

THE PROSTITUTION OF SELF-DETERMINATION
BY HITLER IN AUSTRIA

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CHAPTER I

SELF-DETERMINATION UNTIL 1918

The right of national independence, which came to be called the principle of self-determination, is, in general terms, the belief that each nation has a right to constitute an independent state and determine its own government. It will be the thesis of this paper to show that the Nazi regime under the rule of Adolph Hitler took this principle as its own insofar as its relations with other nations were concerned, but while they paid lip service to the principle, it was in fact being prostituted to the fullest degree in the case of Austria and the Anschluss of 1938.

However, before the ideas of self-determination can be shown to have been prostituted, an understanding of the development of the ideas and their connection with modern democratic ideas is essential.

In the modern sense of the word, democracy was born in the second half of the eighteenth century. Democratic tendencies are to be found before this time, but these tendencies took the form of assertions of a right of representing the people in the government, of checking the government by the political action of the people, or directing it

in the interests of the people. With the French Revolution, democracy became something more. It was not merely the representation of individuals, much less of classes of corporations, in a parliament exercising a constitutional control over the government. The people themselves became the supreme authority; they passed from the role of subject to that of sovereign.

The post-medieval form of the theory of the Divine Right of Kings, which, with the exception of England, had been the chief political gospel of the early modern period, received a mortal blow from the French Revolution, for it was replaced by the Divine Right of the People. Under the influence of the new national and democratic ideas, the people ceased to be an aggregation of individuals. They took a shape and a form, became a unit and were called nations. They were the sovereign power and identified with the state. The revolutionary theory that a people had the right to form its own constitution and choose its own government easily passed into the claim that it had a right to decide whether to attach itself to one state or another, or constitute an independent state by itself.¹ The effect of the revolutionary ideology was to transfer the initiative in state making from the government to the people. Nation-states had formerly been built up from above, by the forces

¹Sarah Wambaugh, A Monograph On Plebiscites, p. 4.

of government, but from the time of the French Revolution, they were to be made much more rapidly from below by the will of the people. The logical consequence of the democratization of the idea of the state by the revolutionaries was the theory of national self-determination. It must, of course, be understood that the democratization of the idea of the state was only one factor playing its part in the making of the nation-states.

As France itself was not under the influence of foreign powers, the strictly democratic element in revolutionary ideology was naturally the one to be emphasized inside France. The principle of national self-determination, however, received practical application during the early years of the Revolution. It appeared in the attitude which the French Assembly adopted towards the proposal for the union with France of Avignon and Venaissin in 1791, and of Savoy and Nice in the following year. A series of speakers urged that only the clearly expressed will of the populations concerned could justify a change in sovereignty, and the Assembly decreed that before annexation, a formal expression of the will of the people should be obtained by the holding of plebiscites, which were conducted on the whole with remarkable impartiality.²

²Ibid., pp. 34, 36, 43.

This idealistic frame of mind did not survive for long in an unadulterated form. The change in revolutionary policy was inaugurated by Cambon's Report of 15 December 1792, in which revolutionary zeal carried the day over democratic idealism. The Report authorized the destruction of the existing authorities in the conquered countries and the establishment of revolutionary governments by force.³ From this point forward, the Revolution rapidly diverged into paths of aggression, and as a result, its own principles were turned against it. The consequent rise of national feeling in the conquered countries proved to be the force which shattered the Napoleonic Empire, and the downfall of Napoleon brought the re-establishment of the anti-democratic and anti-national governments of the old regimes. However, the idea was not by any means dead; in fact, it grew.

This growth of the theory of self-determination was not a simple growth in thought. Great social and economic forces were at work and the rise of national consciousness can not be separated from the growth of a new middle-class society. The principle of nationality reached its height between 1848 and 1870 and found its expression in a series of plebiscites. It was recognized by the Crimean Congress when it was decided in 1856 that a plebiscite should be conducted under international supervision in Moldavia and

³Ibid., p. 46.

Wallachia to determine their future.⁴ Mazzini was the greatest supporter of the idea, and its greatest apparent triumph was the union of Italy under the leadership of Victor Emmanuel II.⁵ However, this new theory was disrupting as well as unifying in its influence. The logic of the theory was that if any state could not persuade its people to regard themselves as a single national community, and so become a nation-state, that state must lose its unity and fly apart into its various elements. Hence, the disintegration of the Austrian and Turkish Empires. The history of the theory of self-determination is primarily the history of the making of nations and the breaking up of states.⁶

With the appearance of the principle of self-determination out of the first and more democratic phase of the French Revolution, and its subsequent development in a series of long struggles with the autocratic empires of Napoleon, the Hapsburgs, and the Romanovs, the connection between the nationalist and democratic movement became strongly established. World War I, after the fall of Russia, was fought by a group of parliamentary states against three great autocratic empires, and it seemed to strengthen this association by carrying it to its highest

⁴Ibid., p. 12.

⁵Ibid., p. 95.

⁶Ernest Barker, National Character, third edition, p. 128.

point. By 1918, national consciousness and democracy were generally taken as synonymous in the thought of the Western nations. The nation-state was regarded by those states that subscribed to the principle of self-determination as the political expression of the democratic will of the people.

This, however, was not necessarily so. The success of national revolts in the latter part of the eighteenth century and nineteenth century, when they did succeed, were not the victory of democratic virtues unaided by force. On the contrary, nations achieved their independence only when they had the backing of an effective and strong military force. Where the military existed, as it did in the United States and the other nations of the Western Hemisphere, revolt was successful. But where it was lacking, as it was in Poland, independence was not achieved. It is also notable that the democratic elements were quite restricted. The wishes of the people were not represented by a direct vote, but by the election of an assembly, often on a very narrow franchise. The significant point is that the theory of nationalism and democracy may not be innately connected, and they could have gained their recent association through historical accident.

The association of nationalism and democracy is more difficult in the light of the development of German political thinking. National unity in France and England was the net

result of the medieval monarchies, whereas Germany remained politically divided until the second half of the nineteenth century, and too, the development of German political life and thought dictated a course for the national idea very different from that which had been followed in the rest of Europe. The absolute authority of the state was an accepted idea without qualifications, and there was virtually no resistance to the idea, as there was in France and England. In fact, while Prussia was in the climax of state worship under the leadership of Frederick the Great, France was getting ready for a revolution that was to be the end of the Bourbons and absolutism.

Germany did not remain uninfluenced by the democratic trend of opinion, as the Revolution of 1848 testified. At this time, the national and democratic principle of self-determination was accepted in the form of a policy of voluntary and democratic unification for all Germany, but this was a common policy. The President of the Frankfort Assembly was able to say with regard to the problem of Schleswig:

I believe that it would be no breach of faith of the cause of Schleswig, no treason against the cause of Germany, if, supposing that a part of Schleswig should express the desire not to remain as a part of Germany, this desire should be complied with.⁷

However, after the war with Denmark, Prussia was no longer willing to submit questions of secession to a plebiscite, and liberal Germany was a thing of the past.

⁷Wambaugh, op. cit., p. 879.

Another notable point about the development of German thinking was the fact that the failure of the Revolution of 1848 emphasized the sovereignty of the nation far and above the rights of the individuals therein. Consequently, the democratic and liberal elements were limited and absorbed very quickly as the Prussian monarchy emerged as the dominant force in German political thought. Prussia became the guiding light of the developing Germany, and as its power became stronger there emerged a powerful, closely integrated, absolutist state that was steeped in tradition. Further, its very character insured its continuance. Nonetheless, the growth of the German nation-state under the Hohenzollerns was a kind of self-determination. The difference was the political context into which the Prussians put it.

The weakening of the forces of liberal nationalism was not a localized occurrence in Germany alone. One of the leading characteristics of the latter half of the nineteenth century was the active policy of many states to denationalize their minority groups and re-educate them to an aggressive imperialism, which was designed to benefit the nation-state as a whole. With a policy such as this in many states, there was nothing for the theory of self-determination to do but recede. For those who did not adhere to the policy of the militant imperialism that ran rampant, there was the socialist ideology, which took nationalism as a move to divert the workers from their destiny. Some schools of

socialism went so far as to condemn democracy, especially as it worked in the capitalistic society, and ultimately, both of the elements of the theory of self-determination were viewed with suspicion.

Actually, the socialist movement had little or no effect in terms of decisive influence over any state before World War I, for no state was governed by a socialist regime. Consequently, the major opposition to the ideology of self-determination came from the forces of imperialism and the tendency toward expansion with which they were associated. To be specific, the greatest deterrent to self-determination at the turn of the twentieth century was the powers of Central and Eastern Europe, namely, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. So strong had they become, that the smaller states around and between them were literally forced on the defensive. For these smaller states, independence appeared to be an impossibility.

In the early years of the current century, Charles Seignobos, a French historian, wrote that the national movement was in its decline. He pointed out that, except for Norway and the Balkans, no nation had achieved independence for over fifty years, and that the annexation of Schleswig and Lorraine by the German Empire was quite definitely a regression of the theory of self-determination. In fact, governments had become so strong that "the hope

of winning their independence by force of arms is closed henceforth to little nations oppressed by foreigners."⁸

There was considerable evidence to support such a view. So long as Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia dominated Eastern Europe, there was little hope for national self-determination in that quarter. England and Russia held control over the greater part of Asia, and Africa was divided among the great powers of Europe with little exception. In the Western Hemisphere, the United States covered dollar diplomacy with the Monroe Doctrine.

However, as World War I developed, the theory of national self-determination revived and rapidly advanced to a position that was apparently one of universal acceptance. Initially, it played practically no part in the formulation of Allied policies, as the Belgian and Serbian questions could easily be generalized into a defense of the independence of small states.⁹ The French based their claim to Alsace-Lorraine on historic grounds, and the terms of the well-known secret treaties that the Allies signed with Italy, Roumania, Japan and Russia pointed out only too clearly that the principle of national self-determination was not foremost in the minds of the Western Powers.

The outbreak of a general European war encouraged discontented minorities everywhere, and the mere presence of

⁸Charles Seignobos, Les Aspirations Autonomistes En Europe, p. x.

⁹Sidney B. Fay, The Origins of the World War, II, 543.

these minorities gave to both sides opportunities that they could not afford to neglect. The Allies took the professed point of view that they were fighting for the rights of small nations, using the invasion and occupation of Belgium and Serbia to support their case. The German and Austrian governments countered this with their joint notes of 11 January 1917.

If the adversaries demand above all the restoration of invaded rights and liberties, the recognition of the principle of nationalities and of the free existence of small states, it will suffice to call to mind the tragic fate of the Irish and Finnish peoples, the obliteration of the freedom and independence of the Boer Republics, the subjection of North Africa by Great Britain, France, and Italy, and, lastly, the violence brought to bear on Greece for which there is no precedent in history.¹⁰

The interesting thing to notice in this case is the difference in the Western and Central conception of nationality. For the Western Powers, the political entity of Belgium and Serbia constituted the crucial issue. For the Central Powers, the maintenance of a cultural unity was the crucial issue. This distinction had its manifestations in the war policies of both sides in that the Germans were quick to dismember the western reaches of the Russian Empire so as to gather all German peoples into one fold. It is true that Germany was attempting to build a series of "buffer" states between herself and Russia, but it was notable that these

¹⁰J. B. Scott, editor, Official Statements of War Aims and Peace Proposals, December 1916 to November 1918, p. 44.

"buffer" states were made up primarily of people who were non-Germanic in their culture, and those territories which held people of the Germanic culture were assimilated into the German state. The Western Powers were reluctant to appeal to the minorities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to rebel and hence cause internal strife within the Central Powers. Too, the Western Powers realized that if the minorities within the Austro-Hungarian Empire succeeded in a rebellion, the economic unity of the region would be destroyed and ultimately would handicap the general economic recovery of Europe once peace was restored.

With regard to Allied policy, it must also be remembered that the Allies were tied to Tsarist Russia, and so long as they had bonds with Russia, there could be no general recognition by the Allies of the principle of self-determination. Russia not only had her own minorities, which she had no intention of freeing, but also her foreign policy was dictated by imperialistic and not nationalistic ideals. Masaryk said in later years that it was not until after the fall of Tsarist Russia that he felt easy about proclaiming that the objects of the Allied policy were "the liberation of small peoples and the strengthening of democracy."¹¹ The way was opened to the Allies with the advent of the Russian Revolution when the Russian Provisional

¹¹T. G. Masaryk, The Making of a State, p. 132.

Government made the announcement in 1917 that they would aim to establish peace on the basis that all nations had the right to determine their own future and destiny. The major deterrent against proclaiming themselves advocates of self-determination was removed for the Allies, and almost immediately, the Allies took self-determination to be an official war aim.

Soon after the Tsarist regime collapsed, the Russian army fell to Germany, and the Bolshevik government which followed took the policy of peace at any price in order to satisfy the wide-spread popular demand and save the Revolution. Such a policy furnished the Central Powers the opportunity to end the war on the eastern front, and at the same time show what their post-war plans were. At Brest-Litovsk, the Russian government put the principle of self-determination into the center of the negotiations, and for the first time in the war, it was the dominant interest.¹² From then on, it remained high on the list of war aims, at least insofar as lip service was paid to it.

In accord with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the major part of the Russian frontier was taken by the Germans, who quickly dispatched occupation troops into all of the liberated provinces and set up puppet governments that were anything but representative. Thus they had actively

¹²J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, Brest-Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace, March 1918, p. 273.

contradicted their proclamations of adherence to the ideas of self-determination. Within the frame of Allied interpretation, events clearly demonstrated that the power within Germany was exercised by the High Command, and defeat at the hands of Germany would probably mean dismemberment. By disclosing their probable intentions, the High Command pushed the Allies to the degree of cooperation necessary to bring victory.¹³

The Russian Revolution was the turning point in the war as far as the principle of self-determination was concerned, for Germany had demonstrated its aims, which in turn had its effect on the Allied attitude toward subject nationalities. All through the war, there had been currents of opinion favoring a generous definition of the war aims with regard to nationalities. The national appeal had been used when it fitted into German plans as official policy, only to be disregarded if it countered them. But in the Allied countries, the idea of self-determination had its genus outside official circles in the various nationalistic minorities. It appeared for the first time in a British Foreign Office memorandum on territorial settlement in the fall of 1916. This document said:

His Majesty's Government have announced that one of their chief objects in the present war is to ensure that all states of Europe, great and small, shall in

¹³Ibid., p. 366.

the future be in a position to achieve their national development in freedom and security. It is clear, moreover, that no peace can be satisfactory to this country unless it promises to be durable, and an essential condition of such a peace is that it should give full scope to national aspirations as far as practicable. The principle of nationality should therefore be one of the governing factors in the consideration of territorial arrangements after the war.¹⁴

This same memorandum recognized that the British Government was limited in this stand by its pledges to its allies.

Likewise, the British limited the application of self-determination to the extent that they were not willing to follow the idea if it appeared that it would strengthen any nation which might threaten the peace of Europe in the future.

The man who did the most to coagulate the general idea of self-determination into one of the officially recognized policies of the Allies was Woodrow Wilson, who took the idea as part of his academically evolved political philosophy. He was the person who worked the idea from generalities down into specific proposals. As early as 11 February 1917, he was calling it "an imperative principle of action."¹⁵ In reply to Wilson's Peace Note of January 1917, the remainder of the Allies called for the "liberation of Italians, of Slavs, of Roumanians, and of Czecho-Slovaks from foreign domination," and "the enfranchisement of populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks."¹⁶

¹⁴D. Lloyd George, The Truth About the Peace Treaties, p. 31. No author of this memorandum was mentioned.

¹⁵Scott, op. cit., 11 February 1918, p. 268. ¹⁶Ibid., p. 37.

