haider, Thaler et al. to which we will come back later. To the police, this once more proved his involvement with the intelligence service and led to another half year in prison.³⁵⁹

During most of Begus' work for the Nazi movement, the well networked intelligence expert Fritz Thaler was at his side, just as he was when Begus established the *Landesleitung's* intelligence service. The two men had already studied together in Innsbruck and also the majority of their informants were long-time personal acquaintances from Tyrol, the university, the Habsburg army or paramilitary formations. This is also true for two of their most important informants, Benno Braitenberg³⁶⁰ and Rudolf Brunner. Braitenberg and Begus had fought together for the *Bund Oberland* in the Silesian Uprisings (1919-1921) while Begus and Brunner were comrades from World War I.³⁶¹

Braitenberg had served as Chief of Police of Eisenstadt and was then transferred to Vienna because of disciplinary reasons due to his open sympathy for the National Socialists.³⁶² Despite his known affiliation with the Nazi movement, he became deputy head of the passport office and responsible for exit visas for Germany³⁶³. His new position actually proved to be very useful for his work for Nazi intelligence. This extraordinary blindness³⁶⁴ of the authorities seemed to have amazed even Braitenberg himself, as he writes in his memoirs: "*Strangely enough, I was assigned a department in which I could be of great help [for the Nazi movement; author's note]: exit visas for Germany*"³⁶⁵

Anhänger der nationalsozialistischen Partei vermittelt und hiedurch geflissentlich staats- und regierungs-) regierungsfeindliche Bestrebungen gefördert hat." Besondere Disziplinarkommission beim Bundeskanzleramt, Disziplinarsache Otto Begus, 30.10.1933, pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/119.579.

³⁵⁸ Rothländer, p. 429

³⁵⁹ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Fortsetzung der Vernehmung des Beschuldigten Robert Scheickl, 29.1.35, p. 6, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; NSDAP-Flüchtlingshilfswerk, Bewerbungsbogen Otto Begus, 24.9.1935, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/119.579.

³⁶⁰ In some instances also spelled as Breitenberg

³⁶¹ Rothländer, p. 430, f.n. 1895.

³⁶² Ibid., p. 430.

³⁶³ Ibid., pp. 430f.

³⁶⁴ Or maybe it might already have been resignation and beginning collaboration. Another possible explanation would be that the emigration of Austrian National Socialists to Germany was even desirable for the Austrian authorities.

³⁶⁵ Original quote: „Sonderbarerweise hatte man mir ein Referat zugeteilt, in dem ich viel helfen konnte: Ausreiseseichtvermerke für Deutschland“. Benno Braitenberg quoted according to Rothländer, p. 431.

As stated in chapter II.1., the German government had introduced a series of economic sanctions against Austria which aimed at the important tourism industry in Austria – the most well-known being the *1000-Mark-Sperre*, as expounded earlier. Another sanction in this sense was the introduction of compulsory exit visas for Germans who wanted to travel to Austria on 1st April 1933.³⁶⁶ In return, the Austrofascist government had copied this policy of exit visas with the additional objective of restricting National Socialists' freedom of movement between Austria and Germany to fight the ongoing Nazi terror.³⁶⁷ Via issuing exit visas in his new position at the passport office, Braitenberg was thus now able to facilitate the travel and emigration of Austrian National Socialists to Germany and in doing so counter and undermine the government's measure to a certain extent. Hence, Braitenberg provided the intelligence service and the Austrian Nazis with an important way of impeding prosecution which at times was very high in demand: secret emigration to Germany as especially after the ban of the NSDAP and its suborganisations in Austria, thousands of Austrian Nazis fled to Germany.³⁶⁸ Apart from that, Braitenberg also forwarded sensitive information from his former position at the police headquarters and his new one as deputy head of the passport office.³⁶⁹

Rudolf Brunner on the other hand was Begus' connection to the aforementioned Nazi network "*Gersthof II*"³⁷⁰ that had been founded by Konrad Rotter at the end of 1930 and at its peak is said to have consisted of over 1000 Viennese policemen – which once more illustrates the extraordinary extent of National Socialist networks among the security forces.³⁷¹ It is likely that a substantial part of them also contributed to the intelligence service of the *Landesleitung*, again exposing the only fragmentary character of archival findings to this day.

Besides Rotter's group, the former head of the security guards' intervention force (*Alarmabteilung der Sicherheitswache*), Leo Gotzmann, provided the service with information too. Gotzmann again was a friend of Herbert Hedrich, nothing less than the head of the state police³⁷². Cases like these exemplify how Nazi networks even reached to the very highest levels of the Austrian executive branch. Gotzmann and Hedrich were in the same fraternity (*Wiener Akademische Sängerschaft Ghibellinen*)

³⁶⁶ Binder, pp. 497f.

³⁶⁷ Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', p. 291.

³⁶⁸ Bauer, *Hitlers Zweiter Putsch Dollfuß, Die Nazis und Der 25. Juli 1934*, pp. 12f.

³⁶⁹ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien - Hauptverhandlung gegen Dr. Benno Breitenberg-Zennenberg, Zeugenaussage Dr. Alois Tomek, Volksgericht am 28.11.47, pp. 1f., in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. – Gauakten, trial record VG 215_55.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, Hauptverhandlung gegen Dr. Benno Breitenberg-Zennenberg, Volksgericht am 28.02.48, pp. 1f., in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. – Gauakten, trial record VG 215_55.

³⁷⁰ Gersthof is a specific area in the 18th district of Vienna.

³⁷¹ Rothländer, pp. 412, 430, f.n. 1894.

³⁷² Ibid., p. 431.

which additionally once more underlines the paramount importance of the countless associations, paramilitary organisations and interest groups of the third camp for the Nazi movement's expansion in Austria and its subsequent takeover – to which we will come back under point three on networking as well.³⁷³

Moreover, the Austrian NSDAP's intelligence service was also in permanent exchange with the intelligence service of the Austrian SS under Ludwig Stigler, a close confidant of Theodor Habicht. For the SS intelligence service, informants in the Chancellor's Office stole documents from the head of the state police's evidence office.³⁷⁴ Rothländer states that of 140 policemen in the Chancellor's Office a staggering 27 were members of the NSDAP.³⁷⁵

In her findings on intelligence networks of the Nazi movement at that time, Christiane Rothländer hence emphasises the intelligence service's extensive scope and its diverse composition of informants before the July coup and wittily describes it as ranging from *"the former Albanian Consul General to a Viennese lederhosen producer."*³⁷⁶

Via this multitude of connections and through Begus' own occupation in the Viennese police department, the intelligence service was able to obtain and also transmit very sensitive documents, inter alia:

➔ Information about impending police raids and arrests

This was in particular the responsibility of a "warning service" that Rudolf Pavlu directed and which used material from the various police informants. It enabled the Austrian *Landesleitung* to warn members and hide or destroy evidence and proved to be an enormous help in keeping Nazi members out of jail. It was partly extended to SS members as well.³⁷⁷ In the disciplinary proceedings against Begus' in autumn 1933, the Extraordinary Disciplinary Commission emphasises the impact of this "warning service" and condemned it as *"promotion of subversive and anti-government endeavours"*³⁷⁸

³⁷³ Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 13.

³⁷⁴ Rothländer, p. 436

³⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 432.

³⁷⁶ Original quote: *„Das von Wächter und seinen Mitarbeitern organisierte Spionagenetzwerk reichte im Sommer 1934 vom ehemaligen albanischen Honorarkonsul bis zum Wiener Lederhosenerzeuger.“* Ibid., p. 436.

³⁷⁷ Besondere Disziplinarkommission beim Bundeskanzleramt, Disziplinarsache Otto Begus, 30.10.1933, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.; Blatnik, p. 161.; Rothländer, p. 436.

³⁷⁸ Original quote: *„In der Tatsache der Übermittlung von Nachrichten über bevorstehende Hausdurchsuchungen bei Mitgliedern der nationalsozialistischen deutschen Arbeiterpartei muss eine geflissentliche Förderung der Bestrebungen dieser Partei und somit mit Rücksicht auf die staats- und regierungsfeindliche Haltung dieser Partei eine geflissentliche Förderung staats- und regierungsfeindlicher Bestrebungen erblickt werden.“* Besondere Disziplinarkommission beim Bundeskanzleramt, Disziplinarsache Otto Begus, 30.10.1933, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

➔ “Information on political orientation of the officers at the police direction Vienna”³⁷⁹, as Otto Begus confirmed in a police interrogation in August 1934

Knowing the political orientation of police officers and who among them might possibly be sympathising with Nazism could have helped the *Landesleitung* in identifying both potential contributors to recruit for the Nazi movement – thus further expanding its networks and influence – and new targets for terror attacks and assaults as prominent supporters of the Austrofascist regime among the security forces were often chosen for attacks.³⁸⁰

➔ Information on procedures of political opponents (respectively potential allies), particularly the *Heimwehr*

As we will see under chapter three on networking and propaganda, Begus, Thaler and their colleagues had intensive and long-standing contact with leading *Heimwehr* figures and could therefore provide information on internal *Heimwehr* procedures and its plans.³⁸¹

➔ Protocols of police investigations and court cases

Confidential police protocols and court testimonies were transmitted by informants within the police and should help the movement’s legal advisors in their juridical struggle against convictions of Nazi members and terrorists.³⁸²

This brings us to the intelligence service’s networks within the Viennese judiciary, which appear to have provided very similar documents. Hence, the legal representatives of indicted National Socialists were provided with very valuable confidential documents by two different sources: from within the police and from within the courts.

Among the networks in the judiciary Otto Wächter and Robert Scheickl had pivotal roles. As stated above, Scheickl worked as a trainee lawyer at the Criminal Court of Vienna. Because of his assignment to one of the political departments (department XXVI), he was primarily concerned with trials against the political opposition. In many cases he thus worked on criminal proceedings against illegal National

³⁷⁹ Original quote: „Die Nachrichten, die ich aus Österreich bekommen habe, bestanden in Verzeichnissen über Reichsdeutsche Autos, welche sich in Österreich aufhielten, über Reichsdeutsche, die hier Wohnung nahmen und weiters in Informationen über [sic] politische Einstellung der Beamten der Polizeidirektion Wien.“ Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, Scheickl Robert; Missbrauch der Amtsgewalt, 27.03.1935, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

³⁸⁰ Jagschitz, ‘Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934’, p. 16.

³⁸¹ Besondere Disziplinarkommission beim Bundeskanzleramt, Disziplinarsache Otto Begus, 30.10.1933, p. 3. In: OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

³⁸² Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, Scheickl Robert; Missbrauch der Amtsgewalt, 27.03.1935, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

Socialists and Nazi terrorists or had at least access to the files – such as in the cases of Geckl et al., Weinrich et al., and Walter Leubuscher, that will be presented in detail in the next chapter.

In these cases, Wächter was part of the legal representation and commissioned Scheickl to use his position as trainee lawyer and the accompanying access to files of ongoing proceedings in order to copy sensitive documents. Scheickl either made excerpts of relevant parts on the spot or took the files home to copy required documents – such as records of the suspects' interrogations.³⁸³ He then submitted the documents to Wächter who in this way gained insight into the prosecutors' evidence and strategy.³⁸⁴

Scheickl's assignment to the very sensitive political department at court gave him an abundance of opportunities to work against the prosecution of National Socialists, even more so as he worked there in the period of most intensive Nazi terrorism (summer 1933 to summer 1934).³⁸⁵ This observation was also made by the investigating police officers after his detention in August 1934 and raises questions concerning the court's staff selection.³⁸⁶ One explanation for the apparently negligent examination of future lawyers at that time actually lies in the Austrofascists' bitter fight against the Social Democratic and left-wing opposition. A superior of Scheickl, *Hofrat*³⁸⁷ Viktor Leeb, remarked in his testimony in the trial against Scheickl that *„as consequence of the February Uprising 1934 massive changes in the staff, also among the courtroom staff of department 26, occurred”*³⁸⁸. After the clashes of February 1934 and the immediately following ban of the Social Democratic party, known Social Democrats were ousted from their positions throughout Austria's institutions, in its administration and its judicial, legislative and executive branches. In some institutions, such as courts, this led to a lack of qualified personnel and to general overwork. It is not very far-fetched to assume that less suitable candidates had to be chosen to fill in and that in some instances, secret National Socialists were thus hired or rose through the ranks.³⁸⁹

³⁸³ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Urteil gegen Robert Scheickl, 25.6.1935, p. 3, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

³⁸⁴ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Dr. Hugo Gerold Hitschmann, 2.3.35, p. 4, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

³⁸⁵ According to Winfried Garscha, the 14 months before the July coup were the deadliest period of Nazi terror in Austria, with about 135 of the around 170 deaths falling in this period. Garscha, p. 107.

³⁸⁶ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Dr. Franz Mayer, 4.3.35, p. 3, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

³⁸⁷ ~court councillor

³⁸⁸ Original quote: *„Hervorzuheben wäre noch, dass als Auswirkung der Februarunruhen 1934 ein starker Personalwechsel u[nd] zw[ar] auch unter den richterlichen Referenten der Abt[eilun]g 26 eintrat.“* Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Viktor Leeb, 21.3.35, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

³⁸⁹ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Dr. Franz Mayer, 4.3.35, p. 3, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

In addition to hasty recruitments, a generally overloaded workforce might overlook suspicious behaviour and transgressions at court, which probably made it easier for Scheickl and other informants to remain undetected and continue abusing their positions.

In one case, the trial against Weinrich et al., Scheickl was told by Wächter in May 1934 to browse through the trial records and look for documents mentioning a certain Dr. Thaler – Fritz Thaler, as stated above, a key member of the intelligence service.³⁹⁰

This specific case of the criminal proceedings against Fritz Thaler in spring 1934 deserves particular attention as it is an extraordinary example to illustrate the concrete results of National Socialist infiltration in the two aforementioned areas, the judiciary and the police. First, as we heard, Scheickl as contributor at court copied documents from the Weinrich files and in this way informed Wächter about the investigations against Thaler. The documents also revealed which accusations had been brought forward against him and what evidence supported them.³⁹¹ Hence, Wächter could estimate how substantial the body of evidence was and consequently how likely an arrest of Thaler would be. In this case, he thought the danger to be great indeed and apparently commissioned Thaler to flee to Germany in order to avoid impending apprehension.³⁹² However, the police forestalled Thaler's flight and arrested him – which brings us to the second point, the infiltration of the police.

Christiane Rothländer is certain that it is due to Thaler's good connections within the Viennese police that enabled him to even flee police custody and escape to Germany. According to a police report she quotes, he managed to flee while being under supervision of several police officers which raises severe questions as to their conduct, to say the least.³⁹³

Therefore, Thaler's case vividly illustrates how minor police and courtroom personnel with Nazi affiliations were misusing their positions for the benefit of Nazism. However, it was not only the lower ranks who were defecting to the Nazi movement – prosecuting attorneys were covertly sympathising with Nazism as well. In the case of Weinrich and Thaler, it was even the presiding judge Johann Powalatz who at the time of the trial (at the end of 1934) already secretly donated to various National Socialist organisations, including the political organisation and the SS – despite being a member of the

³⁹⁰ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Urteil gegen Robert Scheickl, 25.6.1935, pp. 3f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

³⁹¹ Ibid.; Mitteilung Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, An die Staatsanwaltschaft Wien I, 11.01.1935, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Otto Bersch, 20.2.35, p. 6, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Dr. Josef Wojtech, 23.2.35, p. 5, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

³⁹² Rothländer, p. 433.

³⁹³ Ibid.

Vaterländische Front.³⁹⁴ One can only speculate what was discussed in conversations between Powalatz and Wächter, who was a common visitor in the various court departments. Knowing his position towards Nazism, it is very telling that Powalatz was even the head of one of the political departments³⁹⁵ – departments that had actually been established to fight the political opposition. Even more interestingly, Powalatz plays a more prominent and active role in another case: the trial against the very same Robert Scheickl, former trainee lawyer. As stated above, in the aftermath of the July coup extended police investigations and whistle-blowers within the Nazi movement (such as Hörwarthner) led to mass arrests of illegal National Socialists.³⁹⁶ Kurt Bauer states that two months after the failed coup, over 13.000 prisoners with a political background were in jail – almost 90% of them National Socialists.³⁹⁷ Among them were also several members of the intelligence service, including Robert Scheickl. He was severely incriminated by Hörwarthner's testimonies and by documents seized during several police raids. After over ten months in police custody, preventive detention and pretrial detention – a result of the Austrofascist attacks on the rule of law, as elaborated in chapter III.5. – Scheickl was finally tried in June 1935. Johann Powalatz again served as presiding judge and according to Maria Brandsteidl showed extraordinary goodwill to his fellow National Socialist. Brandsteidl was a dedicated Nazi member, an acquaintance of Scheickl and Powalatz' clerk at court of whom she also collected donations for various National Socialist organisations.³⁹⁸ She is the only female contributor to the intelligence service that could be made out in this work of research in the archival sources at hand.³⁹⁹ Brandsteidl established off-the-record contact outside of the court room between Scheickl and Powalatz – nota bene: between defendant and presiding judge – who according to her then directly negotiated about Scheickl's sentence.⁴⁰⁰ Quite in line with this, Scheickl was sentenced to a relatively mild prison term of eight months. What is more, pretrial detention was taken into account which reduced the sentence yet to serve to a mere three months. And as if that was not enough, he was (allegedly) erroneously released prematurely in September 1935. Instead of being imprisoned at the preventive detention camp Wöllersdorf (a common measure against

³⁹⁴ Johann Powalatz, Lebenslauf Johann Powalatz, 28.5.1938, p. 2, in OeStA/AdR Justiz RJM PA Powalatz Johann Dr.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, Anklage gegen Franz Haider, Oskar Vogl und Gottfried Weinrich, 29.09.1934, p. 1, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.; Landes-Gericht für Strafsachen I, Hauptverhandlung gegen Franz Haider und Genossen, 29.09.1934, p. 1, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

Powalatz joined the NSDAP in 1937, although officially his membership was only acknowledged in May 1938, as the central membership database in the Berlin federal archive tells. #6206264, admission 03.06.1938 [01.05.1938]. BAArch (former BDC), NSDAP MitglieDKartei, Dr. Johann Powalatz.

³⁹⁵ Of the political department VI at the Criminal Court of Vienna. Wolfgang Stadler, '... Juristisch bin ich nicht zu fassen.' *Die Verfahren des Volksgerichtes Wien gegen Richter und Staatsanwälte 1945-1955* (Vienna/Berlin: LIT, 2007), p. 346.

³⁹⁶ Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 239.; Garscha, p. 109.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Johann Powalatz, Lebenslauf Johann Powalatz, 28.5.1938, p. 2, in OeStA/AdR Justiz RJM PA Powalatz Johann Dr.

³⁹⁹ See footnote 274.

⁴⁰⁰ Maria Brandsteidl, Lebenslauf, o. D., pp. 2f., in WSTLA/2.3.14., trial record Vr 8121-46.

members of the opposition at that time⁴⁰¹) Scheickl was set free, took refuge at Brandsteidl's house and shortly after fled to Berlin. After the National Socialist takeover in Austria, Powalatz highlighted his efforts in the illegal period in his résumé. Succinctly summarising, he states to have worked "*in National Socialist manner*" in trials against National Socialists in the illegal period⁴⁰² and, among others, refers to Scheickl as witness for his claims.⁴⁰³

From 1936 on, Powalatz went even further in his abuse of office and directly provided the Austrian NSDAP *Landesleitung* with documents of trials against National Socialists indicted of high treason (at that time a crime for which capital punishment may have been imposed).⁴⁰⁴ In March 1939, he was then rewarded for his collaboration with the illegal National Socialists and promoted to president of the senate at the Higher Regional Court in Linz.⁴⁰⁵

The trials against both Weinrich/Thaler and Scheickl thus illustrate the extent and far-reaching consequences of National Socialist expansion among the judiciary. Even attorneys blatantly showed their sympathy for Nazism and antisemitism⁴⁰⁶ and apparently also dispensed justice based on their unequivocal political stance. Hence, not even the highest ranks of law enforcement and the executive branch were by any means free from National Socialist sympathisers.

4.2. Violence and terrorism

As expounded earlier, in practice the intelligence service's infiltration activities are indivisibly connected with the two other dimensions listed here. The service's endeavours did not stop at merely gathering information but expanded to the effective usage of the information as well. This will also be evident in the following examples on the intelligence service's connection **1. to the espionage for military secrets, 2. to the Nazi movement's terrorist arm, 3. to its armament and arms smuggling,** and, closely linked to the other points, **4. to the violent attempt for the overthrow of the government in the form of the July coup.**

⁴⁰¹ Neugebauer, pp. 313–315.; Schölnberger, pp. 196f.

⁴⁰² Original quote: „*Ich habe als Vors[itzen]der in polit[ischen] Strafprozessen gegen Nationalsoz[ialisten] in nationalsoz[ialistischen] Sinne gearbeitet.*“ Johann Powalatz, Lebenslauf Johann Powalatz, 28.5.1938, p. 2, in OeStA/AdR Justiz RJM PA Powalatz Johann Dr.

⁴⁰³ Johann Powalatz, Lebenslauf Johann Powalatz, 28.5.1938, p. 4, in OeStA/AdR Justiz RJM PA Powalatz Johann Dr.; Blatnik, p. 160ff.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 2.; Maria Brandsteidl, Lebenslauf, o. D., p. 3, in WSTLA/2.3.14., trial record Vr 8121-46.; Rothländer, pp. 250, 384.; Stadler, p. 346.

⁴⁰⁵ Führer und Reichskanzler, Ernennung zum Senatspräsidenten beim OLG, 21.2.1939, in OeStA/AdR Justiz RJM PA Powalatz Johann Dr.; Der Stellvertreter des Führers Rudolf Heß, Zustimmung zum Ernennungsvorschlag Johann Powalatz, 21.2.1939, in OeStA/AdR Justiz RJM PA Powalatz Johann Dr.; Der Reichsminister der Justiz, Vorschlag zur Ernennung zum Senatspräsidenten Johann Powalatz, 24.02.1939, in OeStA/AdR Justiz RJM PA Powalatz Johann Dr.; Stadler, p. 346.

⁴⁰⁶ Rothländer, pp. 248–250.

