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THE RISE AND EARLY HISTORY OF
THE AUSTRIAN HEIMWEHR

by

REINHART KONDERT

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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This dissertation is a study of the Austrian Heimwehr movement as it developed from 1918 to 1930. Its role in helping to shape Austrian history was most controversial. As a paramilitary organization strongly imbued with fascist tendencies and supported by Italian money, the Heimwehr tended to coerce Austrian governments unwillingly to the right and forced the Austrian Social Democratic Party to become militantly defensive. Although the late 1920's saw the Heimwehr reach its peak in terms of membership and organization, it was the period outside our scope (1931 to 1936) that witnessed its greatest and most harmful activity. Those years saw the movement become allied with the Dollfuss regime, develop even more intimate ties with the Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, and show an increasingly contemptuous attitude towards its socialist enemies. Butressed by their ties with the Austrian and Italian governments, the Heimwehr leaders provoked the disastrous civil war of February, 1934, which destroyed the Austrian Social Democratic Party and smoothed the way for the declaration of an authoritarian government on May 1, 1934.

It is these events of the 'thirties which receive the most frequent attention of historians. Yet another attempt
to come to an understanding of these events, it appears to this writer, would be a superfluous undertaking. Rather, it seems that an emphasis on the Heimwehr's earlier somewhat neglected history would be more rewarding. This dissertation, therefore, will deal with the Heimwehr's origins and early development, and will pay particular attention to the influence that foreign reactionary groups had upon it. Such a treatment of the Heimwehr's history lends itself to a fourfold division: the initial phase of the immediate postwar years (1918-1921), when the original self-defense units made their first contacts with right-wing elements in Germany and Hungary and were, with the subsequent material and moral support received from these groups, molded into anti-socialist paramilitary organizations of considerable strength; the second period (1921-1927), when these contacts largely broke off, resulting in a temporary decline of the provincial formations; the third period (1927-1929), which saw the Heimwehr experience a significant increase in membership and activity, leading to a greater political awareness and participation; and finally, the fourth phase (1929-1930), when the movement's power and prestige again declined due to a loss of faith in the organization's leaders by its primary foreign and domestic patrons. It was an irrevocable decline which led to the movement's dissolution in 1936.

The recent cataloging of documents in the British
Public Record Office dealing with the origins of the Heimwehr and its connections with paramilitary forces in Germany in the immediate postwar years and the recent publications by Hungarian historians of documents based on the Hungarian archives showing the close collaboration of the Heimwehr with the Italian and Hungarian governments in the late 1920's make it possible to treat with some accuracy these once neglected aspects of the Heimwehr's history. These documents show what was long suspected but never known: that the Heimwehr's relationship with right-wing elements in the neighboring countries was extremely close. Of particular interest is the monetary support offered by these groups. It can be estimated that the total amount of material assistance accorded to the Heimwehr by outside elements probably exceeded the amount received from domestic individuals and organizations.

From these observations it might be appropriate to pose the following question: Was the Heimwehr ever anything but a tool of foreign reactionaries? Undoubtedly the Heimwehr was more than just an instrument of Italian fascism and it did actually represent the interests of native conservative elements. It is equally true that the Heimwehr leadership--at least at the time when its influence was the greatest--was more responsive to the dictates of Mussolini than to the demands of its own rank and file. It is interesting to note that this ambiguity
within the Heimwehr was one of the major causes of the movement's decline after 1929. Basically, the rank and file were democratically inclined whereas the leadership tried to set out in a fascist direction. When the Heimwehr leaders publicly announced that they would follow a fascist course (the Korneuburg oath of May 18, 1930), the majority rejected the plan and the organization became split even further. The evidence thus suggests that fascism (especially the Italian brand) was an unwanted import and had little chance of winning the hearts and minds of the Austrian people.

Although much of the material on which this dissertation is based was drawn from the Hungarian archives and the Public Record Office, other valuable repositories of information (all located in Vienna) which this writer had the privilege to use were Professor Ludwig Jedlicka's Institute for Contemporary History, Professor Herbert Steiner's Archive of the Austrian Resistance, and Mr. Josef Toch's Tagblatt Archiv. To these individuals I must extend my kindest words of appreciation. Also to be thanked are the staffs of the National-Bibliothek of Vienna and of the Rice University library.

Of course, my greatest debt of gratitude I owe to my thesis director, Professor R. John Rath. His persistent, but constructive criticisms brought out whatever there is good in this dissertation. All of its shortcomings are, of course, mine.
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CHAPTER ONE:

THE ORIGINS AND EARLY ACTIVITIES OF THE HEIMWEHR

1918-1921

The Heimwehr grew directly out of the conditions created by the First World War. As early as 1915 voluntary civilian guards (Freiwillige Schützen) were organized in Carinthia as a result of Italy's entrance in the war against Austria-Hungary. These formations were composed of people who were either too young or too old to serve in the regular army. They sprang up entirely spontaneously and were used on emergency occasions to guard communications zones.¹

Towards the close of the war, when it became apparent that the central authorities of the collapsing Habsburg empire were no longer able to provide for the protection and safety of the civilian population in Austria,² steps

¹Heimatschutz-Zeitung, January 4, 1930, p. 2.