It has been pointed out that the Allies did not mean quite what they said, as they had originally made reference to the Italians, Southern Slavs and Roumanians. When this was written, it was with reference to the secret treaty obligations and the known Serbian hope of getting Bosnia, Herzegovina and Dalmatia. The Italians had the reference to Southern Slavs changed to simply Slavs, as they did not want to encourage the Serbians. Also, Masaryk used his influence to get the addition of the Czecho-Slovaks.¹⁷

Wilson solidified his ideas early in 1918 within the Fourteen Points, but even these were limited in their scope insofar as self-determination was concerned. Both Wilson and Colonel House believed that Austria-Hungary was a political necessity for the well-being of Europe, and although they promised the opportunity for autonomous development, they did so on the basis that it would be as Austria-Hungary and not as it turned out to be.¹⁸

The development of the principle of self-determination was hampered by the apparent inability of the Allies to think in terms of the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was perhaps a result of the lack of a feeling of animosity toward the Austrians. Masaryk was able to report that nowhere had the idea of destroying the

¹⁷C. A. Macartney, National States and National Minorities, pp. 184-185.

¹⁸Charles Seymour, The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, III, 346.

Austro-Hungarian Empire occurred to the Allies. He said, "Austria was generally looked upon as a counterpoise to Germany, as a necessary organization of small peoples and odds and ends of peoples, and as a safeguard against 'balkanization'."¹⁹ The British and French had been well steeped in the tradition that Austria-Hungary was a necessity, and it was looked on as a kind of conservative influence. Further, they believed that the Dual Monarchy was naturally a pacific influence in European politics because of its internal difficulties.²⁰ There was also the fear, which later came to the fore in Article 80 of the Treaty of Versailles and Article 88 of the Treaty of St. Germain, that if the Austro-Hungarian Empire broke up, the German elements would unite with Germany, and the possibility of such an event was viewed with considerable alarm among the Allies.

The year 1918 saw a considerable extension of the principle of self-determination, the first important practical step being the holding of a Congress of Oppressed Nationalities at Rome in April 1918 under Italian sponsorship. The attendance included Italians, Roumanians, Czechoslovaks, Poles and Southern Slavs. Perhaps the most important consequence of this meeting was the removal of the outstanding barrier in the way of recognition of the claims

¹⁹Masaryk, op. cit., p. 244.

²⁰H. W. V. Temperley, editor, A History of the Peace Conference, IV, 176.

of the subject nationalities of the Dual Monarchy by the signing of an agreement between the head of the Italian Parliamentary Commission and the leaders of the Yugo-Slav National Council, which engaged both parties

. . . to decide amicably . . . pending territorial questions on the basis of the principle of nationalities and of the right of peoples to dispose of their own destinies, and that so as not to prejudice the vital interests of the two nations, which will be defined at the moment of the peace.²¹

The last clause reduced the rest of the agreement to nothing, and actually left the Italian Government without an official commitment, but it served its purpose, and whether or not it had any value made no difference.

As the internal disintegration of the Austrian Empire became obvious, the Allied declarations about self-determination became stronger and stronger until Wilson was able to reply on 18 October 1918 to an Austrian note that autonomy as a satisfactory answer to the aspirations of the subject nationalities was not enough, and that it was for those people to decide for themselves "what action on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Government will satisfy their aspirations and their conception of their rights and destiny as members of the family of nations."²²

²¹H. F. Armstrong, The New Balkans, p. 65.

²²Scott, op. cit., pp. 428-429.

The development of the Allied policy of self-determination was primarily the result of the actions of the various nationalities and the progress of the war; the adoption of the idea as a policy came, for the most part, as a consequence of this action, usually by minorities. This was especially true with regard to the Hapsburg Empire, but by no means was this an isolated instance. Similar happenings were in progress in the Russian and Turkish Empires, and the cause of nationalism was advancing generally. As the war drew to a close, wherever there was a minority or subject nationality, national armies were mustered and national governments were organized, and by the time actual hostilities had ceased, the stronger of these nationalist movements had already used the Allied policy of self-determination as a fact. Consequently, the Peace Conference was not faced with the problem of creating new states because they had already created themselves out of the disorder which came with the fall of the Central Powers. All that the Peace Conference had to do was put a stamp of approval on these new states and formally delimit their boundaries, but even this turned into a rather complex problem.

The Western Powers had not called the force of nationality into being, and they had been quite reluctant to recognize it, but they did use it to hasten the end of the hostilities. However, by the act of recognizing and using the idea, they had committed themselves to it. Actually,

Wilson probably pushed the idea to limits that the Allies did not want, as there were those who saw that it would be almost impossible to reconcile the principle with the realistic national and imperialistic ambitions of the victors. Nonetheless, the general opinion seems to have expected a settlement based on self-determination, at least insofar as it would be to the victors' benefit, and the Allies were very definitely committed to it.

CHAPTER II

SELF-DETERMINATION, 1918-1932

When the Peace Conference opened in 1919, the guiding light of its over-all policy was to be the principle of self-determination. However, circumstances had placed self-determination in the prominent place it held, and Wilson had, in a sense, forced it upon the rest of the Allies when he was not able to get the Inter-Allied Conference to proclaim the war aims he wanted. By announcing his Fourteen Points, Wilson hoped to counteract the effect of the revelation of the secret treaties by the Bolsheviki, keep Russia in the war, and launch an effective propaganda offensive against Germany.¹ Once Wilson's principles had been published, the Allies could not hold out against them, for an Inter-Allied Parliamentary Commission of French, Belgian, Italian and British representatives had proclaimed their acceptance of the principle of nationality in October 1918. Hence, when the German Government made its proposals for an armistice, the Allied Governments replied that they were willing to negotiate a peace on the terms laid down by Wilson in his speech of 8 January 1918, but the Allies did require

¹Charles Seymour, The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, III, 324-326.

qualifications regarding freedom of the seas and the question of reparations. How far the Allies were actually committed to Wilson's program has been argued considerably, but it is notable that Balfour and Clemenceau sent a note to Tittoni during the dispute over the Italian frontier that said, "All four are pledged to the principle of self-determination."² Actually, parts of the demands of the Fourteen Points were incompatible with the practicalities of self-determination, and neither the British nor the Americans intended to apply the principle to colonial possessions. Too, there were situations in Europe that would have been practically impossible to work out under the principle, but nevertheless, most of the world thought that the Allies were committed to self-determination in its most absolute form, and that it would be put into practice.

The representatives of the several nations who assembled at Paris were not so idealistic as Wilson, for they were the ones who had used the appeal of self-determination for the purposes of war. This is not to say that they were not willing to use it, for they were, but they intended to do so only in cases where it did not conflict with their own national interests.

For instance, in the pre-Armistice negotiations, Italy wanted to introduce a reservation to Point IX which would

²D. Hunter Miller, My Diary at the Peace Conference, XX, 362.

make it clear to everyone that Italy expected to receive the frontier which she regarded as necessary for her security, regardless of ethnic considerations or the wishes of the populations concerned. Orlando dropped the protest when the Allies argued that the frontiers of Italy were not concerned in the negotiations with Germany, which was the immediate problem, but the Italian reservation was never given to the Central Powers.³ The Italians had fought all through the war under a policy of gaining all that was possible for the state under the provisions of the Treaty of London, and they continued the same policy in the Peace Conference, but under the guise of adhering to the Fourteen Points, which was supposed to deceive every one, but actually did nothing but weaken their stand.

The French attitude was much more complicated. The project which the French Government had prepared for the Conference proposed to remove one serious obstacle to the policy of self-determination by cancelling all inter-Allied treaties, and called for the right of a people to decide their own futures. This suggestion was understandable since the dominant figure of the French legation was Clemenceau, who had little tolerance for Wilsonian ideals.⁴ Clemenceau declared to Lloyd George:

³R. Albrecht-Currie, Italy at the Paris Peace Conference, pp. 61-66.

⁴Miller, Diary, II, 4.

. . . he did not believe in the principle of self-determination, which allowed a man to clutch at your throat the first time it was convenient to him, and he would not consent to any limitation of time being placed upon the enforced separation of the Rhenish Republic from the rest of Germany.⁵

The British delegation was less reserved in its attitude toward self-determination than the French, but it had some doubt. Balfour, on the principle that strong frontiers made for peace, had expressed to Wilson earlier the view that strategic necessity should in some cases be allowed to over-ride the principle of nationality.⁶ However, the British were generally prepared to support a consistent and thorough-going application of the principle of self-determination in Europe. The real inconsistency in the British attitude arose from the existence of their large colonial empire. During the war, Lloyd George had held that the principle of national self-determination was as applicable in the case of the colonies as in those of occupied European territories,⁷ but the British Government did not seriously contemplate putting the principle into practice in its own colonies, or in the German colonies either.

Even the American delegation, which was the chief proponent of the principle of self-determination, was not united

⁵D. Lloyd George, The Truth About the Peace Conference, p. 286.

⁶Seymour, op. cit., III, 53.

⁷H. W. V. Temperley, A History of the Peace Conference, II, 227.

on the question. Wilson's Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, revealed his violent opposition to the President's program when he described the principle as "loaded with dynamite," and continued by saying that it was bound to be discredited as the dream of an idealist who did not realize the dangers and impracticalities involved. Lansing pointed out that both Canada and the United States continued to exist only because of their denial of the principle, and that if self-determination had been accepted, the Southern States would have been allowed to secede and French Canada would have formed an independent state. Consideration of the national safety, historic rights, and economic interests, which would be over-ridden by it, should all have preference over the principle of self-determination.⁸

The key to the understanding of Wilson's conception of self-determination is the fact that, for him, it was entirely a corollary of democratic theory. His political thinking was derived from the democratic and national ideals of the French and the American Revolutions, and even though he was of the generation that had accepted the Union, he was still of the school of the Compact Theory of government. Wilson's political inheritance is expressed in his address to Congress on 2 April 1917, which recommended a declaration of a

⁸Robert Lansing, The Peace Negotiations, pp. 97-104.

state of war. Herein Wilson coupled, as the aims America should uphold, the ideals of democracy and the rights and liberties of small nations.⁹

Self-determination was to Wilson almost another word for popular sovereignty. In this, he followed the French and American political tradition. Hence, his tendency to appeal to the peoples of the world over the heads of their government, which provoked a violently hostile reaction when he attempted to influence the Italian people against their own government.¹⁰ For Wilson, the voice of the people was the voice of god, and Rousseau's General Will was not merely an idealistic will, but the actual will of populations. It had only to be freed of the self-interests of autocratic governments for its innate goodness to be manifested.

Wilson was firmly convinced of the goodness of the people's will, and because of this belief, he also believed in the possibility of building up a new and better international order on the basis of national sovereignty which assumed the democratic will of the people to be dominant. Wilson's close association of self-determination and national sovereignty was shown in a comment he made on Article X of the League Covenant. In a speech on 24 September 1919,

⁹Seymour, op. cit., II, 469.

¹⁰Albrecht-Currie, op. cit., pp. 144-145.

he said that because national sovereignty was dependent on the will of the people, no government could be guaranteed by the League.¹¹ This combination of a faith in the people with an unwillingness to interfere with national sovereignty will explain why Wilson rejected the idea of international government and relied on world opinion as the ultimate sanction for international peace, but as expressed through individual nations.

The greatest limitation to the application of the principle of self-determination for Wilson was that he could not say it was the function of the Peace Conference to re-plan the world on the lines of that principle. Although he had acted and spoken as though this were the function of the Peace Conference, upon close examination he had to admit that:

It was not within the privilege of the conference of peace to act upon the right of self-determination of any peoples except those which had been included in the territories of the defeated powers.¹²

Evidently, the British and American delegations to the Peace Conference wanted to confine self-determination to Europe alone, and the French and Italian delegations did not want it at all. Further, the Allies did not go to the Conference with a free hand to draw up new frontiers, for many claims had already been made and occupied, and only a large

¹¹E. Baker and N. Dodd, editors, The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, War and Peace, II, 375-376.

¹²Ibid., II, 224.

military action would have succeeded in invalidating those claims. Thus, in a practical sense, the adoption of a strict policy of self-determination was an impossibility.

The Peace Conference had another major obstacle, which was finding a generally valid definition of the conditions a nation should satisfy before it could legitimately claim a right of self-determination. This was implicitly the basic problem of the entire theory, for before any judgment could be made, it had to be ascertained to what kind of a community it applied. The Germans at Brest-Litovsk had said:

The assertion that the right of self-determination is an attribute of nations, and not parts of nations, is not our conception of the right of self-determination. Parts of nations can justly conclude independence and separation.¹³

The leaders of the nations that were to form the successor states of Austria-Hungary took the opposite point of view. The Serbs said that when President Wilson spoke of the self-determination of nations, "his thoughts never went as far as the small communities."¹⁴ Masaryk expressed the same view of the principle when he asked whether self-determination applied only to a whole ethnic group, or to sections of a group as well.¹⁵ In practice, the disintegrating process

¹³J. Mattern, The Employment of the Plebiscite in the Determination of Sovereignty, p. 155.

¹⁴Temperley, op. cit., IV, 209.

¹⁵T. G. Masaryk, The Making of a State, p. 386.

of self-determination had to be stopped at some point, but on what basis that point could be fixed the Allies were hard put to find an answer.

There was a general tendency to believe that language was an adequate test of nationality. In Europe, the growing consciousness of nationality had attached itself neither to traditional frontiers nor to new geographical associations. Instead, the attachment was to mother tongues.¹⁶ This was true generally, but there were enough exceptions to it to deny it practical value, and too, it was not universally accepted by the nations claiming self-determination. Hence, the Poles claimed territory from Germany on the basis of the language spoken by its inhabitants, but they would not follow the same argument in East Galicia or in the Russian provinces where the language was other than Polish. Similarly, Greece claimed the Albanian speaking areas of Northern Epirus on the ground that they were Greek in their national sentiments.¹⁷

When the Peace Conference found that language was not a reliable test of nationality, the next logical device was the plebiscite when an issue was in doubt. The British were generally ready to employ it, as they did not have the

¹⁶A. J. Toynbee, The World After the Peace Conference, p. 18.

¹⁷Harold Nicolson, Peacemaking, 1919, p. 208.

faith of the Americans in the objectivity of nationality. The holding of plebiscites in the more debatable areas claimed by both Germany and Poland was primarily due to the insistence of Lloyd George.¹⁸ He expressed his sentiments in a memorandum to the Conference when he said, "I am strongly adverse to transferring more Germans from German rule to the rule of some other state than can possibly be helped."¹⁹

Actually, the number of plebiscites that were held was far fewer than expected, especially in view of the consideration that the theory of self-determination and the device of the plebiscite were so closely connected.²⁰ In practice, the Americans thought that their team of experts could provide better evidence of the lines of national divisions and affiliations than could be obtained from plebiscites of the concerned populations.²¹ The Italians, who could have put their claims on the basis of treaty right of strategic necessity, chose to appeal to the right of self-determination, but they did not contemplate the possibility of a plebiscite of the non-Italian populations they wanted to annex to Italy. The anxiety of the Italian delegation to

¹⁸Sarah Wambaugh, Plebiscites Since the World War, I, 14.

¹⁹Temperley, op. cit., VI, 239.

²⁰Wambaugh, op. cit., I, 13.

²¹Miller, Diary, XIX, 99-100.

avoid any general acceptance of the principle of the plebiscite came out clearly in the peace negotiations.²²

The French claimed Alsace-Lorraine on historic grounds, and there was doubt whether a plebiscite would give a clear majority for re-union with France.²³ It was estimated that about half a million French had left the two provinces between 1871 and 1910, and some 400,000 Germans had moved in to take their place,²⁴ which meant that in all probability, a plebiscite would result in a large vote for Germany. Since even the Fourteen Points allocated Alsace-Lorraine to France, the probability of such a vote would have placed the Allies in a rather unpleasant position. Consequently, no plebiscite was held, and an unpleasant situation was avoided at the price of ignoring self-determination.

On the whole, the reluctance to use the plebiscite was impressive, though it would seem that there could have been no better means of securing genuine self-determination. Generally, the opposition to the use of the plebiscite came from the Allies, especially from the lesser states, while the demand for them came from the defeated powers as a sort of defensive tool in hopes that as much territory could be

²²Miller, Diary, XVII, 186-188.

²³Miller, Diary, XX, 342-343.