4.2.1. Espionage for military secrets

Under the direction of Theodor Habicht, the establishment of strong structures within the Austrian army became a priority. This was particularly to be achieved through endeavours of the various intelligence networks and through the *Deutscher Soldatenbund*. This National Socialist cell was primarily established to undermine efforts of the army in case it would be deployed against the Nazi movement and later constituted the foundation for the *SS-Standarte 89*, the main military force used in the July coup. In the highly over-optimistic plans for the coup⁴⁰⁷, the Nazi leadership even expected substantial parts of the army (and police forces) to defect and join the coup but even the high army and police officials among the putschists could not effect this.⁴⁰⁸

The *Deutscher Soldatenbund* was detected and disbanded in June 1933 but not fully defeated. In May 1933, in total over 1000 politically oppositional soldiers were discharged from the army, including around 70 members of the *Soldatenbund*⁴⁰⁹ – among them Franz Hörwarthner, the intelligence service's head of chancellery.⁴¹⁰ However, National Socialist structures and informants within the *Bundesheer* were still widespread. Their information gave the Nazi leadership insight into the *Bundesheer's* weaponry and internal condition and thus enabled it to evaluate the military capacity of the Austrian army. Eventually, army insiders should help in the planning of the putsch in July 1934 – especially with the assessment of the potential reactions of certain army divisions to an attempted putsch.⁴¹¹

An example for one of these networks of informants was the trio of Gottfried Weinrich, Oskar Vogl and Franz Haider, the group's head, which was detected in February 1934. As addressed earlier, this particular case is also connected to the *Landesleitung's* intelligence service because it was one of the trials in which Robert Scheickl should copy documents and due to the involvement of Fritz Thaler.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁷ Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, p. 81; Rothländer, p. 405.; Scheuch, p. 135.

⁴⁰⁸ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 29f.; Bauer, *Hitlers Zweiter Putsch Dollfuß, Die Nazis und Der 25. Juli 1934*, pp. 206–211.; Gerhard Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich* (Graz/Vienna/Cologne: Styria, 1976), p. 81–83.; Jedlicka, *Vom alten zum neuen Österreich. Fallstudien zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 1900-1975.*, p. 283.; Manfred Scheuch, *Der Weg zum Heldenplatz. Eine Geschichte der österreichischen Diktatur 1933-1938* (Vienna: Kremayr & Scheriau, 2005), pp. 135f.

⁴⁰⁹ Blatnik, pp. 157f.; Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, p. 81; Rothländer, p. 405.

⁴¹⁰ Ida Hörwarthner, Gnadengesuch um Enthaftung ihres Gatten, Franz Hörwarthner, 15.07.1938, p. 1, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/33.921.

⁴¹¹ Carsten, pp. 162f.

⁴¹² Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Urteil gegen Robert Scheickl, 25.6.1935, pp. 3f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Mitteilung Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, An die Staatsanwaltschaft Wien I, 11.01.1935, pp. 1–3, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Fortsetzung der Vernehmung des Beschuldigten Robert Scheickl, 29.1.35, p. 6, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Otto Bersch, 20.2.35, p. 6, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; 156-158.: Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Dr. Georg Schaukal, 2.3.35, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

In 1931, Thaler had established contact between Franz Haider and the intelligence service of the German *Reichswehr*, for which Thaler worked as well.⁴¹³ Since then, Haider had worked as professional spy for the German ministry of the *Reichswehr* and should provide it with information on the Austrian army.⁴¹⁴ For this purpose he cooperated with Weinrich and Vogl, whom he knew from the *Bund Oberland*, a paramilitary formation of which Otto Begus and Ernst Starhemberg had been members too.⁴¹⁵ Together with Vogl and Weinrich he recruited informants within the Austrian army.⁴¹⁶ Among them was Walter Leubuscher, a colleague of Oskar Vogl in another paramilitary formation called "*Deutsche Wehr*"⁴¹⁷. Leubuscher was a trained pilot and had attended the Austrian army's officer's school in Upper Austria that gave him access to classified information. Moreover, from autumn 1932 he served as the military instructor of the Viennese SS.⁴¹⁸ This means that the Viennese SS received first-hand training and knowledge about internal army techniques, procedures and tactics. Interestingly, Leubuscher also had good relations with the SA and particularly the SA *Standarte* 11. The leadership of the latter he provided with army-internal "*military instructions [on] the behaviour in street fights during civil unrest*"⁴¹⁹, which most definitely was highly relevant for the SA and its brawl tactics. In addition, Leubuscher forwarded blueprints for weapons, military manuals and internal instructions to Haider's network. When his collaboration with Nazi intelligence was detected in 1933, he was fired. However, he remained a relevant figure for Nazism in Vienna and played an important role for the Nazi movement's terrorist arm, as we will see in the next chapter.⁴²⁰

Vogl himself provided blueprints of Austrian rifles used in the army which he obtained from members of the *Deutsche Wehr*⁴²¹.

The various informants' contributions were mostly collected at Franz Haider's place. Hence, a house search at the time of his arrest revealed multiple documents of army and governmental origin,

⁴¹³ Franz Haider, Niederschrift Zeugenaussage Franz Haider, 07.06.1934, p. 1, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

⁴¹⁴ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, Anklage gegen Franz Haider, Oskar Vogl und Gottfried Weinrich, 29.09.1934, pp. 3, 5, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.; Franz Haider, Niederschrift Zeugenaussage Franz Haider, 22.02.1934, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.; Landes-Gericht für Strafsachen I, Hauptverhandlung gegen Franz Haider und Genossen, 29.09.1934, p. 4, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

⁴¹⁵ Landes-Gericht für Strafsachen I, Hauptverhandlung gegen Franz Haider und Genossen, 29.09.1934, pp. 4f., 8–10, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

⁴¹⁶ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, Anklage gegen Franz Haider, Oskar Vogl und Gottfried Weinrich, 29.09.1934, pp. 3, 5, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

⁴¹⁷ Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, Haft Oskar Vogl, 27.02.1934, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

⁴¹⁸ Holzmann, p. 120.; Rothländer, pp. 310f., 578f.

⁴¹⁹ Original quote: "*Leubuscher stand auch mit dem Standartenführer der S.A. Standarte 11 in engster Fühlung und hat diesem reservate militärische Dienstbehelfe „Verhalten im Strassenkampf bei inneren Unruhen“ übergeben, die er mit seinem Namen gefertigt hat.*" Kriminalbezirksinspektor Alois Luggas, Erhebung Walter Leubuscher, 08.03.1934, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

⁴²⁰ Bundes-Polizeidirektion Wien, Verfahren Weinrich Gottfried und andere, §§8, 67 St.G., 17.03.1934, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.; Kriminalbezirksinspektor Alois Luggas, Erhebung Walter Leubuscher, 08.03.1934, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.; Rothländer, p. 388.

⁴²¹ Oskar Vogl, Niederschrift Zeugenaussage Oskar Vogl, 13.03.1934, p. 1, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

including a decree of the ministry of defence and a recent internal command of a regiment.⁴²² During the trial against Haider, Weinrich and Vogl, further documents were presented that Haider had obtained and transmitted to Germany. Interestingly, the trial was once more presided by Johann Powalatz, but this time the sources do not reveal any deviations on his part. However, it once more shows the prevalence and potential influence of secret Nazi sympathisers at court and the interconnectedness between National Socialist infiltration and other activities of the movement.⁴²³ The last member of the network's leading trio, Gottfried Weinrich⁴²⁴, tried to convince even officers to forward information.⁴²⁵ However, his main contact always remained his close friend Rudolf Christoph, an infantryman in the second infantry regiment in Vienna. Among other sensitive information, Christoph provided him with blueprints of a new mortar and also with an extensive supply of weapons and the necessary instruction manuals.⁴²⁶ During a raid at the house of Weinrich's mother, around 100 detonators, other explosives and a substantial amount of live ammunition were found.⁴²⁷ The investigating authorities did not discover plans for their usage, but they assumed that Weinrich was connected to the prevalent bomb terrorism of the time as well. As a consequence of that and the Austrofascists' stricter legislation on the possession of explosives⁴²⁸, he was sentenced to five years imprisonment in a separate trial in September 1934.⁴²⁹

⁴²² Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, Schreiben an die Staatsanwaltschaft Wien I, Betreffs Weinrich Gottfried und andere, §§8, 67 Stg, 23.02.1934, p. 3, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

⁴²³ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, Anklage gegen Franz Haider, Oskar Vogl und Gottfried Weinrich, 29.09.1934, p. 1, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

⁴²⁴ NSDAP membership number #6192711, admission 12.06.1938 [01.05.1938]. BArch (former BDC), NSDAP Mitgliederkartei, Gottfried Weinrich.

⁴²⁵ Gottfried Weinrich, Zeugenaussage Gottfried Weinrich, 06.03.1934, p. 6, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

⁴²⁶ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, Anklage gegen Franz Haider, Oskar Vogl und Gottfried Weinrich, 29.09.1934, pp. 7, 10–12, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, An das Infanterieregiment Nr. 2, 18.07.1934, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

⁴²⁷ Revierinspektor Franz Hammerschmiedt, Zeugenaussage Beatrix Weinrich, 02.03.1934, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.; Revierinspektor Franz Hammerschmiedt, Verzeichnis gefundener Gegenstände der Hausdurchsuchung bei Beatrix Weinrich, 02.03.1934, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

⁴²⁸ Die Erhebung von Wien vom 25. Juli 1934. In: Kölnische Zeitung, Nr. 372-3, 27.07.1939, In: BArch (former BDC)-NS-5-VI-17751.; Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', pp. 281f., 292f. See also chapter III.5. „Prosecution and its legal circumstances“.

⁴²⁹ 1589 1Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, Anklage gegen Franz Haider, Oskar Vogl und Gottfried Weinrich, 29.09.1934, p. 13, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34. Reference number of this separate trial: Vr 3479/34/32.

4.2.2. The Nazi movement's terrorist arm

One example of the rampant Nazi terrorism with around 25 deaths from spring 1933 to the July coup in 1934⁴³⁰ was the case of Anton Geckl⁴³¹.

On 7th May 1934, Anton Geckl planted a small, self-made bomb⁴³² in the Viennese coffee house "City" that injured three people and caused substantial property damage.⁴³³

Five days before the attack, he had been in Munich, presumably to receive instructions. This exemplifies how terror attacks of the Austrian Nazi movement were incorporated into a bigger strategy in the illegal period and now carried out in close consultation with the Austrian *Landesleitung* in Munich.⁴³⁴

Geckl himself in many respects matches Bauer's and Botz' earlier stated characterisations of a typical National Socialist terrorist at the time. Geckl was 29 years old and in the movement since 1933.⁴³⁵ He had previously been convicted for National Socialist activity and during the criminal proceedings was linked to multiple other bomb and firecracker attacks in Vienna. His case was thus a rather clear one and therefore Geckl even wanted to plead for mental incapacity and asked for a psychiatric examination (which was denied).⁴³⁶

Nevertheless, Otto Bersch urged Scheickl several times to copy documents, in particular interrogations of Geckl, from the trial records. Scheickl then took the file home, copied parts and passed them on to Bersch and Wächter.⁴³⁷

Geckl's interrogations might have been relevant for the intelligence service for two reasons: first, they provided insight into the current level of knowledge of the prosecutors on the subject of Nazi terrorism in Vienna. For example, the fact that Geckl became a suspect in many cases of bomb attacks showed

⁴³⁰ Garscha, p. 107.

⁴³¹ NSDAP membership number #6303833, admission 15.05.1938 [01.05.1938] BArch (former BDC), NSDAP Mitgliederkartei, Anton Geckl.

Anton Geckl, NSDAP-Personalfragebogen Anton Geckl, 01.07.1938, p. 1–4, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/136.698.

⁴³² In the majority of National Socialist bombings, relatively small explosives were used, often rather firecrackers than bombs. In a lot of cases these bombs were actually handmade from conventional materials (such as watches, batteries, cotton wool, tin etcetera) The consequences were often nevertheless devastating.

See Polizei-Inspektion Wien-Westbahnhof, Gutachten des gefertigten Sprengmittelsachverständigen, 25.5.1934, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 4578_34.; Bundespolizeidirektion Wien. Nachschau in der Garderobe des Aspangbahnhofs. Fund eines adjustierten Sprengkörpers mit Zeitzündung, 26.5.1934, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 4578_34.

⁴³³ Urheber unbekannt, Sprengkörperanschlag Cafe City, 8.5.1934, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 4578_34.;

Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Abschrift Urteil Anton Geckl und andere, 7.8.1934, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 4578_34.

⁴³⁴ Jagschitz, 'Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934', p. 16.; Garscha, p. 106.; Rothländer, p. 377.

⁴³⁵ Anton Geckl, NSDAP-Personalfragebogen Anton Geckl, 01.07.1938, p. 2, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/136.698.

⁴³⁶ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Abschrift Urteil Anton Geckl und andere, 7.8.1934, p. 12, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 4578_34.

⁴³⁷ Bundespolizeidirektion Wien, Niederschrift der Einvernahme von Robert Scheickl, 17.8.1934, 3, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Mitteilung Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, An die Staatsanwaltschaft Wien I, 11.01.1935, pp. 2f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

that other terrorists, the actual perpetrators of these attacks, were probably not yet on the police's radar.

Secondly, the documents helped the National Socialists in identifying police informants or even undercover investigators among themselves. If Geckl was incriminated by someone (or incriminated someone else) the intelligence service and consequently, the *Landesleitung* as well would have known. Scheickl's transmission of documents thus helped the Nazi movement in the permanent fight against the infiltration of its own ranks and served the counterintelligence against government spies or apostates.⁴³⁸

Another case in which Robert Scheickl copied documents was the trial against Walter Leubuscher. Leubuscher did not only provide Franz Haider's network with information, as mentioned above. He also organised and commanded a series of terror attacks in the weeks before the party ban in June 1933 and assisted the flight of Nazi terrorist Max Grillmayr.⁴³⁹ He was arrested on June the 13th as result of the intensified police efforts in the days prior to the ban and during a search of his house several pistols with ammunition were found.⁴⁴⁰ However, once more, the investigations against a known National Socialist⁴⁴¹ can be regarded as very telling. First of all, one of the police detectives that investigated the Viennese terror wave of May and June 1933⁴⁴² and the case against Leubuscher (and Hans Muschik, one of his accomplices) was the illegal National Socialist Karl Dietrich. Secondly, Robert Scheickl this time actually really worked on the case and therefore had even easier, legitimate access to the trial records. Thirdly, the presiding judge was once more the generous donor to NSDAP and SS, Johann Powalatz. Therefore, the *Landesleitung* was at all times well informed about the proceedings in the case.⁴⁴³

Ultimately, the outcome of the whole affair is thus not very surprising: Leubuscher's accomplice Hans Muschik was acquitted because the police did not find out – possibly due to an interference of the responsible detective Dietrich – that Muschik was actually a leading figure of the Lower Austrian SS and in charge of its explosives depot. Judge Powalatz even gave him back a pistol which had been seized during a house search in the course of Muschik's arrest.⁴⁴⁴ Leubuscher was sentenced to a mere five months imprisonment – considering the multitude of his offences a very mild sentence. After his

⁴³⁸ Dostal, pp. 46f.; Stuchlik, pp. 121f.

⁴³⁹ Holzmann, p. 121.

Grillmayr at times was also in close contact with Otto Begus. Rothländer, p. 435.

⁴⁴⁰ Holzmann, p. 121.; Rothländer, pp. 332, 385.

⁴⁴¹ As stated above, he was discharged from the army due to contribution to National Socialist intelligence networks.

⁴⁴² In only 19 days, almost 50 people were injured and four killed.

Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 20f.; Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 215–219.; Holzmann, pp. 120f.

⁴⁴³ Rothländer, pp. 383f.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 388.

time in jail, he was bound to be arrested in the preventive detention camp Wöllersdorf, but under unexplained circumstances managed to flee to Italy.⁴⁴⁵

Besides these two examples, the sources also refer to several other instances of bomb and arson attacks in which Otto Wächter served as defence lawyer and tried to activate his informants at court, such as Scheickl.⁴⁴⁶ In the case of Josef Hoffmann, a series of arson attacks had been carried out in the Viennese *Prater*. The authorities at the time could not establish a connection between Hoffmann and the Nazi movement, but Wächter's efforts in the case make a National Socialist background of the attacks very likely.⁴⁴⁷ Another example would be the trial against two known National Socialists, Leopold Ratschka & Johann Meissner in whose houses large amounts of explosives and plans for their usage in terror attacks were discovered.⁴⁴⁸

In cases like these, Wächter activated his networks to fight prosecution. In this way, these networks strengthened the manpower of the Nazi movement's terrorist arm and ensured the perpetuation of its terror attacks across the country.

4.2.3. Arms smuggling and armament

Another way of supporting the radical-revolutionary, terrorist strategy of the National Socialists was the intelligence service's contribution to the Nazi movement's arms smuggling and the armament of its terror commandos and armed forces.

As in court, Robert Scheickl was one of the key figures in this regard as well. He was a member of the (1933 forbidden) RSB, the "Reichs Association of German civil servants"⁴⁴⁹ and via this association and other networks, such as the *Deutscher Klub*⁴⁵⁰, had various connections to government departments and institutions – including the customs office (*Zolloberamt*).⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁵ Kriminalbezirksinspektor Alois Luggas, Erhebung Walter Leubuscher, 08.03.1934, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.; Rothländer, p. 388.

⁴⁴⁶ Kanzlei des Rechtsanwaltes Dr. Otto Gustav Wächter, Vollmachtsvorlage Leopold Ratschka und Johann Maissner, 22.06.1934, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 4383_34. 4383 51f; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Dr. Hugo Gerold Hitschmann, 2.3.35, p. 4, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

⁴⁴⁷ Bezirkspolizeikommissariat Prater, Hoffmann Josef, Versuchte Brandstiftung, 20.5.1934, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 3783_34.

⁴⁴⁸ Anna Nein, Aussage am Bezirks-Polizei-Kommissariat Leopoldstadt zu Sprengstofffund, Leopold Ratschka und Johann Meissner, 13.06.1934, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 4383_34.; Josefine Ratschka, Aussage am Bezirks-Polizei-Kommissariat Leopoldstadt zu Sprengstofffund, Leopold Ratschka und Johann Meissner, 13.06.1934, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 4383_34.; Leopold Ratschka, Zeugenaussage Leopold Ratschka, 19.06.1934, p. 3, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 4383_34.

⁴⁴⁹ = *Reichsbund der Deutschen Beamten*. Voithofer, p. 328.

⁴⁵⁰ Bundespolizeidirektion Wien, Teilabschrift der Niederschrift der Einvernahme von Robert Scheickl von 10.8.1934, p. 1, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Bundespolizeidirektion Wien, Niederschrift der Einvernahme von Robert Scheickl, 17.8.1934, p. 1, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Rothländer, p. 434.

⁴⁵¹ Mitteilung Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, An die Staatsanwaltschaft Wien I, 11.01.1935, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Bundespolizeidirektion Wien, Teilabschrift der Niederschrift der Einvernahme von Robert Scheickl von 10.8.1934, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

Informants there provided him with a “*strictly confidential instruction of the custom’s department of Vienna from the 1st of March 1934 (...) about secret arms shipments to the illegal N.S.D.A.P. [sic]*”⁴⁵². A copy of this instruction was found at Scheickl’s house during a house search and informed the Nazi movement about the customs office’s level of knowledge on and alleged measures against the incessant arms smuggling, often carried out by members of the Austrian legion.⁴⁵³

Another very interesting though rather mysterious find at Scheickl’s home was a shorthand note concerning the link of a certain Schmitz to an (unspecified) right-wing French organisation. Unfortunately, the archival file does not contain the original note but only a five sentence-long, somewhat inconclusive abstract.⁴⁵⁴ This short abstract mentions links to the French arms manufacturer Schneider-Creusot, negotiations with British and French corporations (of which kind remains unclear) and an agreement with “the French” (one can only guess if this refers to Schneider-Creusot, the mentioned right-wing group or something else).

Obviously, a lot of uncertainty remains. The intelligence service might have established connections to right-wing organisations abroad (other than German ones) and maybe even attempted to arrange its own arms trades, independent from German authorities. This would give it an international dimension and an actual role in yet another domain of National Socialist activity. It is also conceivable that the intelligence service’s head Otto Bersch, who after all worked for an Austrian arms producer (Steyr), played a role in these relations to foreign arms manufacturers. However, once again, due to vast gaps in the sources some assumptions unfortunately have to remain highly speculative.

This is true for the assessment of the role of Robert Meissl⁴⁵⁵ as well, another industrious illegal National Socialist. Jakob Stuchlik claims that Meissl was part of the *Landesleitung*’s intelligence service while Rothländer ascribes him to the service of the SS which shows the aforementioned inherent obscurity of the whole intelligence field. Either way, Meissl evidently smuggled arms from Munich to Vienna, served as middleman and delivered communications between Germany and Austria.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵² Original quote: “*Bei der in seiner Wohnung vorgenommenen Hausdurchsuchung wurde unter anderem ein Zettel mit einer handschriftlichen Abschrift einer streng vertraulichen Dienstanweisung des Zolloberamtes Wien vom 1. März 1934, Zl. F 274/3/34, über geheime Waffensendungen an die illegale N.S.D.A.P. vorgefunden.*” Mitteilung Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, An die Staatsanwaltschaft Wien I, 11.01.1935, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

⁴⁵³ Jagschitz, ‘Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934’, p. 14.; Schafranek, Söldner für den Anschluss. Die *Österreichische Legion 1933-1938*, p. 18.

⁴⁵⁴ Original note: “*1 Stenogramm, betreffend die Verbindung eines SCHMITZ mit einer rechtsstehenden französischen Gruppe. Ein Vermerk verweist auch auf das (sic) Scheider – Creusot Konzern hin. Auch soll SCHMITZ mit englischen und französischen Kooperaitonen verhandelt und den Franzosen in dieser Richtung bereits Zusicherungen gegeben haben.*” Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Franz Hörwarthner, 19.2.35, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

⁴⁵⁵ In some instances also spelled as Meißl

⁴⁵⁶ Rothländer, p. 433.; Stuchlik, pp. 95, 97, 103.

4.2.4. The July coup

Two key figures of the intelligence service were also involved in the July coup – Otto Begus and Otto Wächter. In the case of the latter, this is even a vast understatement as Wächter was one of the four masterminds (alongside Fridolin Glass, Rudolf Weydenhammer and Theodor Habicht)⁴⁵⁷ of the whole undertaking and appointed as its political head by Habicht.⁴⁵⁸ I will not go into the details of the still partly nebulous events of this day⁴⁵⁹, but only shortly summarise Wächter's role in it. It is no exaggeration to state that Wächter was involved in every major step of the planning process of the coup and participated in almost all important meetings leading up to it – particularly the ones in Berlin at the end of May⁴⁶⁰, in Zürich on June the 25th⁴⁶¹ and in Munich on the 16th of July⁴⁶².