²⁴Temperley, op. cit., II, 166, 168.

saved as possible. Apparently, each side was prepared to appeal to the principle when it helped in the defense of national interests, and to discard it when its influence was unfavorable. On the other hand, however, it was also true that the delegates at Paris did not expect the theory of self-determination to be applied without regard to other considerations. Even when plebiscites were held, as in Schleswig, the Allies agreed that the frontiers were to be drawn "according to a line based on the result of the votes, and proposed by the International Commission, and taking into account the particular geographical and economic conditions of the localities in question."²⁵

The new states that were constituted by the peace settlement were far from being the results of a strict application of the principle of self-determination. The union of the Slovaks with the Czechs represented an aspiration toward national identity rather than an existent fact. In the same state, the Ruthenes were treated practically as a colonial people, and there was only a pretence at consulting their wishes. The Bohemian Germans were also included with the Czechs primarily on the basis that they were something of a remnant element that no one knew how to handle. Similarly, in Poland, a large Ukrainian and White Russian population was annexed regardless of their wishes or natural

²⁵Miller, Diary, X, 133.

affiliations. In the new Roumania, there were included millions of Magyars and a large number of Saxon Germans, as well as numerous other non-Roumanian elements who were united with the Roumanians irrespective of their wishes or affiliations.

Wilson was partially aware of the failure of his plan to re-draw the world in accordance with the principle of self-determination, but he hoped to continue the process within the League of Nations. In a speech on 17 September 1919, he expressed the idea that, if the desire of any people for self-determination might affect the peace, then the League should intervene.²⁶ In his original draft of the Covenant, there was a clause specifically providing for the further progress of self-determination. His wording ran:

The Contracting Powers unite in guaranteeing to each other political independence and territorial integrity; but it is understood between them that such territorial readjustments, if any, as may in the future become necessary by reason of changes in present racial conditions and aspirations or present social and political relationships, pursuant to the principle of self-determination, and also such territorial readjustments as may in the judgment of three-fourths of the Delegates be demanded by the welfare and manifest interest of the peoples concerned, may be effected, if agreeable to those peoples.²⁷

This was not strictly in accord with the idea of national sovereignty as Wilson had maintained it, but he had been

²⁶Baker and Dodd, op. cit., II, 224.

²⁷D. Hunter Miller, The Drafting of the Covenant, II, 12.

subjected to considerable pressure, and finally the clause was reduced to the non-committal form of Article X of the adopted Covenant. Thus, even for future use, the principle was held in abeyance by those who were antagonistic to it.

In place of the principle of self-determination, there were three other beliefs which were substituted. These were a belief in small states as a justifiable part of the international order, a belief in the equality of states, great or small, and a belief in the right of absolute national sovereignty.

With regard to the belief in the small state, Great Britain had a long tradition of friendship with Portugal, Greece, Belgium, Denmark and others. This policy of friendship for the small states was extended when Britain recognized the independence of the Spanish-American nations. In 1914, Britain had gone to war because of the attack by Germany on Belgium. President Wilson expressed a similar sympathy in an address to the Senate on 22 January 1917, which was just shortly before the United States entered the war, when he said, "The equality of nations upon which peace must be founded if it is to last must be an equality of rights; the guarantees exchanged must neither recognize nor imply a difference between big nations and small, between those that are powerful and those that are weak."²⁸ France

²⁸E. Baker and N. Dodd, *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, The New Democracy*, II, 410-411.

had a tradition of reliance on the support of a group of smaller states against any strong rival. Hence, by the time peace came and brought with it the disintegration of three large empires and the military defeat of a fourth, it was little more than natural that the peace arrangements were thought of in terms of small states which were to be free and independent.

The attitude toward the idea of equal sovereignty was stronger in the American delegation, which held the opinion that if the states were not considered as equals, it would mean the great powers would be acknowledged superior to the smaller states only on the basis of physical might, and the control of world affairs would be based on might alone.²⁹

Only France was willing to relinquish the principle of absolute and complete national sovereignty in favor of a new international order,³⁰ but this willingness was explained by France's desire to convert the League into a great military alliance, which would of necessity require that national sovereignty be sacrificed to achieve military security. Lord Cecil of the British delegation, expressing the general trend of the thought in the Conference, said that one of the basic principles of the League should be non-interference in the internal affairs of any nation.³¹ President Wilson also

²⁹Lansing, op. cit., p. 58. ³⁰Miller, Diary, VIII, 94.

³¹Miller, Diary, XX, 14-15.

recognized the principle of national sovereignty and openly endorsed it, though he did not seem to realize that there could be a conflict between a peace organization such as the League and the idea of national sovereignty.³²

The small states welcomed the assertions of the British and the Americans, for they were quite conscious of their rights of national sovereignty, which, in many cases, were newly acquired rights. Even so, the Canadians and the Australians strongly insisted that the League Council was not an executive body and should not be described as such, and the Dutch insisted that the sovereignty of the individual states should not be limited in any way whatsoever.³³ This was no more than a natural reaction, especially by the newly formed states. They had just recently gained an independent status, felt themselves to be strong and virile, thought themselves quite capable of protecting their own security, and had no intention of relinquishing what they had gained. However, the principle of national sovereignty and the idea of a League of Nations had basic principles that were diametrically opposed.

Self-determination, as a force in international affairs, did not end in 1919, but its incidence changed. During the negotiations of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, Germany had refused

³²Miller, Diary, VIII, 92-93.

³³Miller, Diary, VII, 23, 37, 221, 241.

Russia the right to employ the principle of self-determination to determine what territories would have to be surrendered, and in this refusal, Germany gave the initiative for the use of self-determination to the Allies. However, after the peace settlement was made, the initiative had been returned, for then the Germans, Magyars, and the Bulgarians were the nations with the grievances.

The survival of large and diverse minorities in many countries provided ample occasion for the continuance of the agitation for self-determination. This demand was not diminished by the fact that two of the formerly dominant nations found themselves with a grievance on this count against their former subjects. Also, there was a feeling in many quarters that too many people were being sacrificed to others whose cultural value was infinitely less.³⁴ The members of the Little Entente and Poland were the states most likely to be attacked on the principle of self-determination, and they were also the weakest internally due to the huge minorities they contained. It was ironic that states such as Poland with a 30.4 per cent minority, Czechoslovakia with a 34.7 per cent minority, and Roumania with a 25 per cent minority were created by a settlement that was supposedly based on self-determination. However, the scene was set for the

³⁴Albrecht-Currie, op. cit., p. 119.

future demands, for some four and one half million people had been deprived of their rights of self-determination.³⁵

Apparently, the new states that had been created out of the peace settlement did not realize the wisdom of a generous policy toward their minorities and of attempting to conciliate them by the concession of extensive rights of local autonomy. It was not too unnatural that the new countries did not cater to such ideas, for they were determined to create united nation-states. To them, the question of their ability to create a state that was strong politically and a leader among nations was the important thing.³⁶

The danger of leaving large minorities at the mercy of small states with such an intense national feeling had not been unforeseen, and the Peace Conference endeavored to guard against it by means of the minority treaties. In one way or another, every one of the lesser states in Central and Eastern Europe volunteered or was forced to guarantee certain rights for its minorities, and great hopes were placed in the widespread acceptance of what was believed to be the innovation of minority guarantees.

The minorities were guaranteed civil rights and liberties as citizens of the national state, but this was far

³⁵R. W. Seton-Watson, Britain and the Dictators, pp. 322-323.

³⁶Masaryk, op. cit., p. 366.

from all that they wanted, so both sides of the question were unsatisfied with the results, and the situation gradually declined from bad to worse. Few of the states had accepted the minority treaties willingly. They did not want to subject themselves to something that the big states would not apply to themselves. Consequently, most of the small states regarded the compulsory signature of minority treaties as an admission of an inferior status, and they did not like it.³⁷

To a certain extent, the minorities had been placed under the protection of the League, but in 1920, a League Commission pointed out that there was no mention of the responsibility in the Covenant, and that it was the function of the sovereign state to decide whether or not a minority was to be allowed the right of self-determination. This same committee went on to state:

Positive International Law does not recognize the right of national groups, as such, to separate themselves from the state of which they form a part by the simple expression of a wish, any more than it recognizes the right of other states to claim such a separation.³⁸

The Commission qualified its stand by admitting that in an international crisis, when ordinary rules were not operating,

³⁷J. S. Roucek, Contemporary Roumania and Her Problems, p. 200.

³⁸League of Nations Official Journal, Special Supplement, Number 3, October 1920, pp. 5-6.

self-determination may play its part, but in ordinary times, it was only one of many factors in operation. In effect, the League side-stepped the issue and the minorities were left to the dubious protection of the minority treaties. In the long run, the League took action only when a state powerful enough to have intervened in defense of the minority pushed it into intervening, and then the course of the League was usually vacillating.³⁹ By 1930, the British delegation in the League debate on the minorities took the stand that where German minorities were involved, it was for the German Government to look after their interests.⁴⁰ This well represents the attitude of the League at this time toward the minorities.

German international policy after 1919 began with the fact that Germany did not accept the settlement of Versailles as either permanent or just. Germany agreed to the frontier with Denmark and France,⁴¹ but elsewhere her disagreement was bitterly resentful. The loss of territory to Poland and the consequent rule of the Germans in those lands by the

³⁹C. A. Macartney, National States and National Minorities, p. 491.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 376. This position on the part of England was never brought up by Hitler in later years. Herein, he had a perfect argument, but, apparently, it was lost to everyone.

⁴¹Gustav Stresemann, G. Stresemann, His Diaries, Letters, and Papers, translated by E. Sutton, II, 112-113.

Poles was accepted only as a dictate of force. The German hope and expectation of recovering the lost Silesian territories was shown by the German pressures exerted on the people of German descent in those territories not to forget their ancestry. In this way, the Germans hoped to maintain a strong German minority.⁴²

The revision of the Eastern frontier was repeatedly put forward by Gustav Stresemann, the German Foreign Minister, in his private letters and memoranda as the major aim of German policy. Apparently, he believed that the Polish frontier was a gross violation of the principle of self-determination, as he said in a letter to the former German Crown Prince:

. . . the re-adjustment of our Eastern frontiers; the recovery of Danzig, the Polish corridor, and a correction of the frontier in Upper Silesia . . . (are the major tasks of German foreign policy.)⁴³

This attitude toward the peace settlement on the Eastern frontiers was a continuous one, and, just before the advent of Hitler on the scene of German politics, Otto Braun, the Socialist Prime Minister of Prussia, again called these same frontiers unjust and unnatural and never to be recognized as equitable.

⁴²0. W. Kaeckenbeeck, The International Experiment of Upper Silesia, p. 528.

⁴³1. D. F. Morrow, The Peace Settlement in the German-Polish Borderlands, p. 191.

Germany protested most vigorously that self-determination had been violated in the enforced separation of Germany and Austria. In November, 1918, the Provisional Assembly of German-Austria declared that "German-Austria is a constituent part of the German Republic." The Constituent Assembly repeated this in March, 1919, and in December, the Tyrol Landtag proposed to secede to Germany.⁴⁴ General Hoffmann related in his diary on 29 October 1918 that "Austria has capitulated unconditionally. I hope at least that we may thus get the German lands of Austria for Germany and so compensate ourselves for what we shall have to give up."⁴⁵ However, the peace settlement decreed that Germany and Austria were to be separated, and this prohibition came to be regarded by the Germans as one of the major crimes of Versailles. Little was said in 1919, however, but in 1925, Stresemann referred to it as a violation of the right of self-determination and as a piece of "unexampled cynicism."⁴⁶ By 1932, this enforced separation had become one of the dominant themes in German propaganda and a crucial point of European politics. It was also one of the major factors leading to the rise of Adolph Hitler in 1932 and further prostitution of self-determination.

⁴⁴M. M. Ball, Post-War Austro-German Relations, p. 29.

⁴⁵M. Hoffmann, War Diaries and Other Papers, translated by E. Sutton, I, 245.

⁴⁶Stresemann, op. cit., II, 159.

CHAPTER III

PREPARATIONS FOR PROSTITUTION

After 1932, Germany was committed to the incorporation of Austria into Germany as an economic and political necessity. This fact must be taken as the prime assumption, for all of Hitler's declamations about self-determination became so many words when compared with the policies he pursued. Hitler expressed this assumption in the first line of the first page of Mein Kampf, which was virtually the Bible of Nazi Germany, when he said that a fortunate predestination decreed that he should be born on the confines of Germany and Austria, whose fusion was to be the most important task of his lifetime. Hitler qualified this step to a preliminary toward his goals,¹ but by relegating it, he by no means thought of it as less important. Rather, it was to be a long step toward the ultimate uniting of all Germans, and, supposedly, it was to be on the basis of self-determination.

Notes
This expression of the Nazi policy was written by Hitler during his confinement after his trial in 1924, but in the ensuing years the idea did not change. After the Nazis had gained political supremacy of Germany, only the most ignorant were not convinced that the annexation of Austria

¹Adolph Hitler, Mein Kampf, translated by R. Manheim, p. 1.

was one of the initial aims of the Party. The Nazis were ready to express it as an aim. A whole host of German officials, including Goering, Goebbels, Wilhelm Frick, Robert Ley, Otto Meissner, Franz von Papen, Wilhelm Keitel, and Erhard Milch, openly expressed this to the United States General Consul in Berlin, George Messersmith, on numerous occasions.²

The German plan to achieve the annexation of Austria was essentially a simple one. The immediate goal was to get a foothold in the Austrian Cabinet and then gradually infiltrate the Austrian Government until all that would be needed was an assimilation of the Austrians into Germany on the pretext of self-determination.

The first Cabinet post that Germany wanted to control was the Ministry of the Interior, for it held the advantage of controlling the police system. Almost immediately after the Nazi rise to power in Germany, economic pressures were brought to bear, propaganda programs were initiated, and a program of terrorism was begun to force Austria into concessions. That the German Government engineered these pressures was only too readily admitted by them, especially by Erhard Milch, Chief of the German Air Force.³

²Trials of the Major War Criminals, Affidavit of George Messersmith, 28 August 1945, doc. 1760-PS, XXVIII, 262. Hereafter, TMWC will signify Trials of the Major War Criminals.

³Ibid., XXVIII, 263-264.

This German program was, however, not without opposition. In the West, France, Germany, and Belgium were linked by the Locarno Pact of 1928, which did not allow a change of the status quo. Further, France and Belgium were joined in a mutual assistance agreement which did not agreeably favor an Austro-German union. In the East, France had engineered the Little Entente of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Roumania, which was designed to contain Germany in her 1919 position. Also, France was pushing a proposed Danubian Pact, which was to strengthen the economic position of the Southeastern European nations. France had likewise proposed an East Locarno Pact of mutual assistance, which was to include all the countries in the East from the Baltic to the Adriatic and Black Seas. All of these French maneuvers were really little more than attempts to choke off the possibility of future German expansion, but they did form major obstacles for German foreign policy, especially in view of the rapport which existed among the states.

One other obstacle to German aims was the position of Italy. Mussolini was definitely interested in Austrian independence in order that an interval would be placed between the German and Italian borders. In the years before the Italian venture into Abyssinia, Mussolini neither liked nor trusted the Germans, and an independent Austria insured that Germany would not be at his back door.

With such opposition to German aims, German diplomacy was geared for war in that the diplomatic policy was designed to create dissension, not only among the groups of nations as they were lined up against Germany, but also within the various nations themselves. (Germany hoped to sow the seeds of disunity by fostering doubts, and then let the groups opposing Germany blow themselves apart, thus absolving Germany of all blame. Among the small nations, Germany circulated rumors, made threats, made extravagant and inconsistent promises of rewards, and took any means at hand to open frictions between the states. Of course, Germany scoffed at the idea that she had international obligations. To England and France, peace and security was the price of non-intervention in Southeastern Europe.)

At home, the Nazi Government made preparations to achieve the goal of German expansion, which first meant the annexation of Austria. (Nazi youth engaged in military exercises and drill. The issue was placed before the people to make it appear that Germany was being threatened from without, and, consequently, the people as a whole were given military training. Further, a vast program of re-armament was undertaken with the new weapon of the age, the airplane, given the major emphasis.)⁴

⁴TWVC, Affidavit of George Messersmith, 30 August 1945, doc. 2385-PS. XXX, 298-300.

By the middle of November, 1933, the Nazi program had been so successful that there was evidence in Vienna that a Nazi putsch was imminent.⁵

The threatened putsch did not develop, but as the days passed, Nazi terrorism in Austria increased to such a point the Englebert Dollfuss, Chancellor of Austria, decided to cancel his policy of clemency.⁶ Prior to the early days of January, 1934, Dollfuss had hoped to get Nazi cooperation by being lenient with them, but during this month, talk was circulated that Germany was soon to attack Austria, and obviously, clemency was not the answer to Nazism.

Hitler openly refuted any such thing in his speech before the Reichstag on 30 January 1934, and he went on to say that nothing of the sort would be undertaken or even planned. But he did point out that the same spirit that moved Germany was in the people of Austria, and that he was willing at all times to extend a helping hand to them.⁷ (In

⁵Foreign Relations of the United States, United States Minister in Austria (Earle) to Chief of Western European Affairs (Moffat), 21 November 1933, doc. 3, 1934, II, 3-4. This was the only source that referred to an impending putsch. Hereafter, FRUS will signify Foreign Relations of the United States.

⁶FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Earle) to Secretary of State, 9 January 1934, doc. 4, 1934, II, 5.

⁷N. H. Baynes, editor, The Speeches of Adolph Hitler, April 1922-August 1939, II, 1163, 1165, 1167. Also, FRUS, United States Ambassador in Italy (Long) to Secretary of State, 30 January 1934, doc. 18, 1934, II, 10.

other words, Hitler disclaimed any designs on Austria, but at the same time, he implied that the world should not be too surprised if it awoke one day to find Austria and Germany close, if not actually united.

The world had hardly had time to digest Hitler's speech of 30 January before the Nazis lost a considerable amount of prestige in Austria. On 13 February, the Socialist Party revolted against Dollfuss, primarily on the grounds that it did not like his method of government.⁸ The insurrection was put down by the police and army, which were quite loyal to Dollfuss, but without the help of the Nazi Party. Peace was immediately restored in Austria when Dollfuss offered the Socialists a very lenient peace. However, Dollfuss very generally discredited the Nazis for their disinterest, and the power, prestige, and confidence in Dollfuss rose to new heights.⁹ The Nazis suffered another setback in late February when all political parties were outlawed. The net results of the episode were a stronger Dollfuss, a forestalled Nazi Party, more stable conditions, and finally German intervention.

The German intervention came in the form of a speech by Theodor Habicht of the German Foreign Ministry on 19 February,

⁸FRUS, United States Charge d'Affaires in Austria (Kliefoth) to Secretary of State, 13 February 1934, doc. 19, 1934, II, 11.

⁹FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Earle) to Secretary of State, 2 March 1934, doc. 39, 1934, II, 21-22.

in which he asked the Austrian Government whether it was going to continue its course in quelling the then current uprising by force, or whether it was prepared "to seek a better German future with the Nazi Movement." To demonstrate Germany's good faith, he ordered a truce for all Nazis from 20 February to 28 February, during which time, no Nazi would attack the Austrian Government by word or deed. The truce no more than admitted to the world that the Nazi activities in Austria were controlled by the Berlin government. Immediately, Mussolini advised Hitler to exercise more control over Habicht. Italy, France and England issued a joint statement to the effect that Austria must remain independent according to the existing treaties.¹⁰ Naturally, the speech was suppressed by Germany, as Dollfuss had gained considerable strength in quelling the revolt by 16 February. This was the first incident of official German intervention in internal Austrian affairs, and at no time did the German Government retract the statements made by Habicht.

Despite the fact that all political parties had been abolished,¹¹ Nazi inspired, planned, and executed terroristic

¹⁰FRUS, United States Ambassador in Germany (Dodd) to Secretary of State, 6 March 1934, doc. 594, 1934, II, 23-24.

¹¹FRUS, United States Charge d'Affaires (Kliefoth) to Secretary of State, 16 February 1934, doc. 22, 1934, II, 17.

tactics in Austria increased to old levels, and the Munich radio again poured out propagandistic attacks by the end of April. The increased Nazi activity was due to Dollfuss' lenient treatment of Nazi agitators and Germany's determination to force Austria to terms.¹² Too, the same attitude toward Austria prevailed in the official German circles in Vienna when Rieth, the German Minister to Austria, maintained that the Austro-German question was an internal one that could be settled only if other countries kept out of it.¹³ However, it appeared that the other countries referred to by Rieth were not going to keep out, for on 21 June, Louis Barthou, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, while on a trip through Vienna, issued a statement that France, in cooperation with England and Italy, would continue to guarantee Austrian independence. This meant that the Austrian question was not considered by them an internal German affair.¹⁴

Apparently, Germany did not take great heed of the French Minister's statement concerning Austrian independence, for on 29 June, Joseph Goebbels, German propaganda chief,

¹²FRUS, United States Charge d'Affaires (Kliefoth) to Secretary of State, 11 May 1934, doc. 65, 1934, II, 25. Also, FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Secretary of State, 12 June 1934, doc. 71, 1934, II, 26.

¹³FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Secretary of State, June 1934, doc. 241, 1934, II, 28.

¹⁴FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Secretary of State, 21 June 1934, doc. 73, 1934, II, 55.

told Signor Cherruti, the Italian Ambassador in Berlin, that a Nazi government would be installed in Vienna within a month. Further evidence that the German Government had knowledge of and, in fact, engineered the attempted putsch, which occurred on the Austrian Government on 25 July, came up in the form of a pamphlet which appeared on the streets of Berlin on 24 July.¹⁵ The pamphlet was suppressed, but the very fact of publication and partial distribution a full day previous to the event belied the later protestations of the German Government that it had not been involved.

The most notable feature was the fact that not six months had passed since Hitler had stood before the Reichstag and stated that Germany had no plans or ambitions to attack or molest Austria in any way. And most certainly, an attempted putsch against the Austrian Government was not in accord with the rights of self-determination as they had been expressed by him in the same speech.¹⁶

The putsch itself was an attempt by the Nazis to seize the Austrian Government by first murdering Dollfuss, whom they considered to be the major obstacle to their success,

¹⁵FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Undersecretary of State (Phillips), 1 August 1934, 1934, II, 38. Also, TMWC, Affidavit of Paul Schmidt, 28 November 1945, doc. 3308-PS, XXXI, 1144. Also, TMWC, Affidavit of George Messersmith, 28 August 1945, doc. 1760-PS, XXVIII, 269-270. Also, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Testimony of Goering, Supplement B, 1146-1149. Hereafter, NCA will signify Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression.

¹⁶Baynes, op. cit., Speech of 30 January 1934, II, 1190.

and then intimidating the Cabinet into submission.¹⁷ The event began about noon on 25 July when six trucks met about one hundred and fifty men at some obscure building in Vienna. After donning police and army uniforms and getting a supply of arms and ammunition, men in five trucks went to the Foreign Office (in Ballhausplatz while one truck went to radio Vienna. By 12:30 P. M., Major Emil Fey, a member of Dollfuss' Cabinet, had heard that "something was going to happen." He hurried to the Foreign Office and warned Dollfuss and the remainder of the Cabinet. The Cabinet adjourned, and the members left for their respective offices.¹⁸ At 12:40 P. M., the Nazis seized the radio station and announced that Dollfuss had resigned and that Rintelen, the Austrian Minister to Rome, was the new Chancellor. Rintelen had been chosen by the Nazis to replace Dollfuss because his views paralleled Nazi views.¹⁹

Almost as soon as the announcement of Dollfuss' resignation had been broadcast, the five trucks drove into the Foreign Office and began to occupy it, even while Dollfuss conferred with Major Fey, Undersecretaries Tauschitz and Karwinski, and General Zehner about protective measures.

¹⁷FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Secretary of State, 27 July 1934, doc. 86, 1934, II, 32.

¹⁸FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Undersecretary of State (Phillips), 1 August 1934, 1934, II, 36.

¹⁹FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Secretary of State, 25 July 1934, doc. 80, 1934, II, 29.

During the first few minutes, Dollfuss was shot twice in the neck and the other people in the building were locked up and told that they would be shot if an attack were made on the building.²⁰ However, three things thwarted the Nazis. In the first place, they had expected the announcement of Dollfuss' resignation to spark a popular revolt, which did not come. Secondly, they had anticipated capturing the entire Cabinet, which had just adjourned.²¹ Thirdly, the Nazis had expected an invasion by the Austrian Legion in support of the putsch, which did not come; for when news of the attack on the Foreign Office reached Rome, Mussolini ordered two corps to the Brenner Pass to enter Austria in the event of a German invasion.²² The police took the radio station back, and the army and the people massed about the Foreign Office. Consequently, the Nazis found themselves to be the real prisoners, and, of course, the putsch was realized as a failure.

²⁰FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Secretary of State, 25 July 1934, doc. 81, 1934, II, 29. Also, FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Undersecretary of State (Phillips), 1 August 1934, 1934, II, 37.

²¹FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Secretary of State, 27 July 1934, doc. 86, 1934, II, 32. Also, FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Undersecretary of State (Phillips), 1 August 1934, 1934, II, 37.

²²FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Undersecretary of State (Phillips), 1 August 1934, 1934, II, 41. The Austrian Legion was an organization made up of Austrian Nazis who had fled Austria and Austrians in Germany who liked the idle life the German authorities offered.

Immediately, the Nazis resorted to their pre-arranged escape plan. It was demanded of Kurt von Schuschnigg, who was acting as Chancellor until the Vice-Chancellor, Starhemberg, could be called home from Italy, that those who had participated in the attempted putsch be given safe passage to Germany. Otherwise, the Nazis threatened to shoot all of their prisoners.²³ Since Schuschnigg knew they had Dollfuss, there was little he could do except agree, which he did, but on the basis that no one would be killed. Since the Nazis did not trust Schuschnigg, they demanded that Rieth, the German Minister, be called in as a witness to the agreement. An agreement was reached, and the Nazis surrendered, whereupon it was discovered that Dollfuss was dead from loss of blood. Naturally, this invalidated the agreement, and the police trundled one hundred and forty-four Nazis off to jail.²⁴ Schuschnigg was appointed Chancellor by the Austrian President, Wilhelm Miklas, and proceedings began against the captured Nazis amid a quiet Vienna.

²³FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Secretary of State, 25 July 1934, doc. 81, 1934, II, 30. Also, FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Undersecretary of State (Phillips), 1 August 1934, 1934, II, 37. Also, FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Secretary of State, 27 July 1934, doc. 86, 1934, II, 32.

²⁴FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Secretary of State, 25 July 1934, doc. 82, 1934, II, 30. Also, FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Undersecretary of State (Phillips), 1 August 1934, 1934, II, 37.

The following day, the German Government recalled Rieth, who claimed that he had entered the negotiations at the invitation of the Austrian Government and that he had no prior knowledge of the putsch. In addition to Rieth's claims, Berlin disavowed his actions and denied any implication of Germany whatsoever.²⁵ Only the most naive, however, believed Germany to be innocent of the affair.

In any event, the failure of the attempted putsch and the protestations by Germany of her innocence marked a definite tactical retreat for German planners, for the Nazi movement in Austria was weakened considerably. Not only were they in high disfavor among the populace of Austria, but the majority of the Western World was blaming them for the events which had transpired.²⁶ Germany could not attempt to annex Austria in an open fashion, for such a move would most probably have brought foreign intervention from Italy, and that was the last thing Germany desired at this point.

However, Schuschnigg recognized that the ultimate German aims had not changed in the least. He decided that a course of appeasement for Austria would be best, since such

²⁵FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Undersecretary of State (Phillips), 1 August 1934, 1934, II, 39-40.

²⁶FRUS, United States Charge d'Affaires in Czechoslovakia (Benton) to Secretary of State, 27 July 1934, doc. 39, 1934, II, 31.

a course would give the German Nazis no reason or ground for further intervention in internal Austrian affairs.²⁷

In order to gain as much as possible of what had been lost by the failure of the putsch, Hitler dispatched Franz von Papen to Vienna in hopes that the situation could be smoothed over as quickly as possible. The re-establishment of good relations with Germany was not von Papen's only job, but the urgency with which he was sent indicated Hitler's concern over the situation. Hitler was so concerned that von Papen entered Vienna not as an ordinary ambassador of the German Foreign Office, but rather as the direct envoy of Hitler, to whom Papen reported directly.²⁸

The attempted putsch failed and the Austrian Government remained intact. However, had the activities of the Austrian Nazis been successful, Hitler would have undoubtedly taken up the question and settled it in his own fashion. Even as the reports from Vienna looked encouraging, the Austrian Legion had been alerted to move into Austria, and it was only the very decisive stand of Mussolini that canceled the ordered invasion. But in any event, the Nazi activities in Austria were hardly in agreement with any idea of national sovereignty.

²⁷Kurt von Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, translated by Franz von Hildebrand, p. 5.

²⁸NCA, Testimony of Goering, 30 August 1945, Supplement B, 1149-1151.

The stand of Mussolini and the failure of the putsch caused a change in the German directed tactics, but the alterations stopped there. The primary aim was still the union of Germany and Austria, and, for a time, the political air cleared somewhat, as the terroristic policy was temporarily abandoned for activities such as industrial sabotage, rumor promulgation, creation of panics, and a person to person propaganda campaign.²⁹

However, although the Nazis in Austria were quiet on a specific order from Berlin, this did not mean that they were inactive. In point of fact, they were very busy with the direction and support of Berlin. The Austrian National Socialist Party received plans, propaganda, advice, money, and every conceivable kind of assistance. (In order to use the support and assistance sent in from Germany, the Austrian Nazis reorganized and set up better contact with the Party leadership, obtained a better propaganda program and received detailed instructions for another putsch.) The major change was in the control exercised by Germany.³⁰ The German Ambassador, von Papen, had as his major objective the weakening and undermining of the Austrian Government, an aim he admitted quite readily, and he worked

²⁹Schuschnigg, *op. cit.*, p. 4. Also, FRUS, Memorandum by Chief of Division of Western Affairs (Moffat), 14 September 1934, 1934, II, 49.

³⁰TMWC, Affidavit of George Messersmith, 28 August 1934, doc. 1760-PS, XXVIII, 271, 273.

constantly and without scruples to achieve that end, while Berlin told the world that Germany would observe Austrian independence.³¹

Inside Germany, the major support of the Austrian Nazis was the aid given the Austrian Legion. Hitler not only condoned the Legion, but also supported it with supplies of all kinds, trained it, armed it, and finally paid it. The aim behind the support given was to have it available for marching into Austria at the propitious moment. Too, it was an excellent source of propaganda materials.³²

After the climax of the Nazi activities in the failure of the putsch, Germany was almost back to the point from which the program for a union had begun. A few changes had been made, and, no doubt, some lessons had been learned, but in the last months of 1934, little was accomplished. Herr von Papen's major activity was to contact the influential people and to sway them to the German point of view. Otherwise, he was in Vienna without any apparent instructions as to what was to be done to relieve the strained Austro-German relations. Letters of introduction were used, lavish entertainments were staged, and reputations were exploited in carrying out this exploratory work. Some

³¹Ibid., pp. 272, 274. Also, Baynes, *op. cit.*, II, 1183.

³²TNWC, Affidavit of George Messersmith, 28 August 1945, doc. 1760-PS, XXVIII, 269.

attempts at pacification were made by Germany, but all efforts were toward laying a base for the future. The first portent of the planned Nazi policy came when von Papen requested that the Austrian Government restrain the Austrian press from their caustic comments on Germany, especially since German propaganda against Austria had ceased.³³

Insofar as Austro-German relations were concerned, the year 1935 was quiet with little or no active friction from either party. The existing tensions between the two governments did not decrease, nor did the Reich lessen the economic pressures that had been applied to help force Austria into capitulation. The activities of the then illegal Nazi Party were not curtailed, but were carried on out of the sight of the Austrian Government.

To further lull the world to sleep with regard to his intentions in Austria, Hitler spoke to the Reichstag on 21 May 1935, of Austria and of the right of self-determination in a very definite manner.