During the attempted coup itself, his actions and conduct in general are assessed as indecisive and short-sighted and the coup as a whole is regarded as over-optimistically and amateurishly devised – both by historian's and by contemporaries.⁴⁶³ As a result of the coup's and putschists' manifold shortcomings, most historians regard its eventual failure as foreseeable and unavoidable.⁴⁶⁴

Otto Begus on the other hand came back to Austria again only shortly before the coup and assumed a rather interesting though not yet fully clarified role during its realisation. On the 23rd of July, he participated in a meeting of several SS men who were part of a commando that planned the assassination of Engelbert Dollfuß. However, this commando did not prepare for the storming of the Chancellor's office but rather worked on an alternative plan that intended to throw grenades on Dollfuß' car as it passed Michaelerplatz and in this way kill him. On the day of the coup, the Viennese police received an anonymous tip that warned of this very assassination plot. Therefore, the Viennese police president Seydel deployed strong forces to the Michaelerplatz. As a result, the area around the Chancellor's office was neglected to a certain extent which enabled the attacking SS-Standarte 89 to easily overrun the few defending security forces.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁵⁷ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 29.; Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, pp. 7, 9, 16f.

⁴⁵⁸ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 29.; Bauer, *Hitlers Zweiter Putsch Dollfuß, Die Nazis und Der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 9, 17.; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 129.

⁴⁵⁹ For this purpose, see e.g. Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*.; Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*.; Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*; Schafraneck, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934*.

⁴⁶⁰ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 27.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., p. 29.; Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 189.; Graf, p. 72.; Schafraneck, *Söldner für den Anschluss. Die Österreichische Legion 1933-1938*, p. 64.

⁴⁶² Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, pp. 82f.

⁴⁶³ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 56.; Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 124.

⁴⁶⁴ See e.g. Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, pp. 20f., 94, 225.; Schafraneck, pp. 33–36, 69–71, 76–80, 83f.; Scheuch, p. 136.

⁴⁶⁵ Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, p. 88.; Rothländer, pp. 470–472.

Rothländer is of the opinion that Seydel in doing so fell for a diversionary tactic, for she believes that the whole alleged assassination attempt on Michaelerplatz was staged in order to entice away police forces from the Chancellor's Office – and according to her, Otto Begus was the one who commanded this whole operation and commissioned the fake tip to the police.⁴⁶⁶

For this reason, Rothländer ascribes Begus a rather prominent role in the July coup because she thinks that it was this diversion which made the successful occupation of the Chancellor's Office possible in the first place.

However, this is not the only interesting plan that Begus had a part in. According to a file note from Begus' *Gauakten*, he had already earlier worked on another assassination plot against Dollfuß. He had allegedly planned to let Dollfuß kill by a certain Eleonore Fischer, who worked in the household of the chancellor. However, the Nazi leadership decided in favour of another plan, presumably the eventual July coup plan according to which Dollfuß should be taken hostage in the Chancellor's Office.⁴⁶⁷

4.3. Networking and propaganda

An observation that pervades this whole thesis is the fundamental importance of the countless networks of the third, pan-German camp for the rise of Nazism in Austria. This is generally true for the Nazi movement as a whole and it is to an even higher extent essential for the expansion of intelligence networks such as the intelligence service of the *Landesleitung*.

In the following, I will therefore present several important networks, their relation to members of the intelligence service and the links and opportunities they provided them with:

1. *Heimwehr*
2. Catholic Church
3. *Deutscher Klub*
4. Further organisations

Especially the *Heimwehr* will get particular attention once more as its ties to Nazism provide insights into the larger topic of Austrofascist – National Socialist relations which prominently pervade this whole thesis.

⁴⁶⁶ Rothländer, pp. 470–472. Stuchlik, p. 97.

⁴⁶⁷ Bundesministerium für Inneres, Aktenvermerk Otto Begus, o. D., pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.; Stuchlik, p. 98.

Most historians assume, Dollfuß eventual death was an accident. Bauer, 'Die Kulminationen der Gewalt: Februar und Juli 1934', p. 221.

4.3.1. *Heimwehr*

Following my earlier remarks on the *Heimwehr's* ambivalent relation to Nazism, I will now shortly sketch National Socialist ties to the *Heimwehr* and above all elaborate the relationship between the two most influential *Heimwehr* leaders Ernst Starhemberg and Emil Fey, the Nazi movement in general and the intelligence service in a narrower sense. For the latter, Otto Begus, Fritz Thaler and Otto Wächter are in particular the main links to Starhemberg (Begus and Thaler) and Fey (Wächter and Begus).

In their relations, we can once more identify the earlier presented patterns of cooperation, competition and confrontation that shaped both Fey's and Starhemberg's position to the Nazi movement. Basically, their relations ranged from occasional partnerships to fierce political rivalry to National Socialist assassination attempts on both *Heimwehr* leaders.

Ernst Starhemberg

From the early 1930s on, the illegal Austrian Nazi movement maintained close contact to these two *Heimwehr* leaders – in the case of Fey up until the very week of the coup in July 1934.

Starhemberg on the other hand had long-standing, probably even friendly personal relations to one of the master minds behind the Viennese structures of Nazi intelligence: Otto Begus. In the early 1920s, Starhemberg had been a staunch supporter of the new Nazi movement and of Adolf Hitler – he even participated in the failed Munich Putsch in November 1923. Furthermore, he was also part of the *Bund Oberland*, a pan-German paramilitary organisation that fought in the Silesian Uprisings (1919-1921).⁴⁶⁸ In the *Bund Oberland*, Starhemberg became acquainted with Otto Begus who was his military superior. In addition, in the years 1920 and 1921 Begus was a member of the “*Selbstschutzformation Innsbruck*”, one of the many regional predecessors and sub-organisations of the *Heimwehr*. He might have been in contact with Starhemberg there as well, who studied in Innsbruck at the time and became active in the Tyrolean *Heimwehr*.⁴⁶⁹ During Starhemberg's first short-term appointment as minister of the interior in autumn 1930⁴⁷⁰, he chose Otto Begus as his adjutant⁴⁷¹ and Fritz Thaler as his chief press

⁴⁶⁸ Scheuch, pp. 213f. Walterskirchen, 'Ernst Rüdiger Fürst Starhemberg als ambivalenter politischer Akteur', p. 371.

⁴⁶⁹ Walterskirchen, *Starhemberg. Oder die Spuren der >>30er Jahre<<*, pp. 36f., 58.

⁴⁷⁰ In the cabinet of Vaugoin. As mentioned above, the first government participation of the *Heimwehren* through its own political organisation, the Heimatblock.

⁴⁷¹ Bundes-Polizeidirektion Wien, Einberufung in das BKA Otto Begus, 07.10.1930, in OeStA/AdR BKA BKA-I Präs PA Kt. 375 Begus Dr. Otto.

officer⁴⁷² – which lets us assume that Starhemberg and Begus stayed in touch throughout the 1920s too.

It is easily conceivable why it was in Starhemberg's interest as well to maintain close contact to his intimates in the Nazi movement, even after the ban of the NSDAP in June 1933 – both due to personal and strategic reasons. This can be seen in the disciplinary proceedings against Otto Begus in October 1933.⁴⁷³ Begus was fired as a policeman for providing the Nazi movement and specifically Ludwig Stigler, the head of the intelligence service of the SS, with information on developments in the *Heimwehr* and procedures in the police forces. In return, Begus had arranged with Stigler that *Heimwehr* leader Starhemberg was not to be harmed in case of a Nazi takeover.⁴⁷⁴ The question thus is whether this effort of Begus to protect Starhemberg was a favour he did for an old comrade, whether Starhemberg had provided Begus with information on the *Heimwehren* in exchange for this alleged guarantee of his safety or whether it was a mixture of both explanations.

Either way, as we heard Begus was not as squeamish with regard to other representatives of the government as he was involved in two different assassination plots against Dollfuß.⁴⁷⁵ It is thus reasonable to conclude that Starhemberg might have seen his acquaintance with and favours for important figures of the Austrian Nazi movement as a safety net which should protect him if Nazism seizes power in Austria – a development that especially after Hitler's takeover in Germany in January 1933 seemed more and more likely.

However, efforts for a closer cooperation were already made earlier as well. Eduard Frauenfeld, at that time *Gauleiter* of Vienna, claims that in the middle of 1930 Heinrich Himmler himself offered Starhemberg the leadership of the newly found Viennese SS in order to win Starhemberg for Nazism. According to Frauenfeld, Starhemberg was not averse to the offer, but eventually refused upon pressure of the chairman of the Christian Social Party, Carl Vaugoin.⁴⁷⁶

Another attempt for cooperation was made prior to the elections of the 9th of November 1930. Around two months before this election, Starhemberg had become the *Heimwehr's* national leader (*Bundesführer*). He chose to aspire this position upon the advice of Benito Mussolini – a long-standing

⁴⁷² Rothländer, p. 429.

⁴⁷³ Besondere Disziplinarkommission beim Bundeskanzleramt, Disziplinarsache Otto Begus, 30.10.1933, pp. 1–4, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁵ Bundesministerium für Inneres, Aktenvermerk Otto Begus, o. D., pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/119.579.

⁴⁷⁶ Moll, '»>Letzten Endes war der Steirische Heimatschutz sehr anständig und ordentlich<<. Das Aufgehen des Steirischen Heimatschutzes in der NSDAP: Von der Konfrontation zur Kooperation', p. 18.; Rothländer, p. 96.

Rothländer's remarks on these proceedings are not fully consistent. She refers to Frauenfeld's remarks about Himmler's offer in the middle of 1930, but then claims that at this time Vaugoin was chancellor and Starhemberg vice chancellor. Vaugoin became chancellor in September 1930, so this might just be a rough interpretation of Frauenfeld's date specifications – but Starhemberg did not become Vice chancellor before 1934.

supporter and counsellor of the *Heimwehren* in general and Starhemberg's political career in particular.⁴⁷⁷ As new *Heimwehr* leader, Starhemberg made the controversial decision that a political arm of the *Heimwehr* will be established and participate in the upcoming elections – the *Heimatblock*.⁴⁷⁸ During the chaotic period of the establishment of the *Heimatblock* then talks were held about an electoral alliance between National Socialists and *Heimwehren*.⁴⁷⁹ The idea was not far-fetched, as a high concordance between Starhemberg's ideology and Austrian Nazism doubtlessly existed. Starhemberg was an admirer of Mussolini and was one of the staunchest advocates of an openly fascist system in Austria.⁴⁸⁰ It is unclear whether Mussolini influenced Starhemberg to seek a partnership with Nazism – but it would fit Mussolini's political agenda that prioritised the fight against Marxism over almost anything else and therefore supported right-wing political alliances in various forms.⁴⁸¹ The talks between Starhemberg and several Nazi leaders (including *Reichsorganisationsleiter*⁴⁸² Gregor Strasser) failed however, due to Starhemberg's insistence on him being the leader of the alliance and resistance against it among the Christian Social part of the *Heimwehren*.⁴⁸³

During the following years, attempts for a cooperation were repeatedly made, but failed to produce official results. On Starhemberg's covert interactions with members of the Nazi movement such as Begus we can only speculate. Several documents on National Socialist intelligence services refer to Starhemberg and his entourage as source for sensitive intelligence – amongst other things on the armament and combat strength of *Heimwehr* divisions or the respective attitude towards the Nazi movement – but without providing an illustrating example.⁴⁸⁴ In any case, Begus' efforts in summer 1933 to ensure Starhemberg's safety in the event of a Nazi takeover support the claim of a prolific and continuous exchange though.

⁴⁷⁷ Ableitinger, p. 28.; Lauridsen, pp. 206–208. Merkl, p. 762.; Scheuch, pp. 212, 215f., 218.; Walterskirchen, *Starhemberg. Oder Die Spuren der >>30er Jahre<<*, p. 38.

For an assessment of Italy's and Mussolini's Austria policy see Bertolaso, pp. 203–228. and Helmut Wohnout, 'Bundeskanzler Dollfuß und die österreichisch-italienischen Beziehungen 1932-1934', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian; Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 601–632.

⁴⁷⁸ Walterskirchen, 'Ernst Rüdiger Fürst Starhemberg als ambivalenter politischer Akteur', p. 373.

⁴⁷⁹ Moll, '>>Letzten Endes war der Steirische Heimatschutz sehr anständig und ordentlich<<'. Das Aufgehen des Steirischen Heimatschutzes in der NSDAP: Von der Konfrontation zur Kooperation', p. 18.

⁴⁸⁰ Bauer, 'Dollfuß, Engelbert - Biographische Anmerkungen zu einer umstrittenen Persönlichkeit', p. 368.; Klingenstein, p. 10.; Scheuch, p. 71.; Walterskirchen, 'Ernst Rüdiger Fürst Starhemberg als ambivalenter politischer Akteur', p. 374.

See also contemporary protocols of the council of ministers: Ministerialrat Gross, Ministerialrat Troll, Ministerratsprotokoll Nr. 844, 21.02.1933, in OeStA/AdR MRang MR 1. Rep MRP, 844.

⁴⁸¹ Bertolaso, pp. 29f.; Botz, 'The Short- and Long-Term Effects of the Authoritarian Regime and of Nazism in Austria: The Burden of a "Second Dictatorship"', p. 194.; Jedlicka, 'Die Auflösung der Wehrverbände und Italien im Jahre 1936', pp. 47f.; Stuhlpfarrer, pp. 325–28.

⁴⁸² ~Reich Organisational Leader

⁴⁸³ Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, pp. 65, 76.

⁴⁸⁴ Rothländer, p. 432.

The turning point of Starhemberg's position towards Nazism and the end of his ambivalence in this regard is most certainly the assassination of Dollfuß. Prior to that, in the first half of 1934, he had even intensified efforts to settle the conflict with the National Socialists.⁴⁸⁵ In April 1934, he conferred with the Austrian SA leadership and only weeks before the July coup, Starhemberg moreover launched secret talks with Otto Wächter.⁴⁸⁶ In view of terror waves that tormented Austria at that time, these soundings might seem surprising. Up until June 1934, when Starhemberg started his last attempt of reconciliation with the National Socialists about 25 people had been killed in Nazi terror attacks.⁴⁸⁷ However, Starhemberg's talks with the Nazi leadership become even more remarkable considering the National Socialist assassination attempt on Starhemberg in February 1934.⁴⁸⁸ It is hard to grasp on why Starhemberg would still consider and even strive for rapprochement to the Nazi movement after years of bloody and devastating terror attacks and a potentially lethal attack on himself. It seems that only the National Socialist large-scale attempt for the overthrow of the Austrian government and the resulting murder of Dollfuß finally convinced Starhemberg of the futility of reconciliation attempts so that he discarded all plans for a possible cooperation with Nazism.

Because in the aftermath of the July coup, Starhemberg was then among the absolute hardliners that demanded harsh sanctions including capital punishment for the putschists – eventually, 13 were executed.⁴⁸⁹ However, he did not become chancellor as many had expected, but on 30th July, was “only” appointed minister for safety agendas by the new chancellor Schuschnigg. The reasons for Schuschnigg's triumph in the question of Dollfuß' succession are yet debated and too complex to be discussed appropriately here.⁴⁹⁰

In any case, his new ministerial duties basically made Starhemberg the head of the executive. He was thus one of the key initiators of the now intensified investigations and legal actions against the Nazi movement.⁴⁹¹

In the following months and years, Starhemberg continued to act as staunch opponent to a rapprochement to the Nazis⁴⁹² – whether out of newly won conviction or simple pragmatism in order to not arouse suspicion and have people investigate his former relations to the Austrian Nazi movement remains up for debate. His new dismissive position towards Nazism also led to his migration

⁴⁸⁵ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 25.

⁴⁸⁶ Jagschitz, 'Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten', p. 242. Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, p. 64.

⁴⁸⁷ Garscha, p. 107.

⁴⁸⁸ Walterskirchen, *Starhemberg. Oder die Spuren der >>30er Jahre<<*, pp. 40f.

⁴⁸⁹ Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 239.; Neugebauer, 'Repressionsapparat und -Maßnahmen 1933 - 1938', p. 305.

⁴⁹⁰ Scheuch, pp. 76, 217.; Walterskirchen, 'Ernst Rüdiger Fürst Starhemberg Als Ambivalenter Politischer Akteur', pp. 373f.

⁴⁹¹ Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', pp. 314–16.

⁴⁹² Garscha, p. 110.

to Switzerland a few months before the “*Anschluss*” and in 1940 he even joined the Allies to fight against Hitler.⁴⁹³ In his memoirs⁴⁹⁴, he understandably only mentions this confrontational, later part of his relation to Nazism, not his former negotiations and partial cooperation which would show the variability and ambiguous pragmatism of Starhemberg’s assessment of the Nazis, in particular at the beginning of the 1930s. In this way, Starhemberg’s in a sense dual approach of rapprochement and negotiation (and also his subsequent denial of the existence of communication in that spirit) on the one hand and determined opposition and prosecution on the other hand has crucial explanatory potential for and similarities to the inconsistent, volatile and ambiguous course of action that the Austrofascists as a whole took against the threat of Nazism.

Emil Fey⁴⁹⁵

Similarly this can be said about Emil Fey, albeit the extent of his relations to the Nazi movement and especially his conduct prior to and during the July coup remain disputed and dubious up to this day. What can be stated with certainty is that he was in close exchange with the highest officials of the Austrian Nazis, including Otto Wächter, on various occasions throughout his political career – at times despite the Nazi terror and Fey’s crucial position in the government and the security apparatus.⁴⁹⁶ From 1931 on, when Fey became the leader of the Viennese *Heimwehr*, plans for a closer cooperation or even an alliance between the Nazi movement and the Viennese *Heimwehr* were developed and evaluated among leading Austrian Nazis. The Viennese *Gauleiter* Frauenfeld praised Fey’s qualities and presumably even considered incorporating Fey’s *Heimwehr* division into the Nazi movement, stating that „*there can be no doubt about [Fey’s] national conviction anymore*” – an offer which the latter refused. However, Fey was not disinclined to a cooperation between Austrian Nazi forces and the *Heimwehren* and mentioned the possibility of an “*occasional alliance against common enemies*”⁴⁹⁷. These common enemies were in his world view leftist political forces as he makes clear in a newspaper commentary of October 1933: “*We fight a war on two fronts. The fight against international bolshevism is a true pleasure for us, as we fight it with inner conviction. (...) The fight against the brown front is carried out by us due to a sense of duty and self-preservation.*”⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹³ Garscha, p. 110.; Walterskirchen, *Starhemberg. Oder die Spuren der >>30er Jahre<<*, pp. 42f.

⁴⁹⁴ One also has to say that Gundula Walterskirchen in her detailed works on Starhemberg’s biography rather focusses on this part of his life and to a certain extent neglects the more controversial parts of his relation to Nazism.

⁴⁹⁵ Original quote: “*[An Fey’s] „nationaler Einstellung [bestünde] kein Zweifel mehr.*”“ Eduard Frauenfeld quoted according to Rothländer, p. 95.

⁴⁹⁶ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 186, 206f.

⁴⁹⁷ Original quote: “*[Für Fey käme nur ein] eventuell fallweises Bündnis gegen gemeinsame Gegner in Frage.*” Emil Fey quoted according to Rothländer, p. 95.

⁴⁹⁸ Original quote: “*Wir kämpfen einen Zweifrontenkampf. Der Kampf gegen den internationalen Bolschewismus ist für uns ein wahres Vergnügen, weil wir ihn aus unserem Innersten heraus führen. [...] Der Kampf gegen die braune Front wird von uns aus Pflichtgefühl*

This quote emphasises the momentous distinction that a significant part of the Austrian government's representatives – and here especially the leaders of its paramilitary arm, the *Heimwehr* – made between Socialists and Communists on the one side and National Socialists on the other side. Just as Emil Fey, they did not necessarily strongly oppose Nazism on an ideological level, but mainly saw it as a threat to the current system's rule over Austria. In contrast, Fey and the *Heimwehr* in general saw Marxists and any other political forces on the left as ideological archenemies – enemies against which even alliances with a brutal foe like the National Socialists seemed conceivable and desirable. This crucial conviction held by key Austrofascist representatives, if not by a majority of its leaders⁴⁹⁹, can also explain why a very drastic (and unconstitutional) measure such as preventive detention was disproportionately used against forces on the political left, not primarily against the severe threat of Nazism as Pia Schölnberger observes.⁵⁰⁰ It thus has further explanatory value on the opaque and inconsistent way of proceeding which the ruling government pursued against the illegal Nazis. At other times though, Fey acted as hardliner and as agitator for harsh measures against the National Socialist threat. For example in May 1933 when he condemned Nazism as “brown bolshevism”⁵⁰¹. As a result, he was also seen as enemy among National Socialists and therefore committed suicide in the course of the “*Anschluss*” because he feared impending detention and worse to come.⁵⁰² However, in 1934 his wavering attitude towards the illegal Nazis and consequently rising distrust of Fey might have been one of the reasons for the extensive disempowerment Fey faced from spring of that year on – after gaining massive popularity in the February uprisings.⁵⁰³ He was dismissed as vice chancellor and replaced by his long-time rival in both the *Heimwehren* and the political arena, Ernst Starhemberg⁵⁰⁴. Considering what we know about Starhemberg and his close ties to the illegal Nazis, this poses a somehow absurd personnel decision that further illustrates the problematic degree to which Dollfuß' government and the Austrian state as a whole was permeated by people with an ambivalent relationship to the Austrian Nazi movement, to say the least.

und Selbsterhaltungstrieb geführt.” Emil Fey quoted according to Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, p. 278.; See as well Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Die Begnadigungspolitik der Regierung Schuschnigg. Von der Weihnachtsamnestie 1934 bis zur Februaramnestie 1938’, *BRGÖ - Beiträge Zur Rechtsgeschichte Österreichs*, 2012, 336–364 (p. 339).

⁴⁹⁹ Certainly Dollfuß, Fey and Starhemberg. Bauer, ‘Dollfuß, Engelbert - Biographische Anmerkungen zu einer umstrittenen Persönlichkeit’, pp. 367f.; Jedlicka, Vom alten zum neuen Österreich. Fallstudien zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 1900-1975., pp. 269f.; Rothländer, p. 350.; Scheuch, pp. 54, 154.; Tálos and Manoschek, ‘Zum Konstituierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus’, p. 19.

⁵⁰⁰ Schölnberger, pp. 202, 210f. See also Botz, ‘Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic’, p. 146.; Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 273f., 278, 284, 308.; Wohnout, ‘Dreieck der Gewalt. Etappen des nationalsozialistischen Terrors in Österreich 1932-1934’, p. 86.

⁵⁰¹ Original quote: „brauner Bolschewismus“. Emil Fey quoted according to Rothländer, p. 322.

⁵⁰² Scheuch, p. 30.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., p. 153.