Germany neither intends or wishes to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, to annex Austria, or to conclude an "Anschluss". The German people and the German Government had, however, the very comprehensible desire, arising out of a simple feeling of solidarity due to a common national descent--namely, that the right to self-determination should be guaranteed, not only for foreign nations, but to

³³FRUS, United States Minister in Austria (Messersmith) to Secretary of State, 18 October 1934, doc. 176, 1934, II, 52-53.

the German people everywhere. I myself believe that no regime which does not rest on public consent and is not supported by the people can continue permanently.³⁴

It was notable that Hitler placed the subjects of Austria and self-determination in the very same paragraph.

At the same time, the small nations that comprised the Little Entente and those that were considering the proposed East Locarno Pact and the Danubian Pact were, one by one, acquiescing to German demands on them out of fear of possible aggressions against them in the future. Actually, the small nations had no real choice. By this time, Germany was rearming at an extremely rapid pace, the League of Nations had failed to stop Mussolini when he went into Abyssinia, in March of 1936, France and England were passive as Germany moved into the Rhineland, and, wherever opposition continued, Germany carried on a vigorous policy of stirring up dissension and openly siding with Nazi, Fascist, and anti-government groups. For small nations with large minority groups, this last could be ruinous. Consequently, the small nations reached the conclusion that, since neither France and England nor the League of Nations could or would stop Germany, the next best thing for them to do was to adopt a course of appeasement and make the best deal they could.³⁵ Basically then, Hitler's speech to the

³⁴Baynes, op. cit., II, 1218.

³⁵TWNC, Affidavit of George Messersmith, 30 August 1945, doc. 2385-PS, XXX, 301.

Reichstag was, for all practical purposes, little more than a tactic. Papen made it quite clear that such speeches were no more than words, for he readily admitted to anyone who cared to ask that his mission was to weaken the Austrian Government and pave the way for Anschluss.³⁶

In the early months of 1936, a huge outbreak of agitation against peace came from Austria in the charge that Germany was soon to invade Austria, but Hitler again denied any such intention in his May Day Speech, wherein he charged the fear as a lie that was being perpetrated by the Jews, and firmly denied the existence of a problem of Anschluss. Instead, he waved self-determination before the world.³⁷ But it was not long thereafter that Austria began a series of negotiations with Germany for her life that was to culminate in the very thing Hitler had consistently denied that he wanted---Anschluss.

³⁶Telford Taylor, Sword and Swastika, p. 177.

³⁷Baynes, op. cit., May Day Speech, 1936, II, 1322.

CHAPTER IV

INCREASED TEMPO

Austria was literally forced into negotiating to relieve the tensions with Germany, for, by the middle of 1936, there was no foreign support of her position. Italy, who had been the principal stanchion of Austria's policy of independence, had become highly indebted to Germany, and for Italy to materially block Hitler would have been an affront of the highest order. Consequently, as the Rome-Berlin Axis began to form and congeal, Austria found herself more and more alone. At the same time, Schuschnigg let it be known that he wanted the proposed Danubian Pact, and the French and English ministers in Vienna relayed the message to their governments with a note saying that, if anything was going to be done, it would have to be done in a hurry. In spite of their professed interest in Southeastern Europe, neither France nor England took any initiative in the matter, and it simply died of neglect. It did, however, materially affect the position of Austria in her relations with Germany, for when no support developed from France and England, Austria's bargaining position was considerably less than it would have been with support.¹

¹TMWC, Affidavit of George Messersmith, 28 August 1945, doc. 1760-PS, XXVIII, 275.

In July 1936, by the arrangements of von Papen, the Austrian Government began talks with the German Government with the hope of lessening the tension between the two states and ultimately restoring a semblance of normal intercourse. Germany, on the other hand, entered the talks with three motives, only one of which even resembled the Austrian motive. In the first place, Hitler wanted to exclude Austria, as much as possible, from international discussions. The "Austrian question" was one of the major topics of discussion in diplomatic circles at this time, and Hitler thought that, if the question could be pushed into the background by restoring friendly relations, it would be all to Germany's advantage. It would mean that the possibility would vanish of either France or England stepping forward to guarantee Austrian independence. Secondly, the establishment of friendly relations with Austria would wreck the efforts of those in Austria who were working to restore the Hapsburgs. Those who favored a restoration argued on the basis of the animosity between Austria and Germany, and the advent of friendly relations would destroy that possibility. Lastly, Germany wanted friendly relations with Austria to pave the way for German influence which was designed to prevent the development of an indigenous Austrian culture. Specifically, Germany wanted to flood Austria with newspapers, literature, dramatic groups, films, music, lecturers,

and other cultural reminders of the German heritage so that when "self-determination" was applied, it would not be too incongruous.²

Significantly, these motives did not correspond to Hitler's declarations about self-determination in 1934, 1935, or in the May Day Speech of 1936, nor did they correspond to the published agreement that was issued after the negotiations were concluded.

The agreement, which was known as the Austro-German Agreement of 11 July 1936, had two specific parts. One was published; the other was referred to as the "Gentlemen's Agreement" and was not published. The published part had three main provisions which recognized the full sovereignty of Austria, guaranteed that the internal policy structure of both countries was an internal affair and that neither would interfere with the other, and acknowledged Austria as a German state.³

The unpublished part was much more specific than the published in that it dealt with ten major subjects, which are outlined below in order that the transgression on the

²Documents on German Foreign Policy, German Minister in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 1 July 1936, doc. 233, Series D, I, 434. The "Austrian question" was the problem of the highly strained relations between Germany and Austria and how they were to be relieved. Hereafter, GFP will signify Documents on German Foreign Policy.

³GFP, Joint Austro-German communique, 11 July 1936, doc. 153, Series D, I, 281-282.

principle of self-determination may be more clearly shown.

Article One: Neither state would discriminate against the citizens of the other state in any manner.

Article Two: Mutual cultural relations were to be established. Books, papers, films, etc. were to have no aggressive bent toward the other country.

Article Three: The press of each country was to be influenced so that it would not have a political influence prejudicial to the other country, and each country was to allow the importation of newspapers from the other.

Article Four: The fate of Austrian Nazi exiles was to be settled in joint meetings between the two countries.

Article Five: The national insignia of both countries was to be placed on equal footing as any other third nation, and national anthems of the other country were to be played only when nationals of the other country were attending closed meetings.

Article Six: Normal economic relations were to be re-established.

Article Seven: Tourist restrictions between the two countries were to be lifted and quotas fixed.

Article Eight: Austria was to conduct her foreign policy in the light of the peaceful endeavors of German foreign policy, and the two states were to exchange views on affairs that affected both of them.

Article Nine: Austria was to grant amnesty to her political prisoners, and allow the Nazis political responsibility in the appointment of Nazis to government posts. The Nazis appointed to government positions were to have the confidence of the Chancellor.

Article Ten: Three members of the Foreign Office of each country were to form a joint commission for objection and complaint procedures.⁴

It takes no more than a brief glance at these ten provisions to note that Articles Three, Five, and Nine were in direct contradiction to the published agreement that neither party would interfere with the internal policy of the other. They violated the right of self-determination by giving the German Government a part in determining the Austrian Government's policy. Further, Articles Two, Three, Five, Six, Seven and Nine were directly in agreement with the motives of Germany as expressed by von Papen less than a fortnight before the Agreement was signed. It has already been pointed out that the German motives in the negotiations were not in accord with the principle of self-determination as it was expressed by Hitler. Article Eight contradicted the published agreement, for, if Austrian foreign policy were to be made in the light of German policy, then Austrian policies were, by implication, somehow subservient to German policy,

⁴GFP, Austro-German Agreement of 11 July 1936, 11 July 1936, doc. 152, Series D, I, 278-281.

and such a status could hardly be a recognition of the full sovereignty of Austria. Hence, the Agreement, almost in its entirety, either contradicted itself or fell in line with the German motives in the negotiations, and by definition, violated the principle of self-determination in its intentions.

Proof of the German intentions in the Austro-German Agreement came in later years when Hermann Goering, Hitler's chief aide, called it an agreement that could not have been lived up to because a basic tenet of German foreign policy had been the union of Germany and Austria. Von Papen strengthened the testimony by calling it the first step toward total Anschluss.⁵ It was also notable that the German Government had drawn many concessions from Austria without giving up anything of value, and all of these concessions pointed toward destroying the Austrian Government from within, which had been an intergal part of the Nazi plan since its conception.

The Austrians had been forced to negotiate with the Germans, and a natural result was the adoption of a doubtful attitude by Austria toward German intentions. The Austrians were so dubious that on 13 July, the Austrian Minister in Berlin, Tauschitz, asked whether or not the Agreement would be duly carried out by the responsible members of the Nazi

⁵NCA, Testimony of Goering, Supplement B, 1150-1151. Also, NCA, Testimony of Papen, Supplement B, 1472-1473.

Party. Hans Dieckhoff of the German Foreign Office replied, of course, it would be carried out and the German Government expected the same of Austria.⁶

In Austria, many people welcomed the Agreement as published mainly as a relief from the tensions, and even a few of the Monarchists saw advantages in it. The Clerics, in part, favored the Agreement as a pan-Germanic idea. Naturally, this rather wide acceptance of the Agreement pleased the Nazis, as it tended to make their job of preparing for Anschluss easier. Of course, those who had favored the restoration of the Hapsburgs were crushed, as their main argument was gone.⁷

Italy's reaction to the Austro-German Agreement was considerably different from its stand of two years previously. In a conference with the German Minister in Italy, Mussolini welcomed the Agreement because Austria would no longer be a "football of foreign interests," and it also removed the last obstacle to Italo-German relations.⁸

For Germany, the two most significant points of the Agreement were the inclusion of a pro-Nazi element in the

⁶GFP, Memorandum by Dieckhoff, German Foreign Office, 13 July 1936, doc. 156, Series D, I, 286.

⁷GFP, German Minister in Austria (Papen) to German Foreign Minister, 28 July 1936, doc. 161, Series D, I, 290.

⁸GFP, German Minister in Italy (Hassel) to German Foreign Minister, 11 July 1936, doc. 155, Series D, I, 283.

Austrian Government and the allowance of political responsibility to the Nazis. The former was an indirect approach to Anschluss, as it gave the Nazis positions from which they could intensify the planned internal disintegration of the Austrian Government. For instance, with pro-Nazis in the Cabinet, the terroristic policy of the Nazis could be followed more easily, for fewer officials would be willing to take police or judicial action to halt or prevent terrorism for fear of the possibility of a Nazi regime at some future date.

The allowance of political responsibility was a welcomed concession to the Nazis because they were then permitted an organization in which they could work openly and legally. This organization was supposed to be incorporated into the Fatherland Front, which was the only legal political organization in Austria, but it opened a method for Nazi activities, the limits of which would be very difficult to define.⁹ The freedom to work legally and openly also gave the Nazis ample opportunity to exploit people like Guido Schmidt, the Austrian State Secretary, who had pan-Germanic tendencies. The Nazis hoped to interest him in Nazi policy, since he was one of the few to hold Schuschnigg's confidence, and it would open the possibility of aligning Austria against Russia, which would make Austria dependent on Germany. It

⁹TMWC, Affidavit of George Messersmith, 28 August 1945, doc. 1760-PS, XXVIII, 278-279.

all amounted to another move by the Nazis toward Anschluss, and consequently, a step away from their protestations of self-determination.¹⁰

On 20 July, a conference was held by representatives of Germany and Austria to implement the provisions of the Agreement, specifically the "Gentlemen's Agreement." This meeting, as in the previous one, found Austria primarily on the defensive against German demands, and, as before, Austria gave while Germany took. Herein, it was agreed that German nationals in Austria could form cultural groups, that German actors could perform in Austria in non-Jewish theatres, that there would be an exchange of radio programs, that five newspapers were to be admitted by both countries immediately, that the tourist traffic was to be resumed, that the German salute and personal insignia were to be allowed in Austria, and that a commission was to be sent to Berlin from Austria to integrate the foreign policies of the two states.¹¹

Meanwhile, the Austrian Nazis circulated Bulletin Number Nine of the Lenadesleitung, the Party headquarters in Austria, which forbade all Party members to contact Party

¹⁰GFP, Letter from Karl Megerle, Nazi propaganda expert in Vienna, to German Foreign Minister (Neurath), 29 August 1936, doc. 163, Series D, I, 294-295.

¹¹GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to German Foreign Minister (Neurath), 21 July 1936, doc. 158, Series D, I, 287-289.

officials in Germany.¹² However, the Nazi infiltration was not as rapid as was expected. In the first place, considerable opposition had developed in the Christian Socialist element, which was working for the failure of the Agreement. Too, there was little chance of a Cabinet shake-up, and Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau, a pro-Nazi Cabinet member without portfolio, was constantly put off by Schuschnigg. Further, Schuschnigg had ordered a passive resistance to Nazi integration into government positions.¹³

Goering made Germany's move to soften the Austrian position as the result of fortuitous circumstances. Both Goering and Schuschnigg were in attendance at the funeral of General Gombes, Hungarian Minister President, and, after dinner on 10 October, they had their first meeting. Schuschnigg expressed a concern over the possibility of Anschluss, which Goering immediately sloughed off by saying that if Germany had wanted it, it would have already occurred. Instead, Goering talked of an economic-political partnership and military aid to Austria.¹⁴ Herein was the subtle implication

¹²GFP, German Minister in Austria (Papen) to German Foreign Minister (Neurath), 10 September 1936, doc. 164, Series D, I, 297. The bulletin was not dated.

¹³GFP, Memorandum by Altenburg of German Foreign Office of a conversation with General Muff, German Military Attache' in Vienna, 1 October 1936, doc. 166, Series D, I, 300-301.

¹⁴GFP, Unsigned memorandum on German Legation stationery in Budapest, 13 October 1936, doc. 169, Series I, I, 307-308.

that an Anschluss would not be undertaken by the use of force, so Schuschnigg should calm his fears. Rather, Germany wanted a partnership that could only end in union if the basic Nazi aim is recalled. To soften the implications, Goering invited Schuschnigg to Berlin so he could see how well the Nazi system functioned and be convinced.

The last three days of October saw the second Austro-German conference to further implement the Agreement of July. The Nazis again dominated the proceedings, and it was mainly a demand for Austrian compliance. They discussed the organization of German groups in Austria, the refugee question, and the integration of Nazis into the Austrian Cabinet. Considerable emphasis was laid on the refugee question by the Germans, as Hitler wanted the exiled Austrian Nazis back in Austria to work as German agents,¹⁵ but, apparently, the talk about a Cabinet reorganization had the most effect.

On 3 November, a major shift in the Cabinet occurred, wherein men sympathetic to the Nazi program were installed and those relieved who were most violently opposed to Nazism. Neustadter-Sturmer became Minister of Security, Glaise-Horstenau became Minister of Interior, Wilhelm Taucher became Minister of Commerce, and Rudolf Neumayer became

¹⁵GFP, German Foreign Minister to German Minister of Interior, 11 November 1936, doc. 176, Series D, I, 323-324.

Minister of Finance.¹⁶ Now, the Nazis not only had a foothold in the Austrian Cabinet in those areas where they had worked hardest, but they still had Guido Schmidt, a man who had not been forgotten. The Nazis did not get their chance to use Schmidt until November 1936, but, for a long time, they had known him to be pro-Nazi in his views and close to Schuschnigg. Therefore, at every opportunity, the Nazis had catered to him and bent him as much as possible to their views.

Early in November, Berlin asked for an Austrian representative to come to Germany to negotiate Article Eight of the "Gentlemen's Agreement," and in the invitation, a proposed protocol was included, which supposedly set up the points to be discussed. The proposals were sent to Austria for any additions or amendments the Austrian Government saw fit, but, in each of the German proposals, pressure was exerted to force Austrian compliance with German demands, and the only action Austria took was to agree in principle and not make any definite commitments.¹⁷

Guido Schmidt was chosen to represent Austria in the negotiations, and he suggested that both governments exchange some diplomatic pleasantries before the meeting,

¹⁶ GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 4 November 1936, doc. 171, Series D, I, 315-316.

¹⁷ GFP, German Foreign Minister (Neurath) to German Legation in Austria, 12 November 1936, doc. 177, Series D, I, 325-328. Also, GFP, Memorandum by Altenburg, 13 November 1936, doc. 178, Series D, I, 328-329.

but these were vague and so non-committal that they were good for propaganda purposes only.¹⁸ However, they did set the tenor of the meetings between Schmidt, Hitler, and Constantine Neurath, the German Foreign Minister.)

While in Berlin, Schmidt was treated royally, and by the time he met Hitler, he was so convinced of the goodness of Nazism that he readily believed Hitler's only concerns to be Bolshevism and the treatment of Germans living in other countries.¹⁹ That Hitler intended to employ his growing armies for anything other than a defense against the possibility of an invasion never entered Schmidt's thinking. Before signing the protocol resulting from his visit to Berlin, Neurath applied pressure on such questions as Nazi integration into the Austrian Government, a cessation of repressive measures against the Austrian Nazis, and a broader exchange of newspapers, but Schmidt had been so impressed by Hitler's explanation of the European situation that he apparently took the demands as just and correct.²⁰

¹⁸GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to German Foreign Minister (Neurath), 15 November 1936, doc. 180, Series D, I, 327.

¹⁹GFP, Memorandum by Chief of Presidential Chancellory (Meissner) to German Foreign Minister (Neurath) concerning Hitler-Schmidt conversation, 19 November 1936, doc. 181, Series D, I, 339-341.

²⁰GFP, Memorandum by Neurath, German Foreign Minister, 21 November 1936, doc. 184, Series D, I, 347. Also, GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 24 November 1936, doc. 185, Series D, I, 348.

At this meeting, the attitude to the Bolshevists had been defined, questions in the cultural and economic fields were settled, and progress was made on the repatriation of refugees.²¹

The most important accomplishment was the change in Schmidt's attitude towards Nazi Germany. Now the Germans had a man who was thoroughly pro-Nazi, and he held Schuschnigg's confidence. It seemed to be a tremendous advantage to the German cause. But Schuschnigg's interpretation of the negotiations made it appear that Hitler was not as unreasonable as imagined. Immediately steps were taken to stiffen Austrian policy both against German amnesty demands and against demands for Nazi appointments to government positions.²²

Schuschnigg, apparently on the same basis that he stiffened his policy on amnesty and Nazis in the government, then attacked Nazis in general. In a speech at Klagenfurt on 26 November, he said that Austria had three opponents: Bolshevism, Nazism, and defeatism within its own ranks. Nazism was limited to that Nazism within Austria when he called it an internal problem, but his meaning was clear

²¹GFP, German Foreign Ministry to the German Diplomatic Missions, 21 November 1936, doc. 183, Series D, I, 386.

²²GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 24 November 1936, doc. 185, Series D, I, 349.

to Berlin.²³ Neurath immediately expressed shock and astonishment at Schuschnigg's speech, and told Papen to ask the Austrian Chancellor if he thought measures could be taken against the Austrian Nazis and still go along with Germany on questions of race.²⁴ Upon receipt of the protest from Berlin, Schuschnigg replied he had spoken only to those elements of the Fatherland Front that were opposed to the Austro-German Agreement in an attempt to appease them. He also said that the position of Vienna was below Berlin's in carrying out the historic mission of the German race, but that integration of the Nazis in the government would have to proceed slowly because of the opposition from the Fatherland Front. Schuschnigg concluded his interview with von Papen by asking for time.²⁵ Apparently the Berlin government was pacified, for nothing else was said and no further protest was registered.

However, at the suggestion of von Papen, German aid to the German Nazis in Austria was separated from the German aid to the Austrian Nazis. The idea in this case was to finance the Austrian Nazis to a greater degree than before

²³GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to German Foreign Minister (Neurath), 27 November 1936, doc. 186, Series D, I, 350.

²⁴GFP, German Foreign Minister (Neurath) to German Ambassador in Austria (Papen), 28 November 1936, doc. 187, Series D, I, 351.

²⁵GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 2 December 1936, doc. 191, Series D, I, 361.

and reap the increased political pressure which would be the by-product of such a change.²⁶ As a result of this additional pressure, Schuschnigg could not continue indefinitely to disregard Nazi demands, especially if they came from an internal organization that had been declared legal in the Austrian courts. With this maneuver, the year 1936 came to a close.

In Austria, the possibility of a restoration of the Hapsburgs became very remote, in spite of the continued agitation for it, for the relations between Austria and Germany were considerably relaxed and Austria was enjoying much more stable conditions. The Austrian Nazis were not trying to set up a new government, but rather their task was one of getting people into the Nazi Movement so that a situation could be set up that would be easy for Germany to assimilate. As for Germany, the Agreement had made the aim of annexation much easier, for it had given the Nazis a freedom of action they had not enjoyed for a long time. It also put the German question up for German settlement only, and without the interference of other powers. The motive of getting the Austrian question out of the diplomatic limelight had been a success. However, movements toward Anschluss still had to be taken slowly and deliberately, as the striking power of the reich was not strong

²⁶GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to German Foreign Minister (Neurath), 13 December 1936, doc. 192, Series D, I, 362.

enough to afford an error. After one failure, Hitler was not anxious to experience another.²⁷

The year 1937 began for Chancellor Schuschnigg with pressure by the Nazis from three directions. Early in January, Captain Leopold, head of the Austrian Nazis, sent an informal memorandum to the Austrian Cabinet. Of course, the Cabinet did not formally receive the note, as the act itself would have been recognition of the Nazis as a political entity, but it was considered. In this memorandum, Leopold demanded full amnesty for political prisoners, recognition of the Austrian National Socialist Party, authorization to provide relief to the victims of political quarrels, restoration of normal legal conditions, freedom for cultural and national-political activities, and measures for political equality.²⁸

The direction of the second pressure exerted by the Nazis came from within Schuschnigg's Cabinet. Both Neustadter-Sturmer and Glaise-Horstenau, pro-Nazi Cabinet members, began to support the Nazi demands for an organization to foster the German-National idea and the integration of Nazis into the government. They justified their views on the basis that the Nazis would never cooperate with the Austrian Government

²⁷GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 9 January 1937, doc. 197, Series D, I, 373-374.

²⁸TWNC, Affidavit of George Messersmith, 28 August 1945, doc. 1760-PS, XXVIII, 279-289.

unless they were allowed a voice in it, but this was little more than an excuse, as they hoped to force Schuschnigg to a decision on the status of the Austrian Nazis.²⁹

The third pressure came in the form of another complaint from Germany on the amnesty and refugee questions. The complaint on amnesty was about the speed with which the Austrians were accomplishing it. Berlin worked on the theory that the sooner the Nazis could infiltrate all phases of the government, the sooner they could proceed to wreck it. The refugee question was pushed to get as many Nazi agents into Austria as soon as possible. The entrance of the refugees into Austria would also aid the claim of self-determination when the time was propitious to apply it.³⁰

Schuschnigg reacted to the increased Nazi pressure in two ways. He attempted to counter the pressure by allowing Monarchist activities to resume. Germany immediately protested and went so far as to initiate plans to invade Austria in the event a restoration was attempted. The intention to invade Austria was justified to Mussolini on the basis of a German-Yugoslavic agreement which would not allow restoration, and Mussolini accepted it. Actually, the situation was not as acute as German activities represented it

²⁹GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 9 January 1937, doc. 194, Series D, I, 364-365.

³⁰GFP, German Foreign Minister (Neurath) to German Ambassador in Austria (Papen), 27 January 1937, doc. 206, Series D, I, 383-384.

to be, but most certainly, the resolve not to allow restoration of the Hapsburgs was foreign to the principle of self-determination.³¹

The other reaction to Nazi pressure by Schuschnigg was the creation of the Committee of Seven, which had the function of discussing nationalistic ambitions with the Chancellor so that internal tensions could be relieved. On 8 February, the Committee of Seven submitted a petition to Schuschnigg, through Glaise-Horstenau, for the establishment of an organization for the Nazis. Three statutes for the proposed Nazi organization were attached to the petition. Schuschnigg promised a decision by 13 February, and on 11 February, he met with the Committee to discuss the petition.

Schuschnigg first asked that the statutes for the proposed Nazi organization be withdrawn, which the Committee declined to do. Accordingly, Schuschnigg refused them an organization on the basis of pressure from the Fatherland Front. However, at this same meeting, the Committee got the Chancellor's agreement to have the Fatherland Front

³¹TWNC, Affidavit of George Messersmith, 28 August 1945, doc. 1760-PS, XXVIII, 290-291. Also, GPP, Memorandum by the Counsellor of the German Embassy in Italy (Plessen), 23 January 1937, doc. 204, Series D, I, 381. Also, GPP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 13 February 1937, doc. 209, Series D, I, 388. Also, NCA, Order to prepare for the invasion of Austria in the event of an attempted restoration in Austria, 24 June 1937, doc. C-175, VI, 1006-1011.

establish liaison with the Nazis and handle their grievances, promise a reform of emergency legislation, expedite the amnesty program, consider Nazis for civil service appointments, investigate reports of persecution of the Nazis, and remove gradually those persons from office most objectional to the Nazis.³² Hence, Schuschnigg's attempt to relieve internal tensions culminated in his receiving pressure from both the Fatherland Front and the Nazis, and, once again, he was obliged to make concessions. This was one more example of indirect Nazi intervention in the internal affairs of Austria, as the work of the Committee of Seven was directed from Berlin.

The remainder of 1937 progressed in much the same fashion as the first two months. First the Austrian Nazis or Berlin would originate another complaint or demand; then Schuschnigg would move to counter or pacify the Nazis. Sometimes countermoves were required by either the Austrian Nazis or Berlin, but almost inevitably, Schuschnigg was forced to make one more concession to maintain the peace. Neurath's celebrated visit to Vienna in the latter part of February, the Austrian Cabinet crisis in March, the appointment of Arthur Seyss-Inquart to the Cabinet at Hitler's insistence in June, and dozens of other similar

³²GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 13 February 1937, doc. 210, Series D, I, 290-293. Also, TMWC, Affidavit of George Messersmith, 28 August 1945, doc. 1760-PS, XXVIII, 291.

incidents testify eloquently to this process of German intervention.³³ In all of the diplomatic and political maneuvering in 1937, Schuschnigg continually emphasized that Austria desired to cooperate with Germany, but not at the price of Austrian independence.³⁴ Nevertheless, the Nazis progressed in their aims. By 21 July, all but twenty-nine Nazis had received amnesty, and they would be free by December. Seyss-Inquart, the new Minister of Interior, controlled the Athletic League, which was the newly formed Nazi organization in Austria. The integration of Nazis into the Austrian Government progressed rapidly under the supervision of the pro-Nazi Cabinet members.³⁵ Such was the Nazi progress, despite the fact that, on two separate occasions, the Austrian police found positive evidence of German support and direction of all Nazi activities in Austria.³⁶

³³GFP, Memorandum by Neurath, 25 February 1937, doc. 212, Series D, I, 297-398. Also, GFP, Memorandum by Neurath, 27 February 1937, doc. 213, Series D, I, 399-400. Also, GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 21 March 1937, doc. 218, Series D, I, 411. Also, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 26 May 1937, doc. 227, Series D, I, 425-427.

³⁴GFP, Ministerial Director von Weizsacker to German Foreign Office, 10 June 1937, doc. 237, Series D, I, 441.

³⁵GFP, Minute by Ministerial Director von Weizsacker, 21 July 1937, doc. 245, Series D, I, 450.

³⁶GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 12 May 1937, doc. 233, Series D, I, 420. Also, GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 14 July 1937, doc. 242, Series D, I, 449.

Finally, in September, Chancellor Schuschnigg took a completely negative stand on further concessions to Germany on the grounds that he knew of high Berlin officials who were seriously considering the absorption of Austria. He also maintained that Germany was doing all it could to influence internal Austrian policies in violation of the Austro-German Agreement of 11 July 1936. Schuschnigg had no intentions of taking Nazis into the policy making levels of the government but would incorporate them only insofar as they could be used to divide the Nazis one against the other. The status quo would be maintained, and further concessions would result only under tremendous pressure.³⁷

November was the climactic month of 1937, for the Austrian police uncovered what became known as the Tavs Plan. It bared the German intentions toward Austria with a legibility all could read. Rudolf Hess, Vice-Chancellor of Germany, was the author. In this scheme, Hess proposed that, since the world was in a state of considerable unrest, this was the moment for Germany to annex Austria. The Austrian Nazis would begin the process by creating internal disturbances, and then Germany, after informing Mussolini,

³⁷GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to German Foreign Minister (Neurath), 1 September 1937, doc. 251, Series D, I, 457-458. Also, GFP, German Charge d'Affaires in Austria (Stein) to German Foreign Ministry, 14 October 1937, doc. 263, Series D, I, 473. Also, German Charge d'Affaires in Austria (Stein) to German Foreign Ministry, 23 October 1937, doc. 266, Series D, I, 476-477.

would send an ultimatum demanding that Nazis be integrated into the Austrian Government. If Austria resisted, Germany would invade and conclude the Anschluss. If Austria acceded, the Austrian Nazis were to permeate every function of the government, and Germany would conclude an evolutionary Anschluss. Actually, Hess assumed that Schuschnigg would not be able to quell the created unrest, and Germany would invade.³⁸ Austria did not know that just twenty days earlier, on 5 November, Hitler had set out three alternative plans for German aggression, in which Austria was first on the list in every case.³⁹ The discovery of the Tavs Plan was enough to bring relations between Austria and Germany almost to the breaking point. In such a status, the year 1937 came to a close.

In the other fields of foreign relations, Germany had not been at all idle. It was common knowledge in the German Government that Anschluss was a primary aim, and, consequently, German diplomats from Goering to Neurath to Wilhelm Keppler and on down the diplomatic ladder worked to swing Mussolini's interest away from Austria. At first, Italy would not make any definite commitment, but by October

³⁸NCA, Affidavit of Kurt von Schuschnigg, 19 November 1945, doc. 2994-PS, V, 707. Also, Telford Taylor, Sword and Swastika, p. 178.

³⁹NCA, Hossbach Memorandum, 10 November 1937, doc. 386-PS, III, 300-301. Also, NCA, Testimony of Goering, Supplement B, 1091-1102.

1937, Italy could not defend Austria militarily and was, in fact, in agreement with German policy.⁴⁰

As for England, the British Ambassador in Austria, Neville Henderson, told von Papen that England wanted the settlement of grievances without war, and that England would accept the German solution of the Austrian problem.⁴¹ In other words, England asked Germany to go quietly about her dirty work. As a result of the British attitude, Hitler had no worries about France, for she did not dare act without England at her side. Thus, the state was set on an international basis for future German moves.

The years 1936 and 1937 were ones of preparation insofar as Germany was concerned. Beginning with the Austro-German Agreement of 11 July 1936, Germany undertook a program of terroristic diplomacy for which it is hard to find a companion, and by the end of 1937, Austria was very definitely the loser in an unequal contest. Meanwhile, in her relations with other nations, Germany proceeded to knock Austria's supports from under her and effectively blocked the possibility of interference once an Anschluss was begun. The scene had been cleverly devised and set; the only thing lacking was a propitious moment to forget self-determination.

⁴⁰GFP, Memorandum by German Ambassador in Italy (Hassel) 30 January 1938, doc. 207, Series D, I, 385.

⁴¹GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 1 June 1937, doc. 288, Series D, I, 427.

CHAPTER V

THE FINAL STEP

The final step in Hitler's prostitution of self-determination began in January 1938. At von Papen's suggestion, Hitler extended an invitation to Schuschnigg to meet with him at Berchtesgaden so that they could find some way to relieve the strain in Austro-German relations. Schuschnigg agreed to the proposed meeting, but on the basis that he would be informed of the subjects to be discussed and that the agenda was followed. The meeting was then scheduled for 12 February.¹

During the interval between the arrangement of the meeting between Schuschnigg and Hitler and 12 February, Nazi pressure on Austria was by no means decreased or dormant. On the one hand, Seyss-Inquart met with Schuschnigg and demanded new concessions for the Austrian Nazis. Of the many demands presented, Schuschnigg agreed to release all of the Nazis still imprisoned because of their part in the attempted putsch in 1934, the restitution of pensions and retirement benefits for those Nazis who had been involved in the attempted putsch, the cessation of economic discrimination against Nazis, the inclusion of Nazis in developing economic

¹Kurt von Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 10.

political and military relations, a press truce, the organization of Nazi clubs and trade unions, the establishment of an equal legal status for Nazis, and the appointment of Seyss-Inquart to the control of several governmental committees.² Herein the Nazis gained quite a list of advantages, but in light of the pending meeting with Hitler, Schuschnigg did not want new points of friction to arise, and his policy of appeasement was brought to the fore.