⁵⁰⁴ Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, p. 64.; Rothländer, pp. 422f.

Besides his dismissal as vice chancellor, Fey was forced to relinquish the department he had conducted as minister for safety agendas on the 11th of July⁵⁰⁵ – and thus only days before the July coup. He remained in the government however but lacked much of his former power. This gradual though obvious disempowerment probably contributed to Fey's further orientation towards the Nazis. Because in the course of 1934, contacts between two leading figures of the Austrian Nazi movement, Otto Wächter and *Landesinspekteur* Theodor Habicht, and Fey intensified (again) – parallel to and independent from Starhemberg's consultations with leading Nazi officials.⁵⁰⁶ As stated above, there are still no unequivocal results on how clearly Fey was informed about or even involved in the planning of the upcoming Nazi coup. However, Gerhard Jagschitz in his analysis "*Der Putsch*" showed that in June 1934 Fey had started to evaluate potential scenarios of a *Heimwehr* coup led by himself – again.⁵⁰⁷ We can therefore conclude that Fey was without doubt interested in an overthrow of Dollfuß' rulership and the only question remaining is what he sought to replace it with.

Referring to my previous comments, a potential *Heimwehr* takeover was in no respect a new idea – for example, Botz assumes advanced plans for a "March on Vienna" in summer 1929 after the model of Mussolini's "March on Rome", which also emphasises the inspiration Austrofascists drew from Italian fascism.⁵⁰⁸ Even after the political integration of *Heimwehr* leaders and its political arm the Heimatblock into the government, the idea of a *Heimwehr* coup never disappeared. In the summer of 1932, the *Heimwehren* deliberated potential scenarios with Italian and Hungarian diplomats and developed a new blueprint for a future coup d'état.⁵⁰⁹

And here the circle might close to Fey and his continued exchange with leading Austrian Nazis in 1934. Interestingly, Rothländer (or Jagschitz already!? CF!!) found that the plan of the July putschists corresponds "*in all important details*"⁵¹⁰ with this plan of the *Heimwehren* from summer 1932. Hence, it is likely that the Austrian Nazi movement had in some way been informed about the ideas and

⁵⁰⁵ Jedlicka, *Vom alten zum neuen Österreich. Fallstudien zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 1900-1975.*, pp. 281f., 284.

⁵⁰⁶ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 36f.; Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, pp. 64f. Jagschitz, 'Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten', p. 242.; Schafranek, *Söldner für den Anschluss. Die Österreichische Legion 1933-1938*, pp. 151, 333, f.n. 848.

⁵⁰⁷ Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, pp. 64f.; Rothländer, p. 428.; Scheuch, p. 68, 154.

⁵⁰⁸ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 179f.; Botz, 'Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic', p. 152.; Gehler, 'Zwischen Allen Stühlen - Österreichs Außenpolitik 1918-1938', pp. 121f.; Lauridsen, pp. 445f.

The "March on Rome" was also influential for Pfrimer's coup in 1931. Botz, 'Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic', p. 143.

⁵⁰⁹ At the time this was probably deemed necessary as the newly installed government of Dollfuß (in charge since May 1932) seemed very fragile and was expected to collapse any day. The *Heimwehren* might have been inclined to ready themselves for a coup in order to prevent a government that included the Social Democrats – a red line for the *Heimwehren*. Rothländer, pp. 336f., 428.; Helmut Wohnout, 'Das autoritäre Österreich 1933/34-1938', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 49–64 (p. 50).

⁵¹⁰ Original quote: "*Dieser Plan [der Plan der Juli-Putschisten, author's note] stimmte in allen wichtigen Details mit jenem überein, der im Sommer 1932 von der Heimwehr in Kooperation mit italienischen und ungarischen Diplomaten entwickelt worden war.*" Rothländer, p. 428.

proceedings the *Heimwehren* had intended in their plan – whether Fey respectively his entourage were the source or not remains speculation. What we know for sure is that just a few days before the coup in July 1934, Fey had contact with the Nazi movement once more and, according to Frauenfeld, should even receive a payment by the Nazis.⁵¹¹

Certainly, several questions remain, in particular whether this alleged payment was really agreed upon, what it would have been a remuneration for exactly and whether Fey was really involved in and/or informed beforehand about the coup. What can be said with certainty is that his conduct prior to and partially also during the failed coup d'état remains dubious.⁵¹² To Rothländer – and here I agree – it therefore seems appropriate to assume that not only banalities were exchanged during the meetings between the side of Fey and the Nazi movement in the time between spring and July 1934. According to her, Fey wanted to get a guarantee for the *Heimwehr's* continuance in case of a National Socialist takeover in negotiations between confidants of Fey and, interestingly, Otto Begus.⁵¹³

Either way, Fey's continued relations to the Austrian Nazi movement and his frequently repeated support for Austrofascist rapprochement towards it are evident and make him a central character for the understanding of the dynamic and changeable relation between Austrofascism and Nazism – and similarly this is true for Starhemberg and his close personal acquaintances with leading figures of the Nazi's intelligence network in Austria.

Furthermore, these two examples of dubious contacts between Nazi movement and *Heimwehr* – nota bene, both on the very top of the *Heimwehr* movement – exemplify the enormous dimension and quality of National Socialist networking within the Austrofascist system. They help us understand how the Nazis achieved their fairly good level of information on the *Heimwehren*, in these days a key institution of the Austrofascist rulership and in particular its security apparatus, and on other important institutions of the state and explain the abundance of sensitive information of Austrofascist provenance that we can find in the sources of Nazi intelligence services.⁵¹⁴

What needs to be considered here once more is the dynamic and inconsistent relation between the *Heimwehren* on the one hand and the Austrofascist regime and especially the leading Christian Social Party on the other hand. The *Heimwehr's* fascist radicalism and the oppositional character at its core both gradually and perpetually isolated it within the government, naturally let it drift away from the ruling system and gravitate towards the only political force that was even more radical – the National

⁵¹¹ Ibid., p. 447.

⁵¹² Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, pp. 43–45, 81–83, 99–103, 123. Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, p. 103. Neugebauer, 'Repressionsapparat und -Maßnahmen 1933 - 1938', p. 305.; Scheuch, pp. 138, 143, 154–157.; Walterskirchen, *Starhemberg. Oder Die Spuren der >>30er Jahre<<*, pp. 66–69.

⁵¹³ Rothländer, p. 447.

⁵¹⁴ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, p. 186.

Socialists.⁵¹⁵ As a result, for many *Heimwehr* members there were two options: either an alliance with Nazism as plausible alternative to the collaboration with the system in form of the participation in Dollfuß' coalition or admission to the National Socialists. Thousands of *Heimwehr* members chose the latter way⁵¹⁶ and in doing so put enormous pressure on the *Heimwehr* representatives to advance toward the Nazi party – which Starhemberg and Fey therefore repeatedly did.

However, it is very hard to assess in how far Starhemberg and Fey themselves actually provided the intelligence service with information – unequivocal evidence for this cannot be found in the archival records. Parts of the presented assumptions are thus rather speculative. Nevertheless, we have enough evidence to substantiate the claims on Fey's and Starhemberg's ambivalent and alternating relation to the Nazi movement and their personal contact with key figures of the intelligence service. Both can thus definitely be seen as facilitators of Austrofascist – National Socialist exchange and rapprochement.

As we can see, especially Begus and Wächter were well networked within the *Heimwehr*. In addition, Wächter's trainee lawyer Julius Meerganz-Medeazza until 1929 had been a *Heimwehr* member in his native Tyrol and could provide the intelligence service with further links.⁵¹⁷

Through its own connections and information obtained by other National Socialist intelligence networks, primarily Stigler's SS network, the intelligence service and the *Landesleitung* were precisely and continuously informed about procedures within and plans of the *Heimwehr*. Due to the importance of the *Heimwehr* for Austria's executive branch (since October 1932 Emil Fey was in charge of the security agendas)⁵¹⁸, this in particular meant a steady flow of sensitive information of police and army providence.

4.3.2. Catholic Church

Another very influential organisation within the complex framework of the Austrofascist system was the Catholic Church. Key parts of the regime and its policy were strongly influenced by the Catholic religion and the clergy, especially the Christian Social Party and the Catholic segments of the *Heimwehr*.⁵¹⁹ Also, the socio-political ideas that pope Pius XI. had presented in his encyclical

⁵¹⁵ Lauridsen, pp. 212–14, 230–43. ; Juan J. Linz, 'Political Space and Fascism as a Late-Comer', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*. (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 153–191 (p. 159).

⁵¹⁶ Botz, 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', p. 233.

⁵¹⁷ Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 15.06.1936, p. 1, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.; Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 15.06.1936, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.

⁵¹⁸ Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 186, 206f.

⁵¹⁹ Gerhard Botz, 'Introduction', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*, ed. by Stein Ugelvik Larsen (et al.) (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 192–201 (pp. 195, 198).; Königseder, pp. 62f.; Haas, p. 29.; Johann Kraus,

“*Quadragesimo Anno*” (of May 1931) were at the cornerstone of the Austrofascists’ conception of a “*Ständestaat*”⁵²⁰ – a corporative state based upon the alleged balance between the different estates of society and economy, such as farmers, workers, entrepreneurs etcetera. Both the Catholic Church and the Austrofascists advocated for this at core antidemocratic model in order to preserve the existing power relations – which were challenged by equal suffrage and the resulting high share of workers among the electorate.⁵²¹ Quite in line with this assumption, the Austrian Bishop’s conference denounced the concept of representative democracy with equal representation as “*unchristian and in the deepest sense atheist, id est heretical*”⁵²² in a pastoral letter for Christmas 1933. Part of the “*Ständestaat*’s” appeal to both the Church and the conservative-fascist regime was thus its anti-Marxist stance against the mostly areligious labour movement.⁵²³

Especially in this regard and also in the partly shared antisemitism, the Catholic Church could find common ground with the likewise strictly anti-Marxist Austrian Nazism.⁵²⁴ In particular groups around the Viennese cardinal and former social minister Theodor Innitzer and Adolf Hudal were striving for a reconciliation with the national camp and the Nazi movement. From 1932 on, talks were held between several high-ranking representatives of the Church (including Innitzer) and Nazi leaders, such as *Landesinspekteur* Theodor Habicht.⁵²⁵ According to Jakob Stuchlik, the later chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg, a devout Catholic and influential figure of Austrian political Catholicism, took part of these talks as well.⁵²⁶ The National Socialist delegation on the other hand in addition included an informant of the intelligence service of the *Landesleitung*: Erich Frauwallner, an ethnologist and

‘Volksvertreter? Beiträge zu einer Analyse der Organe der Bundesgesetzgebung 1934–1938 und der Politischen Elite des Austrofascismus’, *Zeitgeschichte*, 18.11/12 (1990), pp. 379–414 (pp. 385, 395); Stanley G. Payne, ‘The Concept of Fascism’, in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*, ed. by Stein Ugelvik Larsen (et al.) (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 14–25 (pp. 20f.); Tólos, ‘Das austrofascistische Herrschaftssystem’, pp. 400f., 410f.

See also Katharina Ebner, ‘Politische Katholizismen in Österreich 1933–1938. Aspekte und Desiderate der Forschungslage’, in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933–1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 159–222.; Hanisch. and Michaela Sohn-Kronthaler, ‘Die Katholische Kirche als innenpolitischer Faktor 1918–1938’, in *Die Umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918–1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 151–159.; Kriechbaumer, ‘Die Christlichsoziale Partei 1918 bis 1933/34’, pp. 137f.; Schausberger.;

An important document in this regard is the concordat of May 1934 which in parts even was included in the new May constitution. Ebner, pp. 166f.; Kriechbaumer, ‘Die Christlichsoziale Partei 1918 bis 1933/34’, pp. 137f., 144.; Wohnout, ‘Das Autoritäre Österreich 1933/34–1938’, p. 44.

⁵²⁰ Bauer, ‘Dollfuß, Engelbert - Biographische Anmerkungen zu einer umstrittenen Persönlichkeit’, p. 368.; Hanisch, pp. 73f.; John Rath, Carolyn W. Schum, ‘The Dollfuss-Schuschnigg Regime: Fascist or Authoritarian?’, in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*, ed. by Stein Ugelvik Larsen (et al.) (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 249–256 (p. 251). Schausberger, p. 356.; Sohn-Kronthaler, p. 154.; Tólos, ‘Das Austrofascistische Herrschaftssystem’, pp. 400f.

⁵²¹ Andreski, p. 54.

⁵²² Original quote: „[Volksrepräsentativität als] „unchristlich und im tiefsten Grund atheistisch, d.h. gottesleugnerisch““. Gemeinsames Hirtenschreiben der österreichischen Bischöfe über staatsbürgerliche Pflichten, Linz 1933, 6. Quoted according to Kraus, p. 395. See also Ebner, p. 160.; Hanisch, p. 74.

⁵²³ Hanisch, pp. 73f., 82f.; Lauridsen, pp. 189–193, 264.; Rath and Schum, p. 249.; Stuhlpfarrer, pp. 324f.; Tólos, ‘Das Austrofascistische Herrschaftssystem’, pp. 400f.

⁵²⁴ Botz, ‘Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904–1945)’, p. 223.; Broszat, p. 33.; Königseder, pp. 58f., 62–64.

⁵²⁵ Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 99.; Stuchlik, pp. 104–106.

⁵²⁶ Anton Staudinger, ‘Austrofascistische “Österreich”-Ideologie’, pp. 34f.; Stuchlik, pp. 105, f.n. 1933.

scholar of far Eastern religions who collected information among Catholic circles. Stuchlik, who published the first monography on Frauwallner's relation to Nazism, argues that he was both a National Socialist advocate among the Catholic Church and an informant for the Austrian NSDAP's intelligence service. He in particular assumed an important role around the "German Catholics Day" in Vienna in September 1933, which was strongly used for Austrofascist propaganda. However, the importance of the Catholic Church in Austria also induced the Nazi movement to start a charm offensive there in order to strengthen its ties to the clergy – a task in which the religious scholar Frauwallner took a crucial part in.⁵²⁷ His efforts thus show the connection of the intelligence service and the Nazi movement to the Catholic Church as very influential power factor in Austria.

4.3.3. *Deutscher Klub*

The *Deutscher Klub* was already mentioned several times because half of the intelligence service's core group⁵²⁸ were part of it and the *Klub's* members extended networks within Austria's institutions were a major source for National Socialist intelligence.

The *Deutscher Klub* was a society of the political right whose primary political goal was the German-Austrian unification⁵²⁹. According to Erker, Huber and Taschwer, "*from the early 1930s on this society was the most influential meeting point for "explicitly national" Austrians and bourgeois National Socialists*"⁵³⁰. In their article about the *Deutscher Klub* and its role in Austria prior and after the Nazi takeover they see it as embodiment of the "*right-wing conservative grey area between the Christian Socials and the German Nationals which continued to exist (...) even after the ban of the NSDAP in 1933*"⁵³¹.

This assessment of the *Klub* as right-wing grey area can be exemplified by the membership of Othmar Spann, probably the most influential political theorist of the "*Ständestaat*". Spann tried to advance his political ideas among various right-wing and fascist movements – the Christian Social Party, the Styrian *Heimwehr*, the Italian Fascists and among both German and Austrian National Socialists.⁵³² He is thus a prime example of the close ideological and personal links between the two camps for which the

⁵²⁷ Scheuch, p. 76.; Stuchlik, pp. 105f, 108–110, 122.

⁵²⁸ Wächter, Bersch, Scheickl and Pavlu were members of the *Deutscher Klub*, which makes it four out of eight.

⁵²⁹ Huber, pp. 94f.

⁵³⁰ Original quote: „Dieser Verein bildete ab den frühen 1930er Jahren den einflussreichsten Treffpunkt für „betont nationale“ Österreicher und für bürgerliche Nationalsozialisten.“ Erker, Huber, and Taschwer, p. 78.

⁵³¹ Original quote: „Am Deutschen Klub wird nämlich die rechtskonservative Grauzone zwischen den Christlichsozialen und den Deutschnationalen deutlich, die selbst nach dem Ende der Bürgerblockregierungen und dem Verbot der NSDAP 1933 fortbestand.“ Erker, Huber, and Taschwer, p. 91.

⁵³² Hansjörg Klausinger, 'Antisemitismus und Die Österreichische Schule Der Nationalökonomie an Der Universität Wien, 1918-1945', *Zeitgeschichte*, 43.3 (2016), 149–166 (pp. 153f., 158–160).; Lauridsen, pp. 189f.

Deutscher Klub as a whole is proof. Moreover, the case of Spann once more shows the problematic closeness of key figures of the Austrofascist regime to Nazism.⁵³³

Quite in line with this, according to Erker et al. “the history of the club illustrates how parts of the right-wing conservative intelligence and the non-Jewish bourgeoisie especially from 1930 on ever further drifted towards Nazism.”⁵³⁴ In this way, the National Socialists replaced the “Greater German People's Party”⁵³⁵ as the leading force among the pan-German camp in Austria and especially after the party ban widely took over influential organisations such as the *Deutscher Klub*.⁵³⁶ In doing so, they could use it as front organisation, raise funds among its members and transfer parts of their internal communication and organisational structures to the *Klub* – as happened in the planning for the July coup.⁵³⁷

Throughout the 1920s and even still in the 1930s, several of the *Klub*'s members were in key positions of Austria's institutions – at least ten club members were part of the government⁵³⁸, among them the short-time chancellor of 1929 Ernst Streeruwitz, the minister of the Dollfuß cabinet Robert Kerber and even the Federal President from 1920 to 1928, Michael Hainisch.

Especially important for the scope of this thesis was Robert Kerber. In autumn 1933, Kerber was appointed as minister of the interior. A few months later, he established close contacts with leading National Socialists, in particular with Hanns Blaschke und Otto Wächter, whom he probably knew from the *Deutscher Klub*, and from that time on regularly transmitted sensitive information from within the government.⁵³⁹ Due to his extensive contribution, Andreas Huber refers to Kerber as “NSDAP middleman in Dollfuß' government”⁵⁴⁰. He particularly provided relevant information from the council of ministers which meant that the illegal Nazi movement was well informed about internal processes in probably the most powerful panel of the government. In this way, Kerber's case exemplifies the extraordinary relevance of the *Deutscher Klub* and high-level contacts of the intelligence service's leadership.

Besides that, Erker et al. also point out the remarkable fact that around 50% of the University of Vienna's rectors between 1908 and 1939 were members of the *Klub*.⁵⁴¹ Furthermore, two former

⁵³³ Klausinger, pp. 153f.

⁵³⁴ Original quote: „Die Geschichte des Vereins illustriert zudem, wie Teile der rechtskonservativen Intelligenz und der nicht-jüdischen Bourgeoisie insbesondere ab 1930 immer weiter in Richtung Nationalsozialismus abdrifteten“ Erker, Huber, and Taschwer, p. 91.

⁵³⁵ = Großdeutsche Volkspartei

⁵³⁶ Erker, Huber, and Taschwer, p. 82.; Jedlicka, *Vom alten zum neuen Österreich. Fallstudien zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 1900-1975.*, p. 212.

⁵³⁷ Eminger and Haas, p. 167.; Erker, Huber, and Taschwer, pp. 83–85.

⁵³⁸ Besides Hainisch and Streeruwitz, these were: Emil Kraft, Walter Rodler, Hans Schürff, Friedrich Schuster, Franz Slama, Heinrich Srbik, Leopold Waber and Josef Wächter. Erker, Huber, and Taschwer, p. 82.

⁵³⁹ Huber, pp. 94–96, 140.

⁵⁴⁰ Original quote: “NSDAP-Mittelsmann in der Regierung Dollfuß” Huber, p. 94.

⁵⁴¹ Erker, Huber, and Taschwer, pp. 78, 81f., 91f.

heads of the state police (Heinrich Tandler and Franz Brandl⁵⁴²) were part of it as well which illustrates its potential for National Socialist intelligence networks.

It is therefore not surprising that the name of the *Deutscher Klub* appears frequently within the archival records on the intelligence service. Four of the service's leading figures were part of it – Otto Wächter, Otto Bersch, Robert Scheickl and Rudolf Pavlu⁵⁴³.

The society itself is referred to as meeting point of political, economic and scientific elites with sympathies for the National Socialists for the most part. Due to this valuable community, it also became a major hub for sensitive information destined for the NSDAP *Landesleitung*⁵⁴⁴. Moreover, after the July coup the authorities identified the *Deutscher Klub* as one of the main meeting points of leading putschists – including Otto Wächter, Otto Bersch, Hanns Blaschke and the *Gauleiter* of Vienna, Alfred Frauenfeld.⁵⁴⁵ It was therefore temporarily closed in August 1934 but allowed to re-open in November after several strongly incriminated members (including Wächter) had been expelled.⁵⁴⁶ Its further history throughout the Austrofascist period and its role prior and after the Nazi takeover in Austria would provide additional interesting insights into Austrian Nazism, but unfortunately go beyond the scope of this thesis.⁵⁴⁷

4.3.4. Further organisations

Apart from that, I want to recollect several organisations and networks that have already been mentioned and described in the thesis – paramilitary organisations such as the *Bund Oberland* or the *Deutsche Wehr* and *völkisch* organisations such as fraternities, choirs, gymnastic and sports clubs, or, as in the case of Otto Wächter, even a rowing club.⁵⁴⁸

These organisations were in their core not explicitly National Socialist and had members from other political parties and camps in them as well. Therefore, links in these organisations extended the National Socialist networks beyond the NSDAP party base and provided them with opportunities to

⁵⁴² Ibid, p. 95, f.n. 58.

⁵⁴³ Bundespolizeidirektion Wien, Niederschrift der Einvernahme von Robert Scheickl, 17.8.1934, p. 1, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Otto Bersch, 20.2.35, pp. 2f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.; Rothländer, p. 434.

⁵⁴⁵ Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 7.

⁵⁴⁶ Gaupersonalamt - Gauhauptstellenleiter Franz Kamba, Politische Beurteilung Otto Wächter, 11.12.1939, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.; Erker, Huber, and Taschwer, pp. 84f.

⁵⁴⁷ The *Deutscher Klub* can emphasise the attested conflict between Austrian and German National Socialists – it was closed down after the “*Anschluss*” because the German National Socialists feared its influence and it stood in the way of the attempted “*Gleichschaltung*”. For more information on the *Deutscher Klub* please see Erker, Huber, and Taschwer, here in particular pp. 86–89, 92.