The efforts of Seyss-Inquart were almost sabotaged by the activities of Captain Leopold and the Austrian Legion. Leopold was simultaneously carrying on separate negotiations with Schuschnigg with the support of Glaise-Horstenau. In effect, Hitler had two forces working for him which constituted a split in the Nazi movement. Hitler much preferred the evolutionary process of continuously drawing concessions from Schuschnigg, as such measures did not create undue international interest in Austria. However, the fact that these two Nazi factions existed allowed Schuschnigg to play the Nazis in his government against each other, both against the Austrian Nazis, and all against Germany. Consequently, as long as Schuschnigg could hold the various elements of the Fatherland Front together, he could retain control.³

²GFP, Memorandum by Wilhelm Keppler, 10 February 1938, doc. 290, Series D, I, 507-508.

³GFP, Commissioner of Economic Affairs (Keppler) to German Foreign Minister (Neurath), 2 February 1938, doc. 218, Series D, I, 497.

Hitler apparently did not have an immediate Anschluss in mind when he met with Schuschnigg. At least, the subject was not brought up in this connection. Rather, he wanted to relax the existing tensions in Austro-German relations by coming to an understanding with Schuschnigg over the status of Nazis in Austria and by improving the economic and political relations within the frame of the Austro-German Agreement of 1936.⁴

In keeping with Nazi policy, terroristic tactics were used. From the time Hitler and Schuschnigg met until the time they parted, Schuschnigg was treated as a gross inferior and blasted verbally with barrages of abuse that lasted for hours. In those moments apart from Hitler, Schuschnigg was intimidated by a goodly portion of the German High Command,⁵ and during the afternoon of 12 February, a proposed protocol was handed to Schuschnigg that provided for everything but direct annexation. An immediate signature was expected by Hitler, but Schuschnigg refused on the basis that he did not have the authority to commit his country. Hitler flew into a blind rage over Schuschnigg's stand. A survey of the provisions of the proposed protocol explains the indignation experienced by Austria's Chancellor.

⁴N. H. Baynes, editor, The Speeches of Adolph Hitler, April 1922-August 1939, II, 1407.

⁵Schuschnigg, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

The proposed protocol first demanded that Seyss-Inquart be appointed Minister of Public Security in addition to his other posts. The appointment would have given complete control of the police system to the Nazis. The second paragraph demanded that Hans Fischboeck, a confirmed Nazi, be appointed to administer Austro-German economic relations. By this appointment, Berlin hoped to control the major forces in the Austrian economy. The third paragraph called for complete amnesty to those involved in the attempted putsch of 25 July 1936, and the fourth provision called for the reinstatement of those Nazis who had been relieved of their duties. The latter two meant that those persons involved in the attempted putsch would regain their positions, many of which were within the police system. The fifth provision called for an exchange of officers between the parties of the protocol. In effect, the German military was to be given full access to the Austrian Army, and it was little more than a type of infiltration. These first five paragraphs spelled out in bold type the destruction of Austrian independence, and it was readily recognized by Schuschnigg.

However, the real trap lay in Paragraph Six. It called for the official recognition by the Austrian Government of the Nazis and their absorption into the Fatherland Front where they would be allowed activities under Austrian law. In addition, the Nazis were to be allowed to profess their creed without interference. The difficulty was a matter of

definition, for exactly what the Nazi creed was and the difference between illegal and legal activities had not been clarified. As the provision was given to Schuschnigg, its observance would have been a matter of who was interpreting it. For the Nazis, Paragraph Six meant complete freedom to carry on their program, and anything less would have meant a storm of protest that Austria was not abiding by her agreements.

The seventh and last paragraph of the proposed protocol recognized the independence of Austria and promised complete disinterest in Austrian internal affairs on the part of Germany.⁶ This one was little more than propaganda for consumption by England and France. British policy, in particular, was one of appeasement, and in his attempt to stay out of any situation that might lead to war, Neville Chamberlain was willing to accept almost anything. Hitler had provided for him amply.

Schuschnigg finally signed the protocol in almost the same form as it was originally presented, but he made it clear that only Miklas could approve it as a matter of policy. Miklas accepted the protocol as an agreement of force, yet vigorously opposed the appointment of Seyss-Inquart to the Ministry of Security. However, in accepting the protocol, Miklas assumed that England, France, and Italy would not

⁶Ibid., pp. 21-22.

allow Germany to invade Austria and accomplish a union. Why he made such an assumption was strange, indeed, for the Western Powers had already ignored Austria's attempts to get guarantees of its independence.⁷

At the announcement of the Protocol of 12 February 1938, Schuschnigg received immediate criticism and pressure from within the Fatherland Front, which became so strong he considered resigning. His thoughts turned to resignation primarily because he believed Austria had been deserted by her foreign supporters, but the internal dissension must have had its effect on him. Huge amounts of capital funds were sent out of the country, the still illegal Nazi Party increased the tempo of its operations, members of the Cabinet threatened resignation, and the Catholic elements of the country blasted him. Schuschnigg would have been something less than human not to have felt alone in his dealings with Germany.

However, Schuschnigg retained his position, reorganized his Cabinet in terms of the Protocol, granted the amnesty, reinstated those who were granted the amnesty, appointed Nazis to positions in the Fatherland Front, and arranged for the exchange of officers between the two states.⁸ Step by

⁷NCA, Testimony of Miklas against Rudolf Neumayer, 30 January 1946, doc. 3697-PS, Supplement A, 518-534.

⁸GFP, German Charge d'Affaires in Austria (Stein) to German Foreign Office, 17 February 1938, doc. 306, Series D, I, 526-527. Also, Schuschnigg, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

step, Austria was handed over to Nazism as Schuschnigg followed his decision of appeasement, and by the time the Protocol was complied with, there was little left for Germany to do, except convince the world it should recognize the union. Hitler was on the threshold of his first aim, but any resemblance of his methods to the ideas of self-determination which he professed was mere coincidence.

Germany undoubtedly recognized its position with respect to Austria, and two moves were made to implement that position. The first was the initiation of military pressure on Austria by staging sham maneuvers, passing false traffic over military radio circuits, initiating rumors, and alerting the Austrian Legion. Hitler ordered and approved this step as early as 14 February, although in a speech to the Reichstag on 20 February, he denied any military activity.⁹

The Nazis' second move to insure their position in Austria was the replacement of Leopold as head of the Austrian Nazis. Hitler called him to Berlin to release him and forbade him to re-enter Austria. Leopold had the tendency to ignore the over-all Nazi plan, and since Hitler wanted a peaceful Anschluss to prevent foreign intervention, Leopold's actions did little to help that aim. Unlike Leopold,

⁹NCA, Memorandum by Neurath, 14 February 1938, doc. 1775-PS, IV, 357. Also, Telford Taylor, Sword and Swastika, p. 181. Also, Baynes, op. cit., Speech to Reichstag, 20 February 1938, II, 1410.

Hitler realized that if the Protocol were carried out, Anschluss would have to come.¹⁰

In France, the negotiations at Berchtesgaden were followed with interest, but with a feeling of impotence, as intervention by any Western Power was considered out of the question. Schuschnigg's acceptance of the terms of the Protocol was viewed as a submission to German pressure, and as a defeat for Mussolini. France thought Austrian independence was a high price for Italy to pay for German support in Africa. But the real position of the French was shown when Ribbentrop denied them the right to intervene. He called the Austrian problem one for German solution only, and France accepted the position.¹¹

The British did not understand quite how the Protocol came about or what it meant, so they decided simply to wait for developments. An inquiry was made by Anthony Eden, but he received the same answer France was given, which was accepted. By 28 February, Chamberlain saw nothing in the Protocol to worry about, as it was merely a legal extension of

¹⁰GFP, Memorandum from the files of Wilhelm Keppler on stationery of the German Foreign Office, but it was not signed, 22 February 1938, doc. 318, Series D, I, 539-541. Also, GFP, Memorandum by Wilhelm Keppler, 28 February 1938, doc. 328, Series D, I, 549.

¹¹GFP, German Embassy in France to German Foreign Ministry, 16 February 1938, doc. 302, Series D, I, 523-524. Also, GFP, Memorandum by Ribbentrop, 17 February 1938, doc. 308, Series D, I, 529-531.

the Austro-German Agreement of 11 July 1936. Consequently, Britain had no reason for intervention in Austria.¹²

Mussolini, strangely enough, assured Schuschnigg that Italy retained her old position behind Austria and agreed that Austria had taken a wise course.¹³ Apparently, Schuschnigg did not appreciate the degree of solidarity between Berlin and Rome, for he later counted on Italian support when he called a plebiscite for 13 March.

Undoubtedly, Hitler was pleased with the reactions of the major nations of Europe to the Protocol, for it practically guaranteed him non-intervention once he began overtly to consume Austria. The advance of the Nazi moves was checked somewhat by Schuschnigg's speech to the Bundestag on 24 February in which he declared that Austria was German in history, character and culture. However, he went on to say that Austria did not want Nazism or union with Germany on any basis. Both criticism and congratulations were forthcoming as a result of the speech, and concern was almost universally registered. The most important result was the

¹²GFP, German Charge d'Affaires in Great Britain (Woermann) to German Foreign Ministry, 17 February 1938, doc. 305, Series D, I, 525. Also, GFP, Memorandum by the German State Secretary (Keppler), 18 February 1938, doc. 310, Series D, I, 532. Also, GFP, German Embassy in Great Britain to German Foreign Ministry, 4 March 1938, doc. 331, Series D, I, 553-554.

¹³Schuschnigg, op. cit., p. 32.

pledge of the laboring class, which constituted most of the Socialist element, to support the Chancellor in his stand for independence.¹⁴

Despite this check in their progress, only four days later, the Nazis were parading openly in defiance of the decrees of the Government to the contrary. They were uniformed in some places, armed in others, and always well disciplined. The police system had been so thoroughly sabotaged that confusion was common, and no one was really sure of the policies to be followed. Business was dead, the schools were closed, and the Jews the new subjects of persecution. And it was all obviously directed from Germany.¹⁵

The Nazi efforts were so openly apparent in Graz, the Styrian capital, that Seyss-Inquart was sent to pacify them. Instead of quieting the situation, he intensified it by saluting in the Nazi manner while he observed one of the demonstrations he was supposed to quiet. By 2 March, the agitation from the Nazis was so strong that more concessions had been wrung from Schuschnigg.¹⁶

¹⁴GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to Hitler, 24 February 1938, doc. 324, Series D, I, 545. Also, GFP, German Ambassador in Austria (Papen) to German Foreign Ministry, 25 February 1938, doc. 325, Series D, I, 546. Also, Schuschnigg, op. cit., pp. 33, 35, 37.

¹⁵Schuschnigg, op. cit., p. 36. Also, New York Times, 1 March 1938, p. 1.

¹⁶New York Times, 2 March 1938, p. 1. Also, New York Times, 3 March 1938, p. 17.

The Chancellor became highly resistant to more German pressure, and he began measures to enforce the existing laws against the illegal Nazi Party. Too, Major Emil Fey informed him that 80,000 men could be organized immediately from the Heimwehr to oppose the Nazis, a move Schuschnigg supported. Schuschnigg also felt that he had a better position after the Socialist working class began to negotiate to support him in maintaining independence.¹⁷

Despite the resistance offered by Schuschnigg, pressures were still exerted by Nazi demonstrations in Linz and Vienna. Usually, these activities were staged by a small minority of any given population, but they were so well organized and executed that the government stopped them only by giving up more to the Nazi demands.¹⁸ Finally, Schuschnigg was under such tremendous pressure that he made the most unexpected move possible. On 9 March 1938, he called for a plebiscite to decide on the independence of Austria.

Actually, Schuschnigg had thought about resorting to a plebiscite some weeks earlier, but he did not come to a decision until the evening of 8 March, while he was in conference with his chief advisors. The plebiscite was chosen

¹⁷New York Times, 1 March 1938, p. 13. Also, New York Times, 2 March 1938, p. 1. Also, New York Times, 4 March 1938, p. 1.

¹⁸New York Times, 5 March 1938, p. 1. Also, New York Times, 6 March 1938, p. 1. Also, New York Times, 8 March 1938, p. 15.

because Schuschnigg felt that he was forced into it, but the fact that a heavy vote for independence was more than probable did much to bring it about. To insure the outcome, the time lapse between the announcement and the voting was very short and the age limit was raised to twenty-four years of age, but the basic assumption was considered certain. Otherwise, Schuschnigg could not have taken the risk.¹⁹

Reaction to the proposed plebiscite was almost immediate. During the night of the announcement, clashes occurred between the Nazis, Fatherland Front and police, and, early in the morning of 10 March, Seyss-Inquart met with Schuschnigg to lodge a protest. The Chancellor replied that the plebiscite contained nothing contrary to either the Austrian Constitution or the agreements with Germany, and he expected all Nazis to vote for Austrian independence since the vote was really no more than an Austrian affirmation of the points agreed on at Berchtesgaden.²⁰

Thursday, 10 March, was a busy day in Austria. The Reservists were mobilized to provide a force to maintain order, the Nazis staged disorders whenever possible, the

¹⁹GFP, German Charge d'Affaires in Austria (Stein) to German Foreign Ministry, 10 March 1938, doc. 344, Series D, I, 566-568. Also, Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-182. Also, New York Times, 10 March 1938, p. 17.

²⁰Schuschnigg, *op. cit.*, p. 40. Also, New York Times, 11 March 1938, p. 1.

border was closed to Germany, and the workers decided to support Schuschnigg without reservations. Likewise, the Socialists, Communists, Catholics, Monarchists and all other groups pledged their support for independence, and Schuschnigg's position was, apparently, somewhat stronger.²¹

Upon receipt of the announcement of the plebiscite, Germany took quick steps. Hitler first dispatched Wilhelm Keppler, Secretary of State, to Vienna with instructions either to stop or alter Austrian plans, and Seyss-Inquart was told to stay out of any negotiations as much as possible. The immediate reaction of the German press was silence, but once the situation was understood, it condemned the plebiscite as over-hasty, of doubtful legality, tricky, not secret, and of dubious validity. Generally, the press characterized the whole affair as a travesty on justice and not a true reflection of the people's will.²²

Hitler also ordered the execution of Case "Otto", which was the German plan for the invasion of Austria. At the time, nothing had been done on it, as it was originally intended for use in event of a Hapsburg restoration, but within

²¹New York Times, 12 March 1938, p. 1.

²²GFP, German Foreign Ministry to German Embassy in Great Britain, 9 March 1938, doc. 339, Series D, I, 562. Also, GFP, German Foreign Ministry to German Embassy in Great Britain, 10 March 1938, doc. 342, Series D, I, 564. Also, New York Times, 10 March 1938, pp. 1, 14.

the next few hours the roles of the army and air force had been outlined in detail. The date for invasion was set at 12 March. Finally, the moment was propitious to achieve the first goal of German expansion.²³

Reaction to the announcement of the plebiscite was quite limited and contradictory in Italy. To Austria, Mussolini said that their policy was right and should be continued at all costs, but the plebiscite was called a mistake. To Germany, Mussolini said that he had advised against a plebiscite and thought it was wrong. However, in view of the fact that Hitler wrote Mussolini a letter justifying his intervention, the Italian attitude was understandable. Mussolini needed German support, and Austrian independence had long since ceased to be a point of Italo-German contention.²⁴

England and France took the position that the plebiscite should be carried out without intervention or intimidation, as they were anxious to maintain the status quo. Officially, neither of them made a commitment, which indicated their passive attitude.²⁵

²³NCA, Directive Number 1, 11 March 1938, doc. C-102, VI, 911-912. Also, Taylor, op. cit., pp. 176, 182.