⁵⁴⁸ Otto Wächter, Personalfragebogen NSDAP, 25.06.1938, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.; Kreispropagandaamt des Kreises II, Hauptstelle Kreisring, Auskunft Vereinsführer Otto Wächter; 01.08.1940, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.; Otto Wächter, Personalfragebogen Otto Wächter, 01.08.1940, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.; Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, pp. 23f. Dostal, pp. 32f.

recruit further supporters. This can be seen in the aforementioned *Bund Oberland*, that was the foundation for Otto Begus' good relations to *Heimwehr* leader Ernst Starhemberg and high-ranking police officer Benno Braitenberg. It was also the place where the leading figures of the presented spy network of Haider, Weinrich and Vogl met each other. Similarly this applies to fraternities that were relevant for the cases of Robert Scheickl, Johann Powalatz and the two high-profile police officials Leo Gotzmann and Herbert Hedrich.⁵⁴⁹

In addition, Powalatz was also in two different *völkisch* organisations and in a German national gymnastic club which most certainly shaped his political opinions and possibly further brought him in contact with National Socialists too.⁵⁵⁰

With the gradual rise of the Nazi movement in Austria, the infiltration and to a large extent as well the takeover of these organisations happened both naturally and intendedly. This proved to be very advantageous after the party ban of 1933, when these organisations also played an important role as front organisations. As stated above, they enabled the National Socialists to maintain their networks without having official party institutions.⁵⁵¹

Besides these at least initially only partly National Socialist organisations, there were important explicitly National Socialist organisations such as the *Deutsche Soldatenbund* (German Soldiers' Association), the *Reichsbund der Deutschen Beamten* (RDB – Reichs Association of German civil servants) and the *Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen* (BNSDJ)⁵⁵². These internal networks were further vehicles for the intelligence service's work as we have seen in the cases of Hörwarthner (*Soldatenbund*⁵⁵³), Scheickl (RDB⁵⁵⁴) and Meerganz-Medeazza (BNSDJ⁵⁵⁵ and RDB⁵⁵⁶). Most of them were forbidden together with the party in June 1933, but continued to exist as relevant networks, often with help of the structures of other, less explicitly (often German National) National Socialist organisations (in the case of the RDB for example the *German Civil Servant Association for Austria*).⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁴⁹ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Franz Hörwarthner Fortsetzung, 19.2.35, p. 3, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.; Rothländer, p. 431.

⁵⁵⁰ Stadler, p. 346.

⁵⁵¹ Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, p. 13.; Blatnik, p. 135.; Rothländer, p. 308.

⁵⁵² The National Socialist association of German Lawyers

From 1936, it was then called *Nationalsozialistischer Rechtswahrerbund*, which can roughly be translated into "National Socialist Association of Keepers of the Law".

⁵⁵³ Ida Hörwarthner, Gnadengesuch um Enthaftung ihres Gatten, Franz Hörwarthner, 15.07.1938, pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921.

⁵⁵⁴ Gendarmeriepostenkommando Neumarkt i. H., Scheickl Robert, Verbrechen nach §11 des VG, 27.02.1947, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.14., trial record Vr 8121-46.

⁵⁵⁵ Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 15.06.1936, p. 1, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.

⁵⁵⁶ Gauleitung Wien, Personalamt, Hauptstelle für politische Beurteilung, Politische Beurteilung Meerganz von Medeazza, 26.02.1940, p. 1, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.

⁵⁵⁷ „*Deutscher Beamtenverein für Österreich*“ Voithofer, p. 328.

Propaganda

The intelligence service was also partly involved in the production (printing) and dissemination of propaganda material, though this certainly was not its main occupation. As elaborated in my previous remarks, under Theodor Habicht's lead the Nazi movement's activities were largely centralised and professionalised. This included propaganda activities as well which were increasingly coordinated with terror waves to maximise the impacts of both – thus, *“the fragmented strategies of Nazi propaganda and violence were integrated into a single violent strategy for the seizure of power”*.⁵⁵⁸ In addition, propaganda also assumed this supplementary function for diplomatic offences of the German National Socialists. Measures of Hitler such as the *Tausendmark-Sperre* were in Austria accompanied by massive propaganda waves, in the forms of leaflets, newspapers or radio broadcasts.⁵⁵⁹

Within the intelligence service, Robert Scheickl and Otto Bersch were most involved in the production and dissemination of propaganda material. Scheickl was the head of the press and propaganda section of department number IV of the *Landesleitung* but the sources do not provide additional information beyond his position.⁵⁶⁰ Bersch on the other hand after his flight to Germany gave some detailed insight into his involvement in propaganda. In an account of his role in the Austrian Nazi movement from November 1936 he listed the printing and dissemination of propaganda material as his responsibilities – as examples he mentioned a speech of Hermann Foppa and images of Adolf Hitler that were printed and distributed under his lead. For the speech of Foppa, a German national politician of the GDVP that later joined the NSDAP, Bersch even stated the print run: a remarkable 170.000 copies of the speech were disseminated which illustrates the huge scope of National Socialist propaganda waves.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁸ Botz, 'Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic', p. 154.

See also Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 23. Rothländer, pp. 378f.

In talks with a British diplomat, Dollfuß identified three ways in which the Nazi movement attacked Austria's independence: *“extensive terrorism, dropping of seditious leaflets (...) and persistent subversive broadcasting - particularly from Munich”* Carsten, p. 183.

⁵⁵⁹ Botz, 'Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic', pp. 154f. Jagschitz, 'Illegale Bewegungen während der Ständischen Ära 1933-1938.', p. 157.; Neugebauer, 'Die Anfänge des NS-Terrorismus in Österreich - Wurzeln, Motive, politische Hintergründe', p. 76.; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, pp. 102f., 114–121.; Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', pp. 309, 312.; Theodor Venus, 'Von der RAVAG zum Reichssender Wien', in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich 2*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and others (Vienna: ÖBV & hpt, 2000), pp. 597–626 (pp. 597f.).

⁵⁶⁰ NSDAP Gauleitung Wien - Referat Alte Garde, Fragebogen Robert Scheickl, 17.01.1939, p. 1, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/316.453.; Robert Scheickl, NSDAP Personalfragebogen Robert Scheickl, 30.06.1938, pp. 1–3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/316.453.; Staatsanwaltschaft Wien, Anklage gegen Robert Scheickl, 29.01.1948, p 2, in WSTLA/2.3.14., trial record Vr 8121-46.

⁵⁶¹ Otto Bersch, Abschrift Eidesstaatliche Erklärung Otto Bersch, 30.11.1936, pp. 1f., in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. – Gauakten, trial record VG 215_55.; Otto Bersch, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 30.11.1936, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/343.264.

5. Prosecution and its legal circumstances

In the following I will shortly outline the legal circumstances of the prosecution of the Austrian Nazi movement and the drastic changes the Austrofascist regime implemented in this regard. These remarks should therefore provide an insight into the legal environment of the time and the measures taken, inter alia, against the threat of Austrian Nazism. They are primarily based on Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal's concise analysis on penal law, police and judiciary as instruments of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg regime, used against the political opposition on both the left and the far-right, id est Nazism.⁵⁶² Apart from that, Wolfgang Neugebauer's study on the repressive character of the Austrofascist state apparatus and Tálos'/Manoschek's article on the foundation of the Austrofascist system provided further information.⁵⁶³ Due to the brevity demanded, these complex and revealing aspects cannot be done justice here. For further details I would hence like to refer the reader to these two elaborations of Reiter-Zatloukal and Neugebauer as I will primarily focus on aspects that I regard as the most important ones for the prosecution against members of the intelligence service.

As already shortly addressed earlier, the conservative-fascist regime violated and step by step abolished key principles of a democratic state of law – hence, Peter Huemer describes this development as “*coup d'état in instalments*”⁵⁶⁴.

In particular the separation of powers had seen grave encroachments right after the takeover of the Austrofascists and was gradually abolished, especially with the May constitution of May 1934. With the usage of the *Kriegswirtschaftliches Ermächtigungsgesetz*⁵⁶⁵ from 1917 and the thusly obtained legislative authority, the government (as part of the executive branch) almost entirely assumed the legislative power formerly executed by the parliament.⁵⁶⁶ For example, the ban of the NSDAP and its sub-organisations and also the bans against the Communist and the Social Democratic parties were

⁵⁶² See Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes'.

⁵⁶³ Neugebauer, 'Repressionsapparat und -Maßnahmen 1933 - 1938'; Tálos and Manoschek, 'Zum Konstituerungsprozeß des Austrofaschismus'.

⁵⁶⁴ Original quote: “*Staatsstreich in Raten*”. Peter Huemer quoted according to Rothländer, p. 334.

In a very similar way, Gerhard Botz calls it “*a sort of 'cold' coup d'état, carried out by stages*” Botz, 'Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic', p. 151.

⁵⁶⁵ An enabling act that had been introduced in 1917 as emergency measure in the face of grave challenges of the war economy. See Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', pp. 283, 285.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.; Rothländer, p. 334.; Tálos, 'Das Austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem', pp. 401–403.

For examples for decrees issued based on the *Ermächtigungsgesetz* see Bauer, Botz, Meixner, p. 245.

See also contemporary protocols of the council of ministers. Ministerialrat Dr. Gross, Ministerialsekretär Dr. Seidl, Ministerratsprotokoll Nr. 839, 31.01.1933, p. 2, in OeStA/AdR MRang MR 1. Rep MRP, 839.; Ministerialrat Gross, Ministerialsekretär Seidl, Ministerratsprotokoll 851, 07.03.1933, p. 2f., in OeStA/AdR MRang MR 1. Rep MRP, 847–855.

declared based upon this enabling act that had initially been drafted as emergency law for the necessities of the war economy in World War I.⁵⁶⁷

Moreover, the Austrofascist regime largely took control over the judiciary as well. A key step in this regard was the elimination of the Constitutional Court in spring 1933 which made it impossible for the opposition to appeal against the manifold anti-constitutional laws which the regime had implemented.⁵⁶⁸

Among these anti-constitutional laws with which the regime de facto suspended the independence of the judiciary were reforms on the legal state of judges (and “*the removal of their irremovability and independence from transfer to another position*”⁵⁶⁹), on jury courts and many other legal areas.⁵⁷⁰

Another drastic measure was the implementation of martial law in November 1933 which also meant the reintroduction of the death penalty.⁵⁷¹

Furthermore, special political departments were established at regional courts from 1933 on to handle political-oppositional transgressions. Hence, these departments were concerned with press offences, violations of, inter alia, the restricted freedoms of assembly and expression and other infringements of merely political nature that thus can rather be assessed as “crimes of opinion”. To ensure the desired convictions, in theory particularly politically reliable personnel should be appointed for the political departments.⁵⁷² However, as we have seen in the cases of Johann Powalatz and Robert Scheickl this was not necessarily always the case.

Furthermore, as in any authoritarian or fascist regime, basic freedoms such as the freedoms of expression, press, movement and assembly were largely constrained throughout the years 1933 and 1934, mainly due to the constant pressure of the radicals in the coalition, in particular the *Heimwehr*.⁵⁷³

⁵⁶⁷ Garscha, p. 100.; Tálos and Manoschek, ‘Zum Konstitutierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus’, pp. 19–21.; Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Austrofascismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938* (Vienna: LIT, 2005), p. 398.

⁵⁶⁸ Ableitinger, p. 35.; Neugebauer, ‘Repressionsapparat und -Maßnahmen 1933 - 1938’, p. 299.; Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 285, 297f.; Tálos and Manoschek, ‘Zum Konstitutierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus’, pp. 19–21.

⁵⁶⁹ Original quote: “*Beseitigung der richterlichen Unabsetzbarkeit und Unversetzbarkeit*”. Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 316f.

⁵⁷⁰ Neugebauer, ‘Repressionsapparat und -Maßnahmen 1933 - 1938’, pp. 300f., 306.; Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 311f.; Tálos and Manoschek, ‘Zum Konstitutierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus’, p. 21.

⁵⁷¹ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 24.; Neugebauer, ‘Repressionsapparat und -Maßnahmen 1933 - 1938’, pp. 301, 306f.; Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 312, 314f.; Tálos and Manoschek, ‘Zum Konstitutierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus’, pp. 19–21.

⁵⁷² Wächter, pp. 96–103.

⁵⁷³ Neugebauer, pp. 299, 308–310.; Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 271, 278, 287–291.; Rothländer, pp. 334f., 341.; Tálos and Manoschek, ‘Zum Konstitutierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus’, pp. 16f., 19–21.

Moreover, the government (respectively until the middle of 1934 especially the minister for security agendas, Emil Fey) tried to purge the security forces from members of any oppositional political group – after the February uprisings mainly from Social Democrats, after the July coup subsequently also from National Socialists.⁵⁷⁴ In doing so the government used „*the pretext of the fight against National Socialist infiltration for the political purge of the bureaucracy*”⁵⁷⁵, Reiter-Zatloukal concludes.

This purge was inter alia carried out via the tightening of the civil service law for government officials and via a centralisation of authority that should take away power from oppositional regions, particularly from the still largely Social Democratic capital Vienna.⁵⁷⁶

On top of that, Fey also established auxiliary police forces, based on the model of the German SA, which mainly consisted of loyal fighters of the Fatherland’s Front and the *Heimwehr*.⁵⁷⁷

The aggregate and interplay of all these measures combined created a deeply antidemocratic and authoritarian system. While these general circumstances of course strongly influenced the work of the intelligence service at the core of this thesis as well, four additional specific fields of law respectively legal developments were particularly important for it:

1. Laws against abuse of power, espionage and the transmission of sensitive information
2. Expansion of the police’s power to impose sentences
3. Introduction of preventive detention and collective punishment
4. Tightening of the Explosives Act and the Weapons Act

1. For point 1, the criminal proceedings against Otto Begas, Robert Scheickl and Otto Bersch and the case of Haider, Weinrich et al. can be examples. When the contribution of then police officer Otto Begas to the intelligence service was discovered, he was sentenced to five months in jail for the

⁵⁷⁴ Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 282–284, 307–11.

⁵⁷⁵ Original quote: „*Die Regierung schritt also unter dem Prätext der Bekämpfung nationalsozialistischer Infiltration zu politischer Säuberung des Beamtenapparats von roten und braunen RegimegegnerInnen.*“ Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, p. 311.

⁵⁷⁶ Dostal, p. 45.; Stefan Eminger, ‘Aufstand der Provinz - zum Spannungsfeld Stadt versus Land im Österreich der Zwischenkriegszeit’, in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 283–300 (pp. 284, 287).; Falter and Hänisch, pp. 240f.; Stefan Karner, ‘Die umkämpfte Republik - Österreich 1918-1938. Zur Einführung’, in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 9–14 (p. 10).; Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 302f., 306–311. Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 302f., 306–311.

⁵⁷⁷ Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 304f.; Tálos and Manoschek, ‘Zum Konstitutierungsprozeß des Austrofaschismus’, pp. 7f.

promotion “*of subversive and anti-government endeavours*”⁵⁷⁸, according to one of the mentioned new tightened provisions on civil servants.⁵⁷⁹ Haider and Vogl on the other hand were indicted for §67 on spying and convicted to sentences between seven and ten months imprisonment.⁵⁸⁰ Bersch and Scheickl again were charged with paragraphs §§101, 102 and 103 concerning abuse of power after their arrests in August 1934.⁵⁸¹ While Bersch was able to flee the country before his conviction, in June 1935 Scheickl was sentenced to eight months in prison – prior to this eventual conviction by a judge, he had already spent more than ten months in police custody, pretrial and preventive detention.

2. Scheickl’s case thus also shows the prevalence and misuse of police detentions and sentences as measures against the opposition. This is emphasised by Reiter-Zatloukal as well who states that the Austrofascist regime strongly relied on the police as instrument of repression, particularly in the beginning. According to her, this was especially due to the higher constitutional protection of the judiciary and its organs that made it harder to bring jurisprudence under control. Moreover, it gave defendants more rights, first and foremost the right to appeal. The authority of the police, however, could easily be expanded and used against political opponents which is exactly what happened under the aegis of Dollfuß and Fey.⁵⁸² First, the applicability of police sentences was largely expanded, with more offences now being punishable by the police in addition to or instead of a trial at court. These offences were mostly directed against the political opposition and the freedom of speech and expression, the singing of certain songs (including the Internationale⁵⁸³), the showing of certain emblems, the wearing of certain uniforms and the waving of certain flags etcetera. However, even grave offences such as terrorist attacks were first sentenced in administrative penal proceedings before being subsequently brought in front of an actual court⁵⁸⁴. Secondly, the sentences for these offences were strongly increased, inter alia via splitting up one offence into several offences and

⁵⁷⁸ Original quote: „[Begos habe] sich einer Verletzung seiner Dienstplichten dadurch schuldig [ge]macht, daß er geflissentlich staats- oder regierungsfeindliche Bestrebungen fördert“. Besondere Disziplinarkommission beim Bundeskanzleramt, Disziplinarsache Otto Begus, 30.10.1933, pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/119.579.

⁵⁷⁹ Provision of the government from the 10th of May 1933 about special measures regarding the civil servants. Verordnung der Bundesregierung vom 10. Mai 1933 über besondere Maßnahmen, betreffend die öffentlich-rechtlichen Bundesangestellten.

⁵⁸⁰ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, Anklage gegen Franz Haider, Oskar Vogl und Gottfried Weinrich, 29.09.1934, p. 2, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

⁵⁸¹ Respectively additionally with paragraph §5 for instigation of said crime in the case of Bersch

⁵⁸² Neugebauer, ‘Repressionsapparat und -Maßnahmen 1933 - 1938’, pp. 299, 311f.; Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, 286–289, 294–297, 307, 318.; Tálos and Manoschek, ‘Zum Konstitutierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus’, p. 21.

⁵⁸³ Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, p. 289.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 287–290, 312.

accumulating the decided sentences.⁵⁸⁵ In parts, the *Ermächtigungsgesetz* was used as legal justification for this once more. And thirdly, the proceedings were sped up and the legal protection of the defendant was curtailed – especially in proceedings against alleged terrorists, in this way quick and high sentences were imposed to maximise the deterrent effect.⁵⁸⁶

In general, police sentences were not only awarded for administrative offences anymore, but police authority was expanded to the political sphere and could now severely punish “crimes of opinion”, without any possibility for appeal and a due process – Reiter Zatloukal states that “*police organs were thus granted authority equal to that of an orderly attorney.*”⁵⁸⁷

It was these measures that led to the strikingly long time Scheickl spent in jail before facing a judge.

3. Almost two of the ten months Scheickl was kept in preventive detention (*Anhaltehaft*).

This newly introduced form of detention was widely used as tool against the political opposition, both on the left and the right. Particularly the main preventive detention camp in Wöllersdorf therefore became a symbol for the unjust and dictatorial character of the Austrofascist regime.⁵⁸⁸

The implementation of preventive detention was a long-standing demand of the radicals in the Austrofascist coalition, in particular of the *Heimwehr*. Consequently, it was *Heimwehr* leader Emil Fey who finally implemented it on September 23rd, 1933 via a decree which was supplemented by a full-fledged law a year later.⁵⁸⁹ The wording of this particular law already clearly reveals the arbitrariness that it enabled and was misused with. It stated that preventive detention can be declared against „*people, that profess to a political party, whose activities were forbidden or (...) of whom it can justifiably be assumed that they abet the aspirations of such a party.*”⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁵ Botz, Bauer, and Meixner, pp. 243f.; Neugebauer, ‘Repressionsapparat und -Maßnahmen 1933 - 1938’, pp. 299, 308f., 311f.; Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 294–96.

⁵⁸⁶ Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, pp. 286, 295–98, 312.

⁵⁸⁷ Original quote: „*Nachdem auf diese Weise bereits der Bedeutungsunterschied zwischen Gerichten und Verwaltungsbehörden in der Praxis aufgelöst worden war, fand diese Entwicklung der Aufwertung der Polizei- und Verwaltungsstrafgerichtsbarkeit darin ihren Abschluss, dass durch die Verfassung 1934 dem Polizeistrafverfahren die gleiche Stellung wie dem gerichtlichen Verfahren eingeräumt und so dem Polizeiorgan eine dem ordentlichen Richter gleichwertige Kompetenz zugestanden wurde.*”

Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, p. 307, also 286.

⁵⁸⁸ For a thorough analysis on the preventive detention camp Wöllersdorf and its history see Schölnberger.

For a concise overview of the development of the measure of preventive detention see Kurt Bauer’s chapter in Botz, Bauer, and Meixner, pp. 239–282.

⁵⁸⁹ Botz, Bauer, and Meixner, pp. 254–261.; Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934*, pp. 221f.; Neugebauer, pp. 313–315.; Reiter-Zatloukal, ‘Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes’, p. 300.; Schölnberger, pp. 190f., 194, 196f.

⁵⁹⁰ Original quote: [*Anhaltehaft konnte verhängt werden gegen Personen*], „*die geflissentlich staats- oder regierungsfeindliche Bestrebungen fördern oder andere zu staats- oder regierungsfeindlichen Handlungen verleiten oder zu verleiten suchen, insbesondere aber Personen, die sich zu einer politischen Partei bekennen, der die Betätigung in Österreich untersagt wurde, oder von denen auf Grund nachgewiesener Handlungen oder Unterlassungen mit Grund angenommen werden kann, daß sie den Bestrebungen einer*

As a result, the alleged support for a banned political party was already reason enough to be taken into preventive detention.

This new tool was especially used to extend detention, either prior or after a sentence imposed by a judge or the police. In the case of Robert Scheickl, it was declared in December 1934 after his time in police detention (four months) and prior to pretrial detention (5 months) and lasted around one and a half months. In total, he was thus kept in custody for over ten months from his arrest until the beginning of the actual custodial sentence⁵⁹¹ – nota bene, before he was even legally convicted by a judge in June 1935 which shows the law's far-reaching scope.

Preventive detention was also imposed on Franz Riegler, a courier of the intelligence service who was arrested in the aftermath of the July coup and kept in Wöllersdorf until March 1935.⁵⁹²

4. The trial against Haider, Weinrich et al. on the other hand can exemplify the tightened regulations on explosives and weapons. In order to fight the raging National Socialist terrorism, the regime implemented harsh restrictions on and higher sentences for the possession and trade of explosives and weapons.⁵⁹³ As a consequence, Gottfried Weinrich (initially charged with §67 for spying) was sentenced to five years in prison in a separate trial (for §6 of the Explosives Act) because the police had found explosives and weapon accessory during a police house search.⁵⁹⁴ When compared to other sentences that we have come across, this is without a doubt a very harsh sentence for the mere possession, not even usage of these articles and illustrates the deterrence effect the Austrofascist government wanted to achieve.

solchen Partei Vorschub leisten." Bundesgesetz vom 24. September 1934, betreffend die Verhaltung sicherheitsgefährlicher Personen zum Aufenthalte in einem bestimmten Orte oder Gebiete (Anhaltegesetz). Accessible under:

https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokument.wxe?Abfrage=BgblAlt&Dokumentnummer=bgl1934_0253_00607

⁵⁹¹ Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, Scheickl Robert; Missbrauch der Amtsgewalt, bzw. Mitschuld daran, 11.03.1935, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

⁵⁹² Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Franz Riegler, 29.3.35, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

For other measures that affected members of the intelligence service one could also mention tightened regulations for facilitated expatriation. The Austrofascists introduced reforms that made it easier to expatriate people that had fled the country and confiscate their property. This is what happened to Julius Meerganz-Medeazza in October 1934. Gauleitung Wien, Personalamt, Hauptstelle für politische Beurteilung, Politische Beurteilung Meerganz von Medeazza, 26.02.1940, pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/47.;

Bundesministerium für Inneres, Abteilung 2, Erhebungen Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, 23.05.1949, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/47.;

Bundesministerium für Inneres, Abteilung 2, Erhebungen Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, 22.04.1949, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/47.;

Bundesministerium für Inneres, Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit, Abteilung 2, Auskunft Julius Meerganz Medeazza, 30.08.1947, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/47.

See also Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', pp. 298f.; Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal, 'Ausbürgerung. Politisch motivierter Staatsbürgerschaftsverlust im Austrofaschismus', *juridikum. zeitschrift im rechtsstaat*, 4, 2006, 173–76.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., pp. 281f., 292f.

See also Die Erhebung von Wien vom 25. Juli 1934. In: Kölnische Zeitung, Nr. 372-3, 27.07.1939, In: BArch (former BDC)-NS-5-VI-17751

⁵⁹⁴ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, Anklage gegen Franz Haider, Oskar Vogl und Gottfried Weinrich, 29.09.1934, pp. 7, 10–12, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, An das Infanterieregiment Nr. 2, 18.07.1934, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 1589_34.

This can further be demonstrated by Anton Geckl's conviction. Geckl had planted an explosive in a Viennese coffee house that had injured three people and was sentenced to twelve years in prison for this offence (§4 of the Explosives Act).⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹⁵ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Abschrift Urteil Anton Geckl und andere, 7.8.1934, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 4578_34.

6. The end of the intelligence service

To conclude the intelligence service's history, I will now outline the main reasons and developments responsible for the sharp decline of the intelligence service after the July coup which also led to its eventual dissolution. It needs to be emphasised though that the service's decline in both importance and activity after the failed coup also reflected in the scarce source material of that phase. Some of the here stated assessments thus remain rather speculative and need to be subject to further research.

As stated above, the failure of the July coup ultimately induced the descent of the intelligence service. The attempted putsch induced the Austrian authorities to a broad offensive against the illegal Nazi movement in Austria, with enormously intensified investigations and a wave of raids and arrests against its members. Interestingly, all of the main putschists in Wächter, Glass, Weydenhammer and Habicht could escape to Germany.⁵⁹⁶ But in total, besides the around 100 identified National Socialists that died during the coup and the following uprisings, hundreds were arrested and 13 of them eventually executed.⁵⁹⁷

The intelligence service was not at all spared – the wave of arrests against it was kicked off by a series of coincidences and developed as follows:

One day after the July coup, on July the 26th 1934, the police conducted a house search at the home of Hanns Blaschke, as already stated a member of the *Deutscher Klub* and an important figure for the Austrian Nazi movement, the intelligence service and also the July coup.⁵⁹⁸ During this house search Franz Hörwarthner, the intelligence service's *Kanzleileiter*, appeared, was arrested and had his house searched as well. While searching Hörwarthner's house, then again Franz Riegler, who served as courier for the intelligence service⁵⁹⁹, entered and was detained. Subsequently, the police searched his house too and found a whole box with material destined for the intelligence service. For the police however, the material featured one flaw: it did not give away names of contributors and leaders of the intelligence service, but only used the members' code names. At this point though, the police received help from inside the intelligence service – the arrested Franz Hörwarthner cooperated with the police. In order to obtain a more lenient sentence he agreed to share internal information and to

⁵⁹⁶ Bauer, *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934*, p. 57.; Graf, pp. 72f.

⁵⁹⁷ Bauer, 'Die Kulminationen der Gewalt: Februar und Juli 1934', p. 222.

⁵⁹⁸ Erker, Huber, and Taschwer, p. 85.; Rothländer, p. 433.; Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Zeugenvernehmung Franz Hörwarthner Fortsetzung, 19.2.35, p. 3, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

⁵⁹⁹ Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien I, Fortsetzung der Vernehmung des Beschuldigten Robert Scheickl, 25.3.35, p. 3, in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

uncover the code names of dozens of members. In doing so, he enabled the police to identify and arrest over forty members and informants of the intelligence service over the next two weeks – including its leader at the time Otto Bersch, Otto Begus, Robert Scheickl and other relevant figures of the network.⁶⁰⁰ According to later documents of the Gestapo⁶⁰¹, Hörwarthner's cooperation with the police allegedly continued after his release for which he was brutally punished. On the 15th of March 1938, only three days after the Nazi takeover in Austria, Hörwarthner was arrested and four months later sent to the KZ Buchenwald. Despite various pleas for clemency of his family, he was held captive there until at least 1942. However, references to Hörwarthner's whereabouts in post-war trials indicate that he survived.⁶⁰²

As a result of the coup's failure and Hörwarthner's apostasy, did not only mass arrests hit the movement, but those illegal Nazis that were still at large saw themselves forced to flee to Germany – including Otto Wächter, Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, Rudolf Pavlu and several other key members of the network.⁶⁰³ Consequently, at the end of August 1934, all members of the intelligence service's group were either in jail or in Germany – due to this catastrophic result it is of no surprise that the service's activities came to an absolute standstill for the following months.

Apart from arrests and flights, the failure of the coup and especially its dilettantish planning and execution led to massive political turbulences.⁶⁰⁴ The whole Austrian *Landesleitung* was publicly rebuked and used as scapegoat for the spectacular failure of the undertaking and as a consequence demonstratively disbanded by Hitler in its entirety on 3rd August 1934 in order to conciliate the furious Austrian government.⁶⁰⁵

The undertaking's leading members faced a massive setback in their careers and were almost completely deprived of power for the time being. Otto Wächter (and also Fridolin Glass) had to go into

⁶⁰⁰ Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien, Scheickl Robert; Missbrauch der Amtsgewalt, 27.03.1935, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

⁶⁰¹ Kreisgericht Wien, Beschluß Hörwarthner Franz, 08.04.1941, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921.

Of course, information of a particularly brutal terror organisation such as the Gestapo has to be treated with specific prudence. However, the remarks on Hörwarthner's conduct do seem plausible when comparing them to statements of Hörwarthner's family members in their pleas for clemency. Gaupersonalamt, Schiedsverfahren Ignaz Hörwarthner, 26.05.1940, pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921.; Ida Hörwarthner, Gnadengesuch um Enthaltung ihres Gatten, Franz Hörwarthner, 15.07.1938, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/33.921.

⁶⁰² According to these sources, he was charged for his role in an assassination in the concentration camp after the war. Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien, Hauptverhandlung gegen Dr. Benno Breitenberg-Zennenberg, Volksgericht am 28.02.48, pp. 1f., in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. – Gauakten, trial record VG 215_55.

⁶⁰³ Bundes-Polizeikommissariat Innsbruck, Auskunft zu Dr. Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, 28.02.1935, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.4., trial record 343_35.

⁶⁰⁴ Broszat, pp. 282f. See Pauley's chapter "The party in ruins" Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, pp. 138–43.

⁶⁰⁵ Garscha, p. 109. Jagschitz, 'Illegale Bewegungen während der Ständischen Ära 1933-1938.', p. 158.; Jagschitz, 'Zwischen Befriedung und Konfrontation. Zur Lage der NSDAP in Österreich 1934 bis 1936', p. 156.; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 228.

hiding in Germany under false names (and from now was known as Oskar Wartenberg⁶⁰⁶) and were even forbidden to maintain any relations to Austria. As mentioned previously, they were asked to justify their taken actions and conduct in the course of the July coup in front of a delicate party court after the “*Anschluss*” in 1938.⁶⁰⁷

In general, most of them politically never fully recovered from the coup’s failure and experienced partly difficult years in relative insignificance in Nazi Germany – with Otto Wächter and his high-level career as state commissioner in Austria (May 1938 until April 1939) and later as governor of the occupied district Galicia being one of the few exceptions, as will be shortly outlined in the following chapter.

On a larger scale, the failure of the July coup not only eliminated most of the leading circle of the intelligence service, but also completely changed its structural embedding in the Nazi movement. With the Austrian NSDAP *Landesleitung*, the intelligence service’s “parent organisation” was eliminated by Hitler himself. The Austrian Nazi movement, that had formerly enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy from Nazi Germany in various domains, including intelligence, was almost entirely stripped of its former leeway.⁶⁰⁸

Under the disguise of the *Treuhandgesellschaft*, the intelligence service was nevertheless continued on a smaller scale and now operated from Berlin and Germany. From February 1935 on, Otto Begus even served as its head again after his release from prison and subsequent flight to Germany. However, the intelligence service did barely provide any added value for the extensive intelligence network of Nazi Germany and never regained its former strength and dynamic. With the Austrian *Landesleitung* as its patron gone, its main supporters such as Wächter largely out of power and the myriad of already existing German intelligence networks, it was not of any particular importance for the German authorities or anybody else.

Hence, through the massive consequences of the failed July coup the intelligence service lost most of its political support and patrons and, to a large extent, also its relevance for the Nazi movement which made its dissolution only a matter of time – eventually, in July 1935 it was formally disbanded.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁶ Fridolin Glass changed his name to Kurt Merkmann, Julius Meerganz-Medeazza to Julius Menzinger. Graf, p. 187. NSDAP-Flüchtlingshilfswerk - Alfred Rodenbücher, An den Herrn Polizeipräsidenten, Betreff Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, 19.07.1935, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.

⁶⁰⁷ Otto Wächter, Antrag auf Eröffnung des Ehrenverfahrens vor dem Schiedhof, Stellungnahme Otto Wächter, 18.06.1938, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.; Garscha, p. 109.; Graf, p. 75.; Jagschitz, ‘Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934’, pp. 157, 159.; Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 135, 138.; Rothländer, p. 485. Der Beauftragte des Obersten Richters der Partei, Ladung Otto Wächter, 28.05.1938, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.; Otto Wächter, Antrag auf Eröffnung des Ehrenverfahrens vor dem Schiedhof - Stellungnahme Otto Wächter, 18.06.1938, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.

⁶⁰⁸ Broszat, p. 283.

⁶⁰⁹ Stuchlik, p. 98.

7. Epilogue

In the following, I will give extended biographical remarks and briefly address the further career paths of members of the intelligence service's core group – to be more precise, of those for whom the archival records and literature allow such insights. In doing so, I also want to assess in how far the intelligence service remained influential as network after its dissolution in summer 1935 and whether connections established in the service were continued and stayed relevant.

The most important protagonist in this regard is once more **Otto Wächter** whom I will follow through the rest of his career in order to answer said question. As described earlier, the failure of the July coup for Wächter as one of the main initiators meant a severe setback in his career – he was able to fly to Germany on the 28th of July, but there had to go into hiding and live under the name of Oskar Wartenberg.⁶¹⁰ Moreover, his assets in Austria were confiscated.⁶¹¹

In Germany, he was one of *"[t]he SS refugees, organized into the SS Sammelstelle, [who] were housed together with the Austrian Legion in the Dachau camp"*⁶¹². Wächter stayed in Dachau from September to November 1934, presumably to receive training⁶¹³. Wächter's close confidant **Julius Meerganz-Medeazza** experienced very similar things: he also had his assets confiscated, had to use a cover name (Julius Menzinger) and was assigned to the SS camp in Dachau for two months – in addition, Meerganz-Medeazza was expatriated.⁶¹⁴ In the following years, he then became a clerk for the Refugee Agency of the NSDAP (for National Socialist refugees that is) – where he was a colleague of **Rudolf Pavlu** and **Robert Scheickl**⁶¹⁵ – and presumably worked for the Gestapo in later years, although no more information was available to verify and specify this statement.⁶¹⁶

Otto Wächter on the other hand did his military service in the German army (from March to July 1936⁶¹⁷) and, according to a newspaper report of 1941, worked in different functions for the party in Berlin and Munich.⁶¹⁸ After the National Socialist takeover in Austria, his career gained momentum

⁶¹⁰ Flüchtlingshilfswerk, Ausweis Nr. 4301, Oskar Wartenberg, 11.04.1935, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.

⁶¹¹ Otto Wächter, Personalfragebogen NSDAP, 25.06.1938, pp. 3f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.

⁶¹² Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis*, p. 144.

⁶¹³ Flüchtlingshilfswerk, Ausweis Nr. 4301, Oskar Wartenberg, 11.04.1935, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.

⁶¹⁴ Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 15.06.1936, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.; Gauleitung Wien, Personalamt, Hauptstelle für politische Beurteilung, Politische Beurteilung Meerganz von Medeazza, 26.02.1940, pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.; Bundesministerium für Inneres, Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit, Abteilung 2, Auskunft Julius Meerganz Medeazza, 30.08.1947, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.

⁶¹⁵ Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 15.06.1936, p. 3, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.

⁶¹⁶ SS-Sammelstelle, NSDAP-Flüchtlingshilfswerk, Alfred Rodenbücher, Bewerbung des SS-Mannes Meerganz-Medeazza um Einstellung in das Geheime Staatspolizei-Amt, 18.05.1935, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.; Bundesministerium für Inneres, Abteilung 2, Erhebungen Julius Meerganz-Medeazza, 22.04.1949, in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/47.

⁶¹⁷ Otto Wächter, Eidesstattliche Erklärung, 14.02.1937, pp. 3f., in OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA/130.802.

⁶¹⁸ Distriktstandortführer Dr. Wächter, in *Krakauer Zeitung*, Nr. 169, 22.07.1941, in BArch (former BDC)-NS-5-VI-17751.

again as he was chosen as “*state commissioner for the cleansing of the Austrian civil service*”⁶¹⁹. He was thus responsible for the removal of civil servants that belonged to the political opposition or that did not meet the deeply antisemitic and racist National Socialist criteria.⁶²⁰

In this new position, he helped two familiar faces to positions in the new National Socialist government. Just as in the *Landesleitung* in the illegal period, Wächter made his old intimate Rudolf Pavlu to his chief of staff.⁶²¹ Rudolf Scheickl (just as Julius Meerganz-Medeazza) on the other hand first continued his legal education and became judicial assessor and then assistant judge. Thanks to the patronage of Wächter, he returned to Austria after the “*Anschluss*” and became consultant of the ministry of interior and cultural affairs.⁶²²

We can thus observe the first two examples in which the abolished intelligence service functioned as career network.

In conclusion, the National Socialist takeover meant a promotion for Wächter and two of his associates. However, the failure of the July coup still followed him. The contemporary critique of Wächter, his fellow putschists and their dilettantish plan and conduct led to internal quarrels, culminating in a party court investigation after the “*Anschluss*”. This investigation should analyse the reasons for the spectacular and disastrous failure of the July coup and was, inter alia, even advanced by Wächter himself who wanted to tackle persistent reproaches against him and once and for all vindicate himself.⁶²³ Eventually, the investigation was stifled and terminated by Hitler himself who wanted to put the whole affair to rest to avoid further internal squabble.⁶²⁴

The next major historic event once more brought a promotion for Wächter: the start of the Second World War, the German occupation of Poland and the following formation of the *Generalgouvernement*⁶²⁵ in autumn 1939 made him the governor of the district of Krakow which he remained until January/February 1942. He then became governor of the district of Galicia (January/February 1942-summer 1944).⁶²⁶ In both of these positions, Hans Frank, the head of the

⁶¹⁹ Original quote: „Staatskommissar für die Reinigung des österreichischen Berufsbeamtentums“ Bundesministerium für Inneres, Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit, Kriegsverbrecher Otto Wächter, 20.05.1946, p. 3, in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_50.; Staatskommissar beim Reichsstaathalter Otto Wächter, An den Gauleiter von Wien SS-Oberführer Odilo Globocnigg [sic], 06.08.1938, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/130.802.

⁶²⁰ Fischer Klee, *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich. Wer war was vor und nach 1945?* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2003), pp. 647f.; Pohl, p. 77.

⁶²¹ Friedrich, p. 587, f.n. 10.

⁶²² Staatsanwaltschaft Wien, Anklage gegen Robert Scheickl, 29.01.1948, p 2, in WSTLA/2.3.14., trial record Vr 8121-46.; Reichsminister der Justiz, An den Herrn Kammergerichtspräsidenten, Betreff Julius Meerganz von Medeazza, 19.06.1936, pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/47.

⁶²³ Otto Wächter, Antrag auf Eröffnung des Ehrenverfahrens vor dem Schiedhof, Stellungnahme Otto Wächter, 18.06.1938, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/130.802.

⁶²⁴ Autor unbekannt, Lieber Parteigenosse Wächter, 09.06.1938, in BArch (former BDC)-NS-19-805.

⁶²⁵ ~General Government, the part of Poland that was administered by Germany but not fully annexed.

⁶²⁶ Staatsanwaltschaft Wien, Amtsvermerk Otto Wächter, 05.12.1945, in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_50.; Bundesministerium für Inneres, Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit, Kriegsverbrecher Otto Wächter, 20.05.1946,

General Government, was his superior. Both Wolfgang Graf and Dieter Pohl come to the conclusion that throughout the Second World War Wächter endorsed Frank's radical and inhumane course against the local Jewish population which culminated in horrific mass murders as part of the Holocaust.⁶²⁷ Pohl states that "*Wächter was involved in the persecution of Jews at the latest since his occupation in the General Government from 1939 on.*"⁶²⁸ Already as governor of the district Krakow he issued several decrees that targeted the local Jewish⁶²⁹ population, such as decree 56 of the 11th of December 1939. It dictated the immediate closure of all "Jewish schools", the exclusion of all Jewish kids from public and private schools and the dismissal of all Jewish teachers.⁶³⁰ Wächter was also present when Frank announced "*direct and indirect measures for extermination*"⁶³¹ in December 1941 – a very explicit and unambiguous pronouncement.

Apart from that, Wächter allegedly stole valuable paintings, including a masterpiece of Pieter Bruegel, from a Polish museum and in doing so even enriched himself at the expense of the local people.⁶³²

In Otto Wächter we thus encounter nothing less than an early accessory and collaborator of the Holocaust. After the war, an arrest warrant for him was issued. In a report of the ministry of the interior he was explicitly referred to as war criminal and described as one of the "*most severely incriminated National Socialist actors in the illegal period as well as in the National Socialist tyranny.*"⁶³³ Despite this accurate assessment of Wächter's role⁶³⁴, he managed to completely evade prosecution – thanks to influential supporters in the Catholic Church. With the help of the aforementioned far-right Austrian

p. 4, in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_50.; Archiv für publizistische Arbeit (Intern.Biogr.Archiv), Dr. Otto Wächter (Gouverneur des Distriktes Galizien), 26.3.1942, in BArch (former BDC)-NS-5-VI-17751.

See also Friedrich, p. 176, f.n. 2; Graf, pp. 75-77, 422. Friedrich 176, f.n. 2, Graf 209, Pohl 77, 422

⁶²⁷ Graf, p. 211; Pohl, pp. 77f.

⁶²⁸ Original quote: "*Spätestens seit seiner Tätigkeit im Generalgouvernement ab 1939 war Wächter mit der Verfolgung der Juden befaßt.*" Pohl, pp. 76f.

⁶²⁹ To be more precise: the persecution of people the National Socialists perceived as Jews.

⁶³⁰ The decree in the original wording:

"*Anordnung des Chefs des Distrikts Krakau, gez. Wächter, vom 11.12.1939*

Anordnung Nr. 56

1. *Alle Judenschulen werden mit sofortiger Wirksamkeit gesperrt.*

2. *Alle Judenkinder, die bisher öffentliche oder private Schulen besuchten, sind sofort auszusuchen.*

3. *Alle jüdischen Lehrer, auch Mischlinge 1. und 2. Grades, sind sofort fristlos zu entlassen.*

4. *Ob und in welcher Art in Hinkunft ein Unterricht für die Judenkinder eingerichtet wird, bleibt späteren Entscheidungen vorbehalten."*

Wächter zu diesem Zeitpunkt Gouverneur des Distrikts Krakau" Decree of Otto Wächter, head of the district of Krakow, quoted according to Friedrich, p. 176.

⁶³¹ Original quote: "*direkte und indirekte Vernichtungsmaßnahmen*". Hans Frank on the 16th of December 1941 quoted according to Pohl, p. 181.

⁶³² See Lorena Muñoz-Alonso, Nazi Loot Claim Over \$77 Million Bruegel Painting Triggers Row Between Austria and Poland, in artnet.news, 23.10.2015. Accessible under: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/nazi-loot-claim-bruegel-painting-346763>

⁶³³ Original quote: "*Wächter (...) zählte zu den schwerst belasteten nationalsozialistischen [sic] Akteuren sowohl in der Verbotszeit wie auch während der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft*" Bundesministerium für Inneres, Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit, Kriegsverbrecher Otto Wächter, 20.05.1946, p. 1, in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_50. See also 208, 233f.

⁶³⁴ Which is also substantiated by the NSDAP's badge of honour which Wächter received in January 1943. WSTLA 28, 77, 197.

bishop Alois Hudal, Wächter managed to hide in the Vatican under a false name and died there in 1949, still undetected and allegedly in Hudal's arms according to the bishop's remarks.⁶³⁵

Besides Otto Wächter, another member of the intelligence service's core group was involved in the General Government: **Rudolf Pavlu**. Once more at Wächter's instigation, Pavlu followed him to Poland and first became head of the work department in the district Krakow under Wächter and then "*Stadthauptmann*"⁶³⁶ of the city of Krakow where he assumed an important role in the establishment of the Krakow ghetto.⁶³⁷

For Pavlu, Wächter thus continued to be a reliable supporter after the dissolution of the intelligence service as well and at times even defended him in internal feuds.⁶³⁸

On the remaining members of the service's core group, only a few pieces of information were available:

- Besides his aforementioned consulting position at the ministry of interior and cultural affairs, **Robert Scheickl** became district commissioner of no less than three Viennese districts (1st, 8th and 9th)⁶³⁹ and was severely wounded in the Second World War. After the war, he was tried for not complying to the obligatory registration for National Socialists but was granted pardon on an application of the ÖVP, the successor party of Dollfuß' Christian Social party.⁶⁴⁰
- **Otto Begus** continued to work for other intelligence networks (as did **Fritz Thaler**) and police departments in Germany after the dissolution of the intelligence service of the *Landesleitung*. In addition, he participated in Mussolini's war in Ethiopia and after the "*Anschluss*" joined the criminal police in Salzburg.⁶⁴¹
- **Otto Bersch** continued his career in the industrial sector and became one of the directors of an armaments manufacturer in Germany. In 1943 he also returned to Austria where his steps become increasingly hard to follow. On the 21st of July 1944, he moved away without further

⁶³⁵ Graf, pp. 214f.; Klee, pp. 647f.; Pohl, p. 389.