²⁴GFP, Minute by Weizsacker, 11 March 1938, doc. 349, Series D, I, 572. Also, GFP, Hitler to Mussolini, 11 March 1938, doc. 352, Series D, I, 573-575.

²⁵GFP, Memorandum by British Ambassador in Germany (Henderson) to German Foreign Minister (Neurath), 10 March 1938, doc. 353, Series D, I, 576. Also, New York Times, 11 March 1938, p. 1.

Hitler's move to initiate an invasion first reached Schuschnigg early in the morning of 11 March, when the Austrian General Consul in Munich called to inform him that the German divisions around Munich were mobilized with the presumable destination of Vienna. A Cabinet meeting was called, and Glaise-Horstenau reported that Hitler was furious over the plebiscite and warned Schuschnigg he had made a mistake. The Chancellor retorted that he saw no reason for Hitler's reaction since the plebiscite was an internal Austrian affair. And the matter was quickly dropped.

Schuschnigg was informed, further, that he could not trust the police system. The amnestied Nazis had returned to their old jobs and many others had infiltrated into the system making it completely useless. Hitler's methods were working beautifully.

The Fatherland Front had mobilized and was available to help maintain law and order, but in terms of the defense of the nation, Schuschnigg discovered that it would not fight against Germany. This was despite the fact that only the day before, the various elements of the Fatherland Front had pledged full support to Schuschnigg to preserve their independence. The attitude of the Fatherland Front was a setback of considerable proportions to the Chancellor, for he had invested heavily on it. When it was needed most, it hesitated.

As the tension of the threat of invasion grew, Schuschnigg decided not to call on France or England for support. He made his decision on the basis of a communication from Italy which informed him that the Italian Government was not in a position to offer advice. Until then, every Austrian move had been taken with the assumption of Italian support, and after that support was withdrawn, it made little sense to ask for aid elsewhere. Too, France did not have a government at the time, and England had her hands full with Ireland and the Orient.²⁶

Early in the afternoon of 11 March, Keppler met with Miklas and told him Germany wished the plebiscite would be postponed and that certain changes in the Austrian Government be considered.²⁷ Germany denied that Keppler issued an ultimatum, but when Miklas refused to comply with the German request, a military ultimatum was not long in its appearance.

It arrived in Vienna at 4:45 P. M. via a telephone call from Germany to Seyss-Inquart. Goering ordered Seyss-Inquart to inform Schuschnigg that the plebiscite had to be revoked within an hour or Germany would invade Austria. In the face of a threatened invasion, Schuschnigg agreed to postpone the

²⁶Schuschnigg, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-44, 47.

²⁷GFP, Memorandum by Altenburg, 12 March 1938, doc. 370, Series D, I, 588-589.

plebiscite, but no sooner had he agreed than Goering demanded the Chancellor's resignation and his replacement by Seyss-Inquart. A deadline of 7:30 P. M. was placed on the demand. Either it would be met or German troops would cross the borders.

Schuschnigg resigned in compliance with the ultimatum, and then told his country that Austria was surrendering only under force. Miklas refused to appoint Seyss-Inquart immediately, and Schuschnigg remained nominally at the head of the government, but by midnight, 11 March, Nazi pressure was so great that Miklas acquiesced. By 1:00 A.M., 12 March, a new Cabinet had been appointed, and a message had been dispatched to Berlin asking for help to restore order. This plea for aid was ordered by Goering and quite unnecessary. Austria was essentially quiet. Nevertheless, early the same morning, the German armies began their march into Austria.²⁸

Actually, the Austrian Government was controlled by the Nazis hours before the first German troops crossed the border. During the course of 11 March, Schuschnigg realized

²⁸NCA, Testimony of Goering, Supplement B, 1129-1135. Also, NCA, Transcription of telephone calls between Goering and Seyss-Inquart, 11 March 1938, doc. 2949-PS, V, 628-654. Also, NCA, Testimony of Wilhelm Miklas, doc. 3697-PS, Supplement A, 518-534. Also, GFP, Austrian Minister of Interior (Seyss-Inquart) to Hitler, 11 March 1938, doc. 358, Series D, I, 580. Also, New York Times, 12 March 1938, p. 1.

that new people were in most of the offices and they were Nazis. It was truly a tribute to the effectiveness of von Papen's program to undermine and infiltrate the government and a manifestation of Hitler's intervention in the internal affairs of Austria. The invasion by German troops did little more than give point and power to the threats of Hitler and Goering.²⁹

Despite the fact that each and every act of the Nazis categorically denied any association with the ideas of self-determination, Hitler began to justify his acts on this same theory. Before he left Berlin early on 12 March, he issued a statement that he was on his way to save six and one-half million Germans from an oppression to which they had been subjected and to extend to them the full rights of self-determination.³⁰

Later in the day, Hitler called self-determination the factor decreeing a union. He accused Schuschnigg of denying the Austrian people this right, and declared that it was his duty to intervene to see that it was afforded to them. In such a fashion, Hitler's presence in Austria was explained.³¹

²⁹Schuschnigg, op. cit., p. 50. Also, Taylor, op. cit., p. 185.

³⁰New York Times, 13 March 1938, p. 1.

³¹Baynes, op. cit., Proclamation of 12 March 1938, II, 1417-1418. Also, New York Times, 13 March 1938, p. 35.

On 13 March, Seyss-Inquart read the proposed Anschluss Law to the newly formed Cabinet in accordance with his instructions from Hitler. Without objection, discussion or debate, the law was passed, and Austria was legally a part of Germany. A provision of the law called for an election on 10 April to verify the union, but it was superfluous. Hitler's aim was already an accomplished fact.³²

The Nazification of Austria took place in a series of rapid moves. No sooner had the Anschluss Law been passed than Hitler issued a decree which integrated the Austrian Army into his own forces. Secondly, Josef Buerckel was appointed to head the province of Austria. He superseded Seyss-Inquart and all who had worked for the downfall of Schuschnigg. The entry of German troops ran smoothly, on the whole, and they sped to every border to insure the permanence of the union. Of course, the Nazis took control of the police, radio, newspaper and transportation facilities, and the efficiency with which they worked demonstrated the thoroughness of their planning. Orders, decrees, dismissals, and appointments came in rapid succession. All Catholic and Jewish organizations were dissolved, youth institutions were

³²NCA, Testimony of Wolfgang Troll, doc. 3697-PS, Supplement A, 537-538. Also, GFP, Memorandum of German Foreign Office, 13 March 1938, doc. 374, Series D, I, 591-592. Also, Baynes, *op. cit.*, Speech at Konigsberg, 25 March 1938, II, 1445.

turned over to the Hitler Youth organization, and by nightfall of 14 March, the last vestiges of an independent Austria were no more.³³ Hitler's original plan to destroy Austria from within had resulted in complete success, but self-determination was prostrate.

In Italy, the reaction to the Anschluss was essentially no more than an endorsement of German intervention. Mussolini approved the event by calling it "internal German politics" and a "development of the national movement." Hitler had announced his intervention as a move to insure self-determination, and Mussolini merely echoed him. Of course, it should be remembered that Hitler had justified his move earlier and given Italy guarantees of continued relations and the Brenner Pass as the Italo-German frontier.³⁴

The reaction to the events of the Anschluss by England were more numerous than Italy's, but in strength, somewhat less. When a rumor of the German ultimatum reached London, Neville Henderson, British Ambassador in Germany, told Neurath that Britain would protest strongly if the rumor were true. However, England docilely accepted Neurath's answer when he

³³New York Times, 13 March 1938, p. 1. Also, New York Times, 14 March 1938, p. 1.

³⁴GFP, Hitler to Mussolini, 11 March 1938, doc. 352, Series D, I, 573-575. Also, New York Times, 13 March 1938, p. 1.

replied to the English protest with the following curt message:

In this situation dangerous consequences could only come into play if an attempt should be made by any third party, in contradiction to the peaceful intentions and legitimate aims of the Reich, to exercise on the development of the situation in Austria an influence inconsistent with the right of the German people to self-determination.³⁵

The British Government then approved of the invasion and "took note" of the proceedings.³⁶

This position was justified by the rationalization that England had fulfilled all her obligations, which were consultations only, and it would have taken a large armed force to halt the German invasion. In essence, England's only protest was over the methods Hitler had used. Had Hitler eased into Austria more gracefully, it is doubtful that England would have said anything at all. After all, the hallowed phrase "self-determination" had been uttered.³⁷

The French Government received rumors of the German ultimatum at about the same time as England, and immediately

³⁵GFP, British Ambassador in Germany (Henderson) to German Foreign Minister (Neurath), 11 March 1938, doc. 355, Series D, I, 578. Also, GFP, British Ambassador in Germany (Henderson) to German Foreign Minister (Neurath), 11 March 1938, doc. 354, Series D, I, 577. Also, Neville Chamberlain, In Search of Peace, pp. 71-73.

³⁶GFP, British Ambassador in Germany (Henderson) to Goering, 13 March 1938, doc. 376, Series D, I, 593.

³⁷GFP, German Charge d'Affaires in Great Britain (Woermann) to German Foreign Ministry, 14 March 1938, doc. 386, Series D, I, 601. Also, Chamberlain, op. cit., pp. 73, 99.

a strong protest was lodged in Germany. Neurath answered that the rumor was unfounded, but if it were true, it was a matter of internal German affairs and of no concern to France. Upon verification of the situation, it was simply accepted.⁵⁸

As shown before, Hitler began to justify his move to an Anschluss on the grounds of self-determination quite early. The days that immediately followed revealed a well-planned campaign. On 15 March, Goering made a speech commemorating German Memorial Day in which he said:

Who has the right to interfere when Germans want to be German. . . . Here only the German people in their entirety have the right to decide.

Now for the first time since the terrible peace treaties will the German people of Austria have an opportunity to tell the world freely, honestly and in all frankness how they want to shape their life. Whatever their decision, Germany will respect it.⁵⁹

Hitler reiterated Goering's statements four times within the next three weeks. First he spoke in Vienna on 15 March, then to the Reichstag on 18 March, at Königsberg, Austria on 25 March, and finally at Graz, Austria on 3 April. Each time self-determination was named as the driving force

⁵⁸GFP, German Ambassador in France (Weizsaeck) to German Foreign Ministry, 11 March 1938, doc. 387, Series D, I, 601. Also, GFP, French Ambassador in Germany (Francois-Poncet) to German Foreign Minister (Neurath), 11 March 1938, doc. 356, Series D, I, 578. Also, GFP, German Ambassador in France (Weizsaeck) to German Foreign Ministry, 15 March 1938, doc. 388, Series D, I, 603.

⁵⁹New York Times, 14 March 1938, p. 21.

of Germany's interest in Austria and the governing factor of all German policy. He continued to press his argument up until 30 January 1939 when self-determination was again brought forward in his address to the Reichstag.⁴⁰ By this time, however, words about self-determination were hollow; its prostitution was complete.

⁴⁰Haynes, *op. cit.*, Speeches on 15 March 1938, 18 March 1938, 25 March 1938, 3 April 1938, 30 January 1939, II, 1426, 1428-1429, 1440-1441, 1452, 1572.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In the course of its development, the principle of self-determination was connected to the modern concepts of democracy. By 1918, the nation-state was regarded as the political expression of the democratic will of the people by those who subscribed to the idea of self-determination. The Peace Conference, which followed World War I, was supposedly committed to this notion, and, although self-determination was not the ultimate criterion of the judgments of the Peace Conference, it was applied according to the principles of democratic rule when used.

In a sense, the nations which had talked of self-determination the most had misused it by substituting something else in its stead. In most cases, self-determination simply would not work, or the victorious Allies felt that their national safety would be jeopardized by its application. However, the intent of the Allies was not to use self-determination as a kind of camouflage for planned aggression.

On the other hand, Adolph Hitler intended to follow a course of aggression, even before he rose to power in 1932. Once the Nazi Party controlled Germany, there was no doubt about the future of the state within the policy making levels.

The annexation of Austria was the initial aim. Gradually, economic, social and political pressures were brought against Austria from without. Internally, the existing government was undermined and infiltrated to the degree that the Nazis were effectively in possession before the invasion of the German military.

This process of pressure and infiltration lasted from 1932 to 1938. Of necessity, it was a slow process, for Germany could not afford to become directly involved until the German Army had been re-built. Further, the Nazi cause suffered a complete failure in 1934, which jeopardized the possibility of success. As a result, the planned program of German expansion was delayed by active Austrian resistance and the German desire to avoid foreign intervention. But in no sense was the German aim for an Anschluss altered. The little change that did occur was one of technique only.

Meanwhile, the activities of the Nazi movement were hidden behind the German protestations that all people should have the right of self-determination. According to Hitler, it was the guiding principle for all German foreign policy, and the nations to which this propaganda was directed accepted it at face value. Peace was their main concern, and they were willing to follow a policy of appeasement to achieve it. Consequently, the German avowal of self-determination furnished an excuse to avoid affairs which could precipitate another European war. In effect, Hitler's use of self-

determination was no more than a diversionary tactic to lure the Western European powers into a policy of non-intervention.

Of course, there was no need for the German fraud of self-determination in Italo-German relations after 1936, and Hitler's task of mollifying the world became much easier. Italy had once again repeated the same role she had played before entering the war in 1914. Always, the policy of Mussolini was to vacillate between commitments until he was sure he had gained all he could in terms of benefits for Italy. Finally, Mussolini thought he stood to gain the most by casting his lot with Hitler as a result of the Abyssinian venture, but in doing so, he abrogated his commitments to Austria, which effectively nullified the bargaining position of Schuschnigg, whether Schuschnigg knew it or not. And most certainly, the Rome-Berlin relationship was known to Hitler, who could use it to his own best advantage.

Public opinion probably had a great deal of influence on the official attitude of both France and England, as the general trend of thought was in line with the thinking which had followed the Peace Conference in 1919. World War I had been the war to end all wars, and the very idea of another was preposterous to the masses of people. Consequently, had the statesmen of the time just prior to the Anschluss talked of the actions of Hitler in terms of his

starting another war, they most probably would have lost control of their governments. As statesmen, however, they should have at least told their people exactly what the international situation was and let them decide for themselves. Political considerations were apparently more important than the total welfare of the nations.

Events within France and England, however, had a good deal to do in the attitudes of each. In France, Cabinet crises were common, and at the time of the Anschluss, the French had no government at all. Meanwhile, the British were having their own internal troubles. The Irish were demanding independence and the British colonies in the Orient were occupying much of England's time and energy. These circumstances explain, but do not justify, the weakness and vacillation in the foreign policies of France and England.

Kurt von Schuschnigg was apparently a man who did not truly realize the total situation within which he worked. From the time of the Austro-German Agreement in 1936 until the Nazi invasion in 1938, he continually granted new concessions to demands that either came directly from Germany or were instigated by her. It seems inexplicable that he did not call on the support he thought he had in Italy, or take his problem to the League of Nations. Perhaps he knew long before 11 March 1938 that he no longer had the support of Italy and thought he could stand up against

Germany alone. But, since he also knew there were many elements in Austria that did not agree with his policies and on whom he could not count for support, it again seems unreasonable that he thought he could stand against the constant German pressure. Apparently, he did not consider an appeal to the League of Nations, as the possibility was never mentioned. By the time he was in serious trouble, the League had already ignored the Italian venture into Abyssinia and Germany's entrance into the Rhineland, and he may have realized that the League was an impotent agency.

Hitler's basic prostitution of self-determination was his adoption of it for propaganda purposes. As noted before, the principle of self-determination developed in connection with the modern ideas of democracy, and it was thought of as a manifestation of the will of the people. In Nazi Germany, the state was not a democracy, but rather a dictatorship. Consequently, the adoption of self-determination as a matter of policy was impossible by virtue of its connection with the democratic ideas, for the people did not hold the power of the government. Had the other nations of Europe cared to look, this inconsistency could not have escaped notice. Because they did not care to notice, one of the greatest frauds of modern history was perpetrated. Actually, each of the incidents which followed Hitler's adoption of self-determination was only a practical application of an idea distorted. But the deception was so complete that detection came too late.

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