⁶³⁶ The head of the civil administration of an occupied city, presumably a position similar to a mayor.

⁶³⁷ Friedrich, p. 587, f.n. 10.; Pohl, pp. 158f.

⁶³⁸ Graf, pp. 210–213.

⁶³⁹ Gendarmeriepostenkommando Neumarkt i. H., Scheickl Robert, Verbrechen nach §11 des VG, 27.02.1947, pp. 2f., in WSTLA/2.3.14., trial record Vr 8121-46.

⁶⁴⁰ NSDAP Gauleitung Wien - Referat Alte Garde, Fragebogen Robert Scheickl, 17.01.1939, pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/316.453.; Staatsanwaltschaft Wien, Anklage gegen Robert Scheickl, 29.01.1948, pp. 1,3, in WSTLA/2.3.14., trial record Vr 8121-46.; Landes-Invalidenamt für Oberösterreich, Bescheid Scheickl Robert, 29.09.1947, pp. 1f., in WSTLA/2.3.14., trial record Vr 8121-46.; Bundesministerium für Inneres, Generaldirektion für die öffentliche Sicherheit, Gnadenbitte Robert Scheickl, 21.02.1949, in WSTLA/2.3.14., trial record Vr 8121-46.; Karl Renner, Resolution zur Einstellung des Volksgerichtsverfahrens gegen Robert Scheickl, 26.06.1949, in OeStA/AdR-01-PK – 8843.; Präsidentschaftskanzlei, Antrag auf Nachsicht der Sühnefolgen nach dem Verbotsgesetz für Robert Scheickl, 03.01.1949, in OeStA/AdR-01-PK – 8843.

⁶⁴¹ Bundesministerium für Inneres, Aktenvermerk Otto Begus, o. D., pp. 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/119.579.; Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS - SD-Leitabschnitt Wien, Werdegang Otto Begus, 23.09.1940, pp 1f., in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/119.579.; Adolf Beckerle, Polizeipräsident in Frankfurt am Main, An Otto Begus, Berufung als Kriminalkommissar, 07.11.1936, in OeStA/AdR ZNSZ GA/119.579.

notice – this particular date is interesting insofar as it is only one day after the plot of Graf Stauffenberg in Germany. However, there is no further information on this whatsoever which means that anything beyond the observation of this incident would be wholly unsubstantiated speculation.⁶⁴² After the war, proceedings against him were initiated at the *Volksgericht* in Vienna that somehow were started all over again in 1955. However, it seems that a conviction was never imposed.⁶⁴³

- About **Julius Meerganz-Medeazza's** career moves no further information could be obtained after his beginnings in Germany except that he received the medal of honour of the 13th of March (as did other members of the intelligence service).
- Last but not least: **Franz Hörwarthner's** brutal punishment in form of imprisonment in the KZ Buchenwald was already mentioned above.

Ultimately, we can thus state that the intelligence service and the related personal ties turned out to be a relevant and helpful career network for at least two of the core group's members: for Robert Scheickl and Rudolf Pavlu. Particularly the latter made a career in the occupied territories in today's Poland in close geographic and functional proximity to Wächter, his former boss in both the NSDAP *Landesleitung* and the intelligence service.

⁶⁴² Otto Bersch, Abschrift Eidesstaatliche Erklärung Otto Bersch, 30.11.1936, pp. 1f., in WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_55.; Urheber unbekannt, Bericht Erhebungen Otto Bersch 17.6.1948, p. 1. In: WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4. - Gauakten, trial record VG 215_55.

⁶⁴³ WSTLA, archive collections 2.7.1.4., trial record VG 215_55.

IV. Conclusions

Referring to my main research questions outlined in the introduction, I have illustrated in which ways the intelligence service was involved in several National Socialist activities in the illegal period. Hardly surprising, its main contribution to the Austrian Nazi movement was intelligence. In this domain, the intelligence service was involved in every major step of the process: from the establishment, maintenance and expansion of the network of informants, to the acquisition, collection and procession of relevant information to the transmission to the *Landesleitung* and selected recipients in Germany. It obtained the aspired intelligence with the help of extended National Socialist, right-wing and conservative networks. These networks in Austria's society, its institutional structures and authorities were the precondition for its effective functioning.

Objectives and purposes

The intelligence the service provided was thereby used in various ways for the manifold activities of the Nazi movement. The mere gathering of information in many regards was thus not solely a purpose in itself, but rather the means to an end. As shown throughout this thesis, it rather served a myriad of objectives and purposes. In an attempt to concisely summarize my above elaborated results and conclusively answer this fundamental research question, I have identified ten objectives and purposes which the intelligence service pursued and served.

1. Expansion

The new intelligence service contributed to the further expansion of intelligence activities within Austria, as part of the shift in strategy that the ban of the party and its suborganisations had made necessary. It should ensure a continuous transmission of relevant information to the Austrian *Landesleitung* and, to a lesser extent, also to German authorities.'

2. Professionalisation

Moreover, the *Landesleitung's* intelligence network aimed to professionalise the already existing intelligence structures. Due to the now illegal character of almost any activity for the National Socialist movement it was imperative to act more professionally and inconspicuous in order to avoid further arrests among the already decimated Nazi members. In doing so, the resilience of National Socialist intelligence structures against intensified prosecution should be increased.

3. Centralisation

This was also one of the objectives of the attempted centralisation of Austrian intelligence activities. The new intelligence service should serve as umbrella organisation for the various incorporated intelligence networks, coordinate their activities under one roof and in doing so increase their efficiency and the Nazi movement's clout.

4. Infiltration

As further part of the new strategy in the illegal period, the intelligence service should intensify and pool the efforts for the large-scale infiltration of relevant structures in a wide range of domains of the Austrian state and society. It should support and expand the existing inside networks within sensitive institutions and at the same time undermine and destabilise the ruling government.

5. Impede prosecution

Especially from mid-June 1933 and the party ban on, the Austrian authorities largely intensified the prosecution of the Nazi movement and carried out extensive waves of arrests.

Therefore, the primary targets for the stated reinforced infiltration were the institutions responsible for the prosecution of the now illegal Nazi movement – the police forces and the judiciary. In this task also lay the main occupation of the intelligence service, which in some instances thus also fought its own prosecution.

In providing various examples I have shown that the National Socialists in general and the intelligence service in particular intensified the efforts to infiltrate these institutions in order to establish several "safety nets" that would help them avoid detention or at least reduce sentence.

In an attempt at classification and recapitulation I have listed five important "safety nets" which were activated on different stages of prosecution:

1. Police insiders, among them high-ranking officials as well, transmitted information on police raids and ongoing investigations in order to warn potential suspects among the Nazi movement – as especially done by Otto Begus and Rudolf Pavlu's warning service.
2. If warnings did not prevent detention, police officers could assist the escape of arrested National Socialists – as in the case of Fritz Thaler.
3. Courtroom personnel like Robert Scheickl undermined jurisdiction and provided the Nazi movement's legal advisors with confidential information on criminal proceedings against National Socialists (such as Geckl, Leubuscher and the group of spies in Haider, Weinrich, Vogl and Thaler). Naturally, knowing the public prosecutors' level of

knowledge and strategies in court meant a huge advantage for the “party lawyers” around Wächter and helped them decide the necessary steps.

4. At court, higher ranking officials, such as judge Johann Powalatz, were allies of the Austrian National Socialists as well and used their position to minimize the ramifications of criminal proceedings and ensure the earliest possible release, as happened in the trial against Robert Scheickl or Walter Leubuscher and Hans Muschik.
5. If necessary, confidants could help with a suspect’s flight to Germany, like Benno Braitenberg with his position as deputy head of the passport office.

6. Facilitate armament and terrorism

These extensive measures for the impediment of prosecution should maximize the number of active members at large that the Nazi movement could use in terrorist attacks and other covert activities. In addition, the intelligence service had informants within the Austrian army (border guard) and the customs office that, inter alia, informed it about measures the Austrian authorities had taken to prevent arms smuggling to Austrian Nazi commandos and thus enabled the smugglers to circumvent these measures. In this way, the intelligence service fostered both the man- and military power of Nazi terrorism in Austria which further shows its contribution to and endorsement of the violent-terrorist, radical-revolutionary strategy that was prevailing at that time among Austrian Nazis.

7. Prepare violent takeover

The culmination of this radical-revolutionary strategy was the attempt for a violent takeover in the form of the July coup to whose preparations and execution the intelligence service also substantially contributed. Especially two of its members (Wächter and Begus) were largely involved and assumed prominent roles prior to and during the coup.

8. Networking

As shown in the examples of the Catholic Church or the *Deutscher Klub*, the intelligence service should establish and enhance links to a variety of important Austrian organisations. In doing so, it should support the networking efforts of the Nazi movement, increase National Socialist influence in and strengthen its grip on Austria.

9. Foster the influence of the NSDAP in the internal struggle for power

The intelligence service of the *Landesleitung* as new umbrella organisation in the intelligence field was to be controlled by the NSDAP, the political arm of Nazism. It should foster the independence of the political party from the paramilitary organisations, especially the SA, in intelligence and beyond and strengthen the *Landesleitung's* position as leading authority of the Austrian Nazi movement. Therefore, the intelligence service must be understood as a tool of the NSDAP in this struggle for supremacy against the backdrop of the complex power relations within the Nazi system.

10. Fight against political opponents

Last but not least, the intelligence service should also serve as important tool in the fight against political opponents – such as the *Heimwehr*. Insiders within rival organisations provided the *Landesleitung* with information on internal matters, such as the armament and combat strength of armed formations or the position on a potential cooperation. The resulting advantage in knowledge helped the political leadership to continuously and swiftly adapt its strategy and propaganda with regard to these rival organisations.

Besides the objectives and purposes of the intelligence service's establishment, other fundamental research questions were how the Nazi movement's large-scale expansion in Austria could unfold in the first place, what facilitated it and which role the Austrofascist regime and the abolition of democracy that it induced, played in that regard.

My and many other mentioned historians' conclusion here is that the contemporary antidemocratic movements and developments advanced by the Austrofascist regime – and here in particular by the radicals in the *Heimwehr* – and the deep ideological rift running through Austria's society and politics largely facilitated Nazism's gradual takeover. The authoritarian turn of the Austrofascists pre-empted several measures of the National Socialist blueprint for the establishment of its totalitarian system, such as the fragmentation, repression and persecution of the political opposition, especially on the left. These measures weakened Austria's resilience against National Socialist persuasion and strongly increased its susceptibility to the extensive infiltration efforts of the Nazi movement. The removal of left-leaning, id est politically undesirable, civil servants, judges, policemen et cetera opened up new opportunities for candidates from the national camp, which at that time was almost entirely absorbed by Nazism. The resulting lack of personnel and the turbulences that resulted from it also impaired the

authorities' defence mechanisms against the infiltration through National Socialists spies and informants.

Furthermore, as could be grasped throughout this thesis, different types of autocratic body of thoughts were prevalent in Austria at the beginning of the 1930s. Radical, antidemocratic forces such as the *Heimwehr* as a matter of fact were part of the government and assumed an ambivalent and wavering position towards Nazism – as was shown in the remarks on the *Heimwehr* and its leaders Emil Fey and Ernst Starhemberg. In this way, these autocratic forces provided Nazism with a large personnel as well as ideological reservoir and thus constituted a fertile ground for Nazism's totalitarian ideology. In the First Republic and the following Austrofascist regime, we can therefore observe a prime example on how a "*defensive democracy*" should not be constituted in order to resist attacks of radical antidemocratic forces. In fact, we can identify a two-fold defeat caused by antidemocratic forces: first, the defeat of democracy by an inner-Austrian group of antidemocrats in the form of the heterogeneous Austrofascist coalition. And secondly, the defeat of an independent Austrian (though already antidemocratic) state by Nazism as internal and external foe.

In conclusion, part of the explanation for Nazism's rise to power lies within the ideological constitution and institutional surroundings of the Austrofascist regime that even at the higher ranks could not fully resist Nazism's persuasion, despite the obvious threat it posed to the ruling regime and the country as a whole.

This threat manifested itself in the National Socialists' massive attack on Austria carried out simultaneously on a military, economic, diplomatic and institutional-infiltrating level and from both within and outside the country. As I have shown, a fundamental part of this attack was the intensification and professionalisation of National Socialist intelligence activities as in the form of the intelligence service of the *Landesleitung*. The analysis of the intelligence service in the form of this thesis hence explains how this attack unfolded and how it – and thus in fact the takeover of Austria – had started already years before the country's eventual demise in March 1938. It therefore hopefully can contribute to a better explanation of the circumstances, methods and course of the National Socialist rise to power in Austria in particular and in Europe in general.

V. Bibliography

1. Primary sources

OeStA – Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (Austrian State Archives)

Archive of the Republic (AdR) – Gauakten (OeStA/AdR ZNsZ GA)

- 47 – Julius Meerganz-Medeazza
- 33.921 – Franz Hörwarthner
- 130.802 – Otto Wächter
- 136.698 – Anton Geckl
- 199.579 – Otto Begus
- 316.453 – Robert Scheickl
- 343.264 – Otto Bersch

Archive of the Republic – Protocols of the Council of Ministers (OeStA/AdR MRang MR 1. Rep. MRP)

- Ministerratsprotokoll Nr. 839, 04.01.1933
- Ministerratsprotokoll Nr. 844, 21.02.1933
- Ministerratsprotokoll Nr. 846, 24.02.1933
- Ministerratsprotokolle 847-855, 25.02.1933–12.03.1933
- Ministerratsprotokolle 953-957, 20.07.1934–26.07.1934
- Ministerratsprotokoll 958, 27.07.1934
- Ministerratsprotokoll 960, 03.08.1934
- Ministerratsprotokoll 961, 07.08.1934

Archive of the Republic – Judiciary files (AdR Justiz RJM PA)

- Johann Powalatz
- Josef Wojtech

Archive of the Republic – Presidential Chancellery, pleas for clemency (OeStA/AdR PK 2Rep AR NS)

- Robert Scheickl

Archive of the Republic – Chancellor's Office (AdR BKA BKA-I PräS PA)

- Otto Begus

Archive of the Republic – Ministry of Commerce (AdR HBbBuT BMfHuV)

- Julius Meerganz-Medeazza

WSTLA – Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (Municipal and Provincial Archives of Vienna)

Archive collections 2.3.4. – Landesgericht für Strafsachen Wien

- Trial record Vr 343_35 against Robert Scheickl and Otto Bersch
- Trial record Vr 1589_34 against Franz Haider, Oskar Vogl and Gottfried Weinrich
- Trial record Vr 3783_34 against Josef Hoffmann
- Trial record Vr 4383_34 against Johann Meissner and Leopold Ratschka
- Trial record Vr 4578_34 against Anton Geckl and others.

Archive collections 2.7.1.4. – Gauakten

- Trial record VG 215_50 – Otto Wächter
- Trial record VG 215_55 – Otto Bersch

Archive collections 2.3.14. – Volksgericht

- trial record Vr 8121_46 – Robert Scheickl

BArch – Bundesarchiv – German Federal Archive

Archive collections National Socialism

- NS-5-VI-17751
- NS-9-269
- NS-19-805 (Mikrofiche)
- NSDAP Mitgliederkartei (Central file of NSDAP members)

2. Literature

- Ableitinger, Alfred, 'Politik in Österreich 1918 bis 1933', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 17–48
- Ackerl, Isabella, 'Das Kampfbündnis der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei mit der Großdeutschen Volkspartei vom 15. Mai 1933', in *Das Jahr 1934: 25. Juli. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 8. Oktober 1974*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1975), pp. 21–35
- Allinson, Mark, *Germany and Austria since 1814* (London / New York: Routledge, 2015)
- Andreski, Stanislav, 'Fascists as Moderates', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvet, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 52–55
- Auerbach, Hellmuth, 'Eine nationalsozialistische Stimme zum Wiener Putsch vom 25. Juli 1934', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 12.2 (1964), 201–218
- Bandhauer-Schöffmann, Irene, 'Der "Christliche Ständestaat" als Männerstaat?', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 254–280
- Bauer, Kurt, 'Arbeiterpartei? Zur Sozialstruktur der illegalen NSDAP in Österreich.', *Zeitgeschichte*, 29.5 (2002), 259–272
- , 'Die Kulminationen der Gewalt: Februar und Juli 1934', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 217–226
- , 'Dollfuß, Engelbert - Biographische Anmerkungen zu einer umstrittenen Persönlichkeit', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 365–369
- , *Elementar-Ereignis. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten und der Juliputsch 1934* (Vienna: Czernin, 2003)
- , *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934* (St. Pölten/Salzburg/Wien: Residenz, 2014)
- , 'Struktur und Dynamik des illegalen Nationalsozialismus in der obersteirischen Industrieregion 1933/34', 1998 <http://www.kurt-bauer-geschichte.at/PDF_Texte_Themen/Diplomarbeit_Kurt_Bauer.pdf>
- Bertolaso, Marco, *Die erste Runde im Kampf gegen Hitler? Frankreich, Großbritannien und die österreichische Frage 1933/34. Eine Untersuchung der Außenpolitik der Westmächte in den*

ersten 18 Monaten des 'Dritten Reiches' auf der Grundlage diplomatischer Akten (Hamburg: Kovac, 1995)

- Binder, Dieter A., 'Alte Träume und neue Methoden. Das deutsch-österreichische Verhältnis als Produkt aggressiven Revisionismus von 1933 bis 1938', in *Ungleiche Partner? Österreich und Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jh.*, ed. by Rolf Gehler, Michael; Schmidt, Rainer F.; Brandt, Harm-Hinrich; Steininger (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996), pp. 497–512
- Blatnik, Herbert, 'NS-Kommunikationsnetze und Infiltration, Propaganda und Terror nach 1933', in *Vom NS-Verbot zum >>Anschluss<<. Steirische Nationalsozialisten 1933-1938*, ed. by Hans Schafranek and Herbert Blatnik (Vienna: Czernin, 2015), pp. 125–193
- Botz, Gerhard, 'Anschluss an die Vergangenheit. Überlegungen zum Zusammenhang von Verdrängung der NS-Vergangenheit und aktueller Krise von Zeitgeschichte, Antifaschismus und Demokratiebewußtsein in Österreich.', in *Jahrbuch 1987*, ed. by Österreichischer Bundesverlag (Vienna: Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes, 1987), pp. 23–41
- , 'Die österreichischen NSDAP-Mitglieder. Probleme einer quantitativen Analyse aufgrund der NSDAP-Zentralkartei im Berlin Document Center', in *Die Nationalsozialisten. Analysen faschistischer Bewegungen*, ed. by Reinhard Mann (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980), pp. 98–136
- , *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1934* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1976)
- , 'Introduction', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvét, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 192–201
- , 'Political Violence, Its Forms and Strategies in the First Austrian Republic', *Historical Social Research Supplement*, 28 (2016), 133–159
- , 'Strukturwandlungen des österreichischen Nationalsozialismus (1904-1945)', *Historical Social Research, Supplement*, 28, 214–240
- <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/48412/ssoar-hrsupp-2016-28-botz-Strukturwandlungen_des_osterreichischen_Nationalsozialismus_1904-1945.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-hrsupp-2016-28-botz-Strukturwandlungen_des_osterreichis>
- , 'The Changing Patterns of Social Support for Austrian National Socialism (1918-1945)', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvét, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 202–225

- — —, 'The Short- and Long-Term Effects of the Authoritarian Regime and of Nazism in Austria: The Burden of a "Second Dictatorship"', *Historical Social Research Supplement*, 28 (2016), 191–213
- Botz, Gerhard, Kurt Bauer, and Wolfgang Meixner, *Die Sozialstruktur der illegalen NS-Bewegung in Österreich* (Vienna: Ludwig Boltzmann-Institut für Historische Sozialwissenschaft, 2011)
- Bracher, Karl Dietrich, "'Austrofaschismus' Und Die Krise Der Demokratien', in *Kontroversen Um Österreichs Zeitgeschichte: Verdrängte Vergangenheit, Österreich-Identität, Waldheim Und Die Historiker.*, ed. by Gerhard Botz and Gerald Sprengnagel (Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 1994), pp. 494–510
- Broszat, Martin, *Der Staat Hitlers. Grundlegung und Entwicklung seiner inneren Verfassung* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000)
- Burkhardt, Martin, *Arbeiten im Archiv* (Paderborn et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006)
- Carsten, Francis Ludwig, *The First Austrian Republic 1918-1938. A Study Based on British and Austrian Documents.* (Aldershot: Gower/Maurice Temple Smith, 1986)
- Dostal, Thomas, 'Das "braune Netzwerk" in Linz. Die illegalen nationalsozialistischen Aktivitäten zwischen 1933 und 1938', in *Nationalsozialismus in Linz*, ed. by Fritz Mayrhofer and Walter Schuster (Linz: Archiv der Stadt Linz, 2001), pp. 21–136
- Dvorak, Paul, 'Die Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie 1930-1938. Ein Forschungsüberblick', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Lucile Wenninger, Florian; Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 17–40
- Ebner, Katharina, 'Politische Katholizismen in Österreich 1933-1938. Aspekte und Desiderate der Forschungslage', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 159–222
- Elste, Alfred; Hänisch, Dirk, *Auf dem Weg zur Macht. Beiträge zur Geschichte der NSDAP in Kärnten von 1918 bis 1938. Wien 1997.; Erwin Steinböck: Kärnten. In: Österreich 1918-1938. Geschichte der Ersten Republik.* (Vienna, 1997)
- Eminger, Stefan, 'Aufstand der Provinz - Zum Spannungsfeld Stadt versus Land im Österreich der Zwischenkriegszeit', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 283–300
- Eminger, Stefan, and Karl Haas, 'Wirtschaftstreibende und Nationalsozialismus in Österreich. Die Nazifizierung von Handel, Gewerbe und Industrie in den 1930er Jahren', *Zeitgeschichte*, 29.4 (2002), 153–176

- Erker, Linda, Andreas Huber, and Klaus Taschwer, 'Von der „Pflegestätte nationalsozialistischer Opposition“ zur „äußerst bedrohlichen Nebenregierung“. Der Deutsche Klub vor und nach dem „Anschluss“ 1938', *Zeitgeschichte* 2, 44 (2017), 78–97
- Falter, Jürgen W., *Hitlers Wähler* (Munich: Beck, 1991)
- Falter, Jürgen W., and Dirk Hänisch, 'Wahlerfolge und Wählerschaft der NSDAP in Österreich 1927–1932: Soziale Basis und parteipolitische Herkunft', *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung. Supplement*, 1, 2013, 233–259
- Friedrich, Klaus-Peter, *Polen. September 1939–Juli 1941* (München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2011)
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg, 'Vorlesung 5: Skizze der Grundlagen einer Hermeneutik (1958)', in *Das Problem des historischen Bewußtseins.*, ed. by Hans-Georg Gadamer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), pp. 42–57
- Garscha, Winfried R., 'Nationalsozialisten in Österreich 1933–1938', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933–1938.*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 100–120
- Gehler, Michael, 'Tirol zur Zeit des Juli-Putsches der Nationalsozialisten im Jahre 1934', in *Historische Blickpunkte. Festschrift für Johann Rainer.* (Innsbruck, 1988), pp. 159–172
- , 'Zwischen allen Stühlen - Österreichs Außenpolitik 1918–1938', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918–1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 117–128
- Gehmacher, Johanna, 'Kein Historikerinnenstreit. Fragen einer frauen- und geschlechtergeschichtlichen Erforschung des Nationalsozialismus in Österreich', *Zeitgeschichte*, 22.3/4 (1995), 109–123
- Graf, Wolfgang, *Österreichische SS-Generäle* (Klagenfurt/Ljubljana/Vienna: Hermagoras, 2012)
- Haas, Hanns, 'Der "Anschluss"', in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos, Ernst Hanisch, Wolfgang Neugebauer, and Reinhard Sieder (Vienna: ÖBV & hpt, 2000), pp. 26–54
- Hagtvet, Bernt; Rokkan, Stein, 'The Conditions of Fascist Victory: Towards a Geoeconomic-Geopolitical Model for the Explanation of Violent Breakdowns of Competitive Mass Politics', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvet, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 131–152
- Hanisch, Ernst, 'Der Politische Katholizismus als ideologischer Träger des "Austrofaschismus"', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933–1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang

Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 68–86

Hauch, Gabriella, 'Vom Androzentrismus in der Geschichtsschreibung. Geschlecht und Politik im autoritären christlichen Ständestaat/"Austrofaschismus" (1933/34-1938)', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 351–380

Holtmann, Everhard, 'Zwischen "Blutschuld" und "Befriedung": Autoritäre Julijustiz.', in *Das Jahr 1934: 25. Juli: Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 8. Oktober 1974*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1975), pp. 36–45

Holzmann, Michael E., '... und steht die Legion auf dem ihr zugewies'nen Posten'. *Die Österreichische Legion als Instrument früher NS-Aggressionspolitik* (Berlin: LIT, 2018)

Huber, Andreas, *Rückkehr erwünscht. Im Nationalsozialismus aus 'politischen' Gründen vertriebene Lehrende der Universität Wien* (Vienna: LIT, 2016)

Jagschitz, Gerhard, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich* (Graz/Vienna/Cologne: Styria, 1976)

———, 'Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten', in *Österreich, Deutschland und die Mächte. Internationale und österreichische Aspekte des 'Anschlusses' vom März 1938*, ed. by Gerald Stourzh and Brigitta Zaar (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), pp. 229–270

———, 'Illegale Bewegungen während der Ständischen Ära 1933-1938.', in *Revolutionäre Bewegungen in Österreich*, ed. by Erich Zöllner (Vienna: ÖBV Wien, 1981), pp. 141–162

———, 'Von der "Bewegung" zum Apparat. Zur Phänomenologie der NSDAP 1938 bis 1945.', in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos, Ernst Hanisch, Wolfgang Neugebauer, and Reinhard Sieder (Vienna: ÖBV & hpt, 2000), pp. 88–122

———, 'Zur Struktur der NSDAP in Österreich vor dem Juliputsch 1934', in *Das Jahr 1934: 25. Juli. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 8. Oktober 1974*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1975), pp. 9–20

———, 'Zwischen Befriedung und Konfrontation. Zur Lage der NSDAP in Österreich 1934 bis 1936', in *Das Juliabkommen von 1936. Vorgeschichte, Hintergründe und Folgen. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 10. und 11. Juni 1976*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1977), pp. 156–187

Jedlicka, Ludwig, 'Der außenpolitische Hintergrund der Ereignisse vom Frühsommer 1934 bis Oktober 1934', in *Das Jahr 1934: 25. Juli. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 8. Oktober 1974*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1975),

pp. 46–57

- , 'Die Auflösung der Wehrverbände und Italien im Jahre 1936', in *Das Juliabkommen von 1936. Vorgeschichte, Hintergründe und Folgen. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 10. und 11. Juni 1976*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1977), pp. 104–118
- , *Vom alten zum neuen Österreich. Fallstudien zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 1900-1975*. (St. Pölten: Niederösterreichisches Pressehaus, 1977)
- Karner, Stefan, "'... Des Reiches Südmark". Kärnten und Steiermark im "Dritten Reich" 1938-1945.', in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos, Ernst Hanisch, Wolfgang Neugebauer, and Reinhard Sieder (Vienna: ÖBV & hpt, 2000), pp. 292–325
- , 'Die umkämpfte Republik - Österreich 1918-1938. Zur Einführung', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 9–14
- , 'Vom "Anschluss" zum Reichspogrom 1938 - Der Nationalsozialismus an der Macht', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 65–98
- Keil, Martha, "'Zwischenzeit": Jüdisches Leben in Österreich vom Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges bis zum "Anschluss"', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 301–311
- Kershaw, Ian, *The Nazi Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London: Edward Arnold, 1985)
- Klausinger, Hansjörg, 'Antisemitismus und die Österreichische Schule der Nationalökonomie an der Universität Wien, 1918-1945', *Zeitgeschichte*, 43.3 (2016), 149–166
- Klee, Fischer, *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich. Wer war was vor und nach 1945?* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2003)
- Klingenstein, Grete, 'Bemerkungen zum Problem des Faschismus in Österreich', *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur*, 14 (1970), 1–13
- Klösch, Christian, 'Zerrieben zwischen Nationalsozialismus und Austrofaschismus. Landbund und Großdeutsche Volkspartei und das Ende der deutschnationalen Mittelparteien am Beispiel von Franz Winkler und Viktor Mittermann', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 87–104
- Königseder, Angelika, 'Antisemitismus 1933-1938', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur*.

- 1933-1938, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 54–65
- Kraus, Johann, 'Volksvertreter? Beiträge zu einer Analyse der Organe der Bundesgesetzgebung 1934-1938 und der politischen Elite des Austrofaschismus', *Zeitgeschichte*, 18.11/12 (1990), 379–414
- Kriechbaumer, Robert, 'Die Christlichsoziale Partei 1918 bis 1933/34', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 137–150
- , *Die großen Erzählungen der Politik. Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945* (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 2001)
- Lauridsen, John T., *Nazism and the Radical Right in Austria 1918-1934* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2007)
- Leidinger, Hannes, 'Johann Schober - Kontinuitäten im Umbruch', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Karn (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 359–63
- Linz, Juan J., 'Political Space and Fascism as a Late-Comer', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvet, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 153–191
- Longerich, Peter, 'Tendenzen und Perspektiven der Täterforschung.', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 14–15, 2007, 3–7
- Malpas, Jeff, 'Introduction: Hermeneutics and Philosophy', in *The Routledge Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. by Jeff Malpas and Hans-Helmuth Gander (Oxon/New York: Routledge), p. 2015
- Marková, Marta, *Auf Knopfdruck. Vienna Postwar Flair* (Vienna: LIT, 2018)
- Melichar, Peter, 'Definieren, Identifizieren, Zählen. Antisemitische Praktiken in Österreich vor 1938', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften*, 17.1 (2006), 114–146
- , 'Who Is a Jew? Antisemitic Defining, Identifying and Counting in Pre-1938 Austria', *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 50.1 (2005), 149–174
- Merkel, Peter H., 'Comparing Fascist Movements', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvet, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 752–783
- Moll, Martin, '>>Letzten Endes War Der Steirische Heimatschutz Sehr Anständig Und Ordentlich<<. Das Aufgehen Des Steirischen Heimatschutzes in Der NSDAP: Von Der Konfrontation Zur Kooperation', in *Vom NS-Verbot Zum >>Anschluss<<. Steirische Nationalsozialisten 1933-1938*, ed. by Hans Schafranek and Herbert Blatnik (Vienna: Czernin, 2015), pp. 13–41
- , 'Das nationale Lager', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner

- (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 183–91
- Mommsen, Hans, 'Forschungskontroversen zum Nationalsozialismus', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 14–15, 2007, 14–21
- Mugrauer, Manfred, 'Die KPÖ im Kampf gegen die austrofaschistische Diktatur', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Lucile Wenninger, Florian; Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 41–68
- Muhlack, Ulrich, 'Verstehen', in *Geschichte. Ein Grundkurs*, ed. by Hans-Jürgen Goertz (Reinbek: rowohlt, 2007), pp. 104–136
- Neugebauer, Wolfgang, 'Die Anfänge des NS-Terrorismus in Österreich - Wurzeln, Motive, politische Hintergründe', in *Österreich 1934. Vorgeschichte - Ereignisse - Wirkungen*, ed. by Günther Schebeck (Vienna/Munich: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2004), pp. 70–77
- , 'Repressionsapparat und -maßnahmen 1933 - 1938', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-19382*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 298–319
- Neumann, Franz, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933-1944* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2009)
- Pauley, Bruce F., *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981)
- , 'Nazis and Heimwehr Fascists: The Struggle for Supremacy in Austria, 1918-1938', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvét, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 226–38
- Payne, Stanley G., 'The Concept of Fascism', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvét, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 14–25
- Pohl, Dieter, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941-1944. Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens*, ed. by Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996)
- Rath, John, and Carolyn W. Schum, 'The Dollfuss-Schuschnigg Regime: Fascist or Authoritarian?', in *Who Were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism.*, ed. by Jan Petter Larsen, Stein Ugelvik; Hagtvét, Bernt; Myklebust (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp. 249–256
- Rathkolb, Oliver, and Theodor Venus, *Reichsbankanstalten 1938-1945 am Beispiel der Reichsbankhauptstelle Wien* (Österreichische Nationalbank, 2013)

<<https://www.oenb.at/Publikationen/Oesterreichische-Nationalbank/Die-OeNB-in-der-NS-Zeit.html>>

- Reiter-Zatloukal, Ilse, 'Ausbürgerung. Politisch motivierter Staatsbürgerschaftsverlust im Austrofaschismus', *juridikum. zeitschrift im rechtsstaat*, 4, 2006, 173–176
- , 'Die Begnadigungspolitik der Regierung Schuschnigg. Von der Weihnachtsamnestie 1934 bis zur Februaramnestie 1938', *BRGÖ - Beiträge zur Rechtsgeschichte Österreichs*, 2, 2012, 336–64
- , 'Politische Radikalisierung, NS-Terrorismus und „innere Sicherheit“ in Österreich 1933–1938. Strafrecht, Polizei und Justiz als Instrumente des Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regimes', in *Vom Majestätsverbrechen zum Terrorismus. Politische Kriminalität, Recht, Justiz und Polizei zwischen Früher Neuzeit und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Karl Härter and Beatrice de Graaf (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2012), pp. 271–319
- Rothländer, Christiane, *Die Anfänge der Wiener SS* (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 2012)
- Safrian, Hans, 'Österreichische Täter im Nationalsozialismus', in *Österreichischer Zeitgeschichtetag 1995. Österreich – 50 Jahre Zweite Republik* (Innsbruck/Vienna: Studienverlag, 1997), pp. 225–227
- , 'Tabuisierte Täter. Staatliche Legitimationsdefizite und blinde Flecken der Zeitgeschichte in Österreich.', in *Kontroversen um Österreichs Zeitgeschichte: verdrängte Vergangenheit, Österreich-Identität, Waldheim und die Historiker.*, ed. by Gerhard Botz and Gerald Sprengnagel (Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 1994), pp. 527–535
- Sandgruber, Roman, 'Österreichs Wirtschaft 1918-1938 - Überblick und Weichenstellungen', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 235–246
- Schafranek, Hans, 'Österreichische Nationalsozialisten in der Illegalität 1933-1938. Ein Forschungsbericht', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 105–137
- , *Söldner für den Anschluss. Die Österreichische Legion 1933-1938* (Vienna: Czernin, 2011)
- , *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934.* (Vienna: Czernin, 2006)
- Schausberger, Franz, 'Ignaz Seipel im Spannungsfeld zwischen Gott und Staat', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 353–363
- Scheuch, Manfred, *Der Weg zum Heldenplatz. Eine Geschichte der österreichischen Diktatur 1933-*

1938 (Vienna: Kremayr & Scheriau, 2005)

- Schmidl, Erwin A., 'Die NSDAP in Österreich bis zum "Anschluss" 1938', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 193–204
- Schmidlechner, Karin M., 'Frauen in Österreich zwischen 1918 und 1938', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 313–319
- Schmit, Georg-Hans, '"Im Namen Gottes, des Allmächtigen": christlich - deutsch - berufsständisch. Ausgewählte Aspekte über den Stand und die Perspektiven der Forschung über das christlichsoziale Lager in den Jahren 1929 bis 1938', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 141–158
- Schölnberger, Pia, 'Wöllersdorf - Die Anfänge', in *Jahrbuch 2010*, ed. by Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (Vienna, 2010), pp. 190–211
- Senft, Gerhard, 'Neues vom "Ständestaat"? Anmerkungen zur Wirtschaftspolitik im Austrofaschismus', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 243–256
- Slapnicka, Harry, *Oberösterreich zwischen Bürgerkrieg und „Anschluß“ (1927-1938)* (Linz, 1975)
- Sohn-Kronthaler, Michaela, 'Die katholische Kirche als innenpolitischer Faktor 1918-1938', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 151–159
- Stadler, Wolfgang, '... Juristisch bin ich nicht zu fassen.' *Die Verfahren des Volksgerichtes Wien gegen Richter und Staatsanwälte 1945-1955* (Vienna/Berlin: LIT, 2007)
- Staudinger, Anton, 'Austrofaschistische "Österreich"-Ideologie', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 28–52
- , 'Zur "Österreich"-Ideologie des Ständestaates', in *Das Juliabkommen von 1936. Vorgeschichte, Hintergründe und Folgen. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 10. und 11. Juni 1976*, ed. by Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1977), pp. 198–240
- Staudinger, Eduard G., 'Zur Entwicklung des Nationalsozialismus in Graz von seinen Anfängen bis 1938', in *Graz 1938 (=Historisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Graz 18-19)*, ed. by Friedrich (et al.)

Bouvier (Graz, 1987), pp. 31–74

Steinböck, Erwin, 'Kärnten', in *Österreich 1918-1938. Geschichte der Ersten Republik*, ed. by Kurt Weinzierl, Erika; Skalnik, 1983, pp. 801–840

Stögner, Karin, 'Über einige Gemeinsamkeiten von Antisemitismus und Antifeminismus', in *Jahrbuch 2005*, ed. by Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (Vienna, 2005), pp. 38–51

Stourzh, Gerald, 'Die Aussenpolitik der österreichischen Bundesregierung gegenüber der nationalsozialistischen Bedrohung', in *Österreich, Deutschland und die Mächte. Internationale und österreichische Aspekte des 'Anschlusses' vom März 1938*, ed. by Gerald Stourzh and Brigitta Zaar (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), pp. 319–346

Stuchlik, Jakob, *Der arische Ansatz. Erich Frauwallner und der Nationalsozialismus* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009)

Stuhlpfarrer, Karl, 'Austrofaschistische Außenpolitik - ihre Rahmenbedingungen und ihre Auswirkungen', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 322–336

Tálos, Emmerich, 'Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 394–420

— — —, *Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem* (Vienna: LIT, 2013)

Tálos, Emmerich, and Walter Manoschek, 'Aspekte der politischen Struktur des Austrofaschismus: (Verfassungs-)Rechtlicher Rahmen - politische Wirklichkeit - Akteure', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 124–160

— — —, 'Zum Konstitutierungsprozeß des Austrofaschismus', in *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938*, ed. by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Vienna: LIT, 2005), pp. 6–25

Tálos, Emmerich, and Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Austrofaschismus. Politik - Ökonomie - Kultur. 1933-1938* (Vienna: LIT, 2005)

Thaler, Johannes, 'Legitimus. Ein unterschätzter Baustein des autoritären Österreich', in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 69–86

Venus, Theodor, 'Von der RAVAG zum Reichssender Wien', in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich*, ed. by

- Emmerich Tálos, Ernst Hanisch, Wolfgang Neugebauer, and Reinhard Sieder (Vienna: ÖBV & hpt, 2000), pp. 597–626
- Voithofer, Richard, *Drum schließt euch frisch an Deutschland an Die Großdeutsche Volkspartei in Salzburg 1920-1936* (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 2000)
- Wächter, Karina, *Politik und Strafjustiz in den Jahren 1933 und 1934 - mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Landesgerichtes für Strafsachen Wien I.*, Diplomarbeit (Vienna, 2013)
- Walser, Harald, *Die illegale NSDAP in Tirol und Vorarlberg* (Vienna, 1983)
- Walterskirchen, Gudula, 'Ernst Rüdiger Fürst Starhemberg als ambivalenter politischer Akteur', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 371–376
- , *Starhemberg. Oder Die Spuren der >>30er Jahre<<* (Vienna: Amalthea Signum, 2002)
- Welskopp, Thomas, 'Erklären, begründen, theoretisch begreifen', in *Geschichte. Ein Grundkurs*, ed. by Hans-Jürgen Goertz (Reinbek: rowohlt, 2007), pp. 137–177
- Wenninger, Florian, 'Austrian Missions – Das Problem der politischen Äquidistanz der Forschung am Beispiel Austrofaschismus', in *Österreich 1933–1938. Interdisziplinäre Annäherungen an das Dollfuß-/Schuschnigg-Regime*, ed. by Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal, Christiane Rothländer, and Pia Schölnberger (Köln/Vienna: Böhlau, 2012), pp. 257–272
- Wohnout, Helmut, 'Bundeskanzler Dollfuß und die österreichisch-italienischen Beziehungen 1932-1934', in *Das Dollfuß-/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Florian; Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy (Vienna / Cologne / Weimar: Böhlau, 2013), pp. 601–632
- , 'Das autoritäre Österreich 1933/34-1938', in *Die umkämpfte Republik. Österreich 1918-1938*, ed. by Stefan Karner (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag, 2017), pp. 49–64
- , 'Dreieck der Gewalt. Etappen des nationalsozialistischen Terrors in Österreich 1932-1934', in *Österreich 1934. Vorgeschichte - Ereignisse - Wirkungen*, ed. by Günther Scheffbeck (Vienna/Munich: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2004), pp. 78–90

VI. Appendix

Abstract (German)

Der Aufstieg des Nationalsozialismus in Österreich fand seinen Ausgang bereits einige Jahre vor dem März 1938 und dem Einmarsch deutscher Truppen. Die nationalsozialistische Bewegung errichtete schon zu Beginn der 1930er Jahre ausgedehnte Strukturen zur Unterwanderung des österreichischen Staates und seiner Institutionen.

Eine wichtige Rolle spielten dabei verschiedene Nachrichtendienste wie jener der österreichischen NSDAP-*Landesleitung*, der im Fokus der vorliegenden Masterarbeit steht.

Die Masterarbeit elaboriert die Hintergründe und Bedeutung dieses 1933 aufgebauten Netzwerks und identifiziert seine Hauptprotagonisten. Anhand konkreter Beispiele wird dargelegt, wie Informanten (ausschließlich männlich) und Mitglieder des Nachrichtendienstes ihre Positionen in der Justiz, dem Polizeiapparat, dem österreichischen Bundesheer oder verschiedenen Regierungsbehörden nutzten, um vertrauliche Informationen an die österreichische Nazi-Bewegung weiterzugeben. Im Hauptteil der Masterarbeit wird ferner erläutert, auf welche Weise diese Informationen in weiterer Folge genutzt wurden. Zu den wichtigsten Aufgabengebieten des Nachrichtendienstes zählte dabei die Erschwerung der Strafverfolgung von Nationalsozialist_innen. Die Informanten in Polizei und Justiz ermöglichten es dem Nachrichtendienst beispielsweise Nationalsozialist_innen vor bevorstehenden Hausdurchsuchungen oder Verhaftungen zu warnen oder aber die Haftzeit bereits festgenommener Nationalsozialist_innen mittels Informationsweitergabe aus laufenden Ermittlungen und Strafverfahren zu verkürzen. Darüber hinaus leitete der Nachrichtendienst unter anderem auch Informationen aus dem Zolloberamnt sowie dem Bundesheer weiter, um so den Waffenschmuggel von Deutschland nach Österreich weiter zu intensivieren.

Auf diese Weise war der Nachrichtendienst auch für den bewaffneten, terroristischen Arm der Nazi-Bewegung relevant. Seine Untersuchung zeigt somit verschiedene Dimensionen nationalsozialistischer Aktivität in der illegalen Phase nach dem Verbot der NSDAP und ihrer Unterorganisationen in Österreich im Jahr 1933.

Abstract (English)

The rise of Nazism in Austria started already several years before March 1938 and the invasion of German troops. Already at the beginning of the 1930s, the Austrian Nazi movement established extensive structures for the infiltration of the Austrian state and its institutions.

Various intelligence services played an important role in this process, such as the intelligence service of the Austrian NSDAP *Landesleitung*, which is at the centre of the master's thesis at hand.

The thesis elaborates the background and relevance of this network (which was established in 1933) and identifies its main protagonists. In giving concrete examples, it demonstrates how informants and members of the intelligence service abused their positions in the judiciary, the police, the Austrian army or various government authorities to forward sensitive information to the Austrian Nazi movement. In the main part of the thesis the author explains in which way the gathered information was used subsequently. One of the most important objectives of the intelligence service was the impediment of prosecution of National Socialists. Among other things, informants in the police and the judiciary enabled the intelligence service to warn the movement's members of impending police raids and arrests or reduce the sentences of already arrested National Socialists via transmitting information from ongoing investigations and trials. Moreover, the intelligence service forwarded classified information from the customs office and the Austrian army in order to further intensify the arms smuggling from Germany to Austria.

In this way, it was also connected to the armed, terrorist arm of the Nazi movement. The investigation of the intelligence service thus shows various dimensions of National Socialist activity in the illegal period after the party and its suborganisations had been banned in Austria in June 1933.