²In a statement made by a military representative on October 30, 1918, in the second session of the provisional assembly, it was openly acknowledged by the officer that the Habsburg army was no longer able to "ensure the inviolability of the German-Austrian state territory . . . and to see to the maintenance of peace and order." See Stenographische Protokolle der provisorischen National-
were taken by the government to assist its citizens in self defense. In October, 1918, a law was passed authorizing the arming of the population. In accordance with the law, volunteer guards, armed in great part by the government, were organized in all of the provinces of Austria. These volunteer guards were composed of people from all walks of life and went by a number of different names (Bürgerwehr, Einwohnerwehr, Stadtwehr, Ortswehr, Bauernwehr, Heimwehr, Volkswehr, etc.). Their common purpose was the protection of the unarmed citizenry. In the rural districts they were set up to guard homes, farms, and railways. In the towns, voluntary defense units were formed to protect communication networks, factories, and especially food depots from the famine-stricken populace. For the most part the workers and factory guards in the towns were controlled by the


3 See Lindley (England's ambassador to Austria) to Curzon (England's Secretary of Foreign Affairs), Vienna, January 11, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 716/3, No. C1168.

4 The following weapons were handed out to the various defense units in Austria as of November 11, 1918: 1,156 machine guns, 80,345 repeating rifles, 13,627 carbines, 396 hand grenades, 888 sidearms, 8,702,640 rifle cartridges, and 72,891 pistol cartridges. These arms were never called in by the government. These figures can be found in an official document, dated November 30, 1918, issued by the ministry of war. See Quellenbuch zur Österreichischen Geschichte (Vienna: Birken Verlag, 1967), p. 8.
Social Democrats and differed sharply in their outlook on life from the more conservative provincial groups. Almost from the start, therefore, these organizations were divided "into adherents either of the Right or the Left."\(^5\)

However, in the early days of the First Republic these armed formations found little reason to differ with each other. In the provinces bordering on Germany, workers' and peasants' guards cooperated in the defense of their borders against the possible spill-over of the communist rebellion in Bavaria. The brief communist regime of Béla Kun in Hungary in the summer of 1919 and the abortive communist putsches in Vienna on April 17 and June 15\(^6\) created the proper atmosphere for a close collaboration of bourgeois and workers' guards in Vienna and Lower Austria.\(^7\) In Styria and Carinthia the need for cooperation among the various elements of society was felt all the more by virtue of the Yugoslav invasion in the spring of 1919. Until the fighting stopped in June,


\(^{7}\) Although this cooperation in Vienna was short-lived, both bourgeois and workers' formations were armed by the Socialist government. See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, January 11, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 716/3, No. C1168.
1919, volunteer Heimwehr companies, composed of peasants, workers, and middle class citizens, fought side by side with the forces of the regular army (the socialist controlled Volkswehr), to beat back the common Yugoslav foe.

Unfortunately for Austria, this spirit of cooperation among the various associations lasted only as long as there were common, overriding dangers threatening the populace as a whole. By the end of 1919 both the threat of communism and of a Yugoslav invasion of Carinthia had largely subsided. Foreign troops passing through Austria to their homelands no longer were a menace to the people. Also, the pillaging and looting of food depots, so common earlier, had now virtually disappeared. In all of the provinces of Austria, with the possible exception of Carinthia, where Yugoslav troops remained until the

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plebiscite of October 20, 1920, had decided Carinthia's fate in favor of Austria, a degree of stability had returned which might have made it possible for the various defense units to be disbanded altogether.

For a number of reasons this did not happen. In the first place, Vienna and the provinces were deeply distrustful of each other. Vienna was the stronghold of socialism; the provinces were citadels of conservatism. The socialists of Vienna were free thinkers; the peasants in the provinces were devout Catholics. The traditionally autonomous provinces feared the centralizing tendencies of the socialists in Vienna. The socialists feared that the conservative propensities of the peasant would lead to the restoration of the monarchy. This mutual distrust made it almost impossible for one group to dissolve its forces without first demanding the disbandment of the other.¹⁰ Without anyone really realizing it, the nature of the Arbeiterwehr in the cities and the Heimwehr in the provinces changed from that of purely defensive units either to socialist or anti-socialist paramilitary

¹⁰For example, in an interview on December 5, 1920, between Julius Deutsch, the leader of the Austrian Arbeiterwehr, and Colonel F. W. Gosset, a member of the British delegation to the Inter-Allied Military Commission of Control, Deutsch stated flatly that he would oppose all attempts to disarm the Arbeiterwehr unless the Heimwehr were disarmed first. See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, December 8, 1920, Public Record Office (London), File 351/3, No. 013711.
formations.

Mutual distrust alone could not have perpetuated the existence of the armed defense units. About the time that these volunteer bands might have disappeared from the scene conservative elements in Austria, Hungary, and Bavaria stepped in to transform the volunteer guards in the provinces into well-armed anti-socialist forces. Through large amounts of material aid, the Austrian defense units were to be organized into powerful paramilitary troops.

After the defeat of communism in Bavaria and Hungary in 1919 reactionary regimes were established in both regions. Both Hungary and Bavaria became havens for right-wing elements. These extreme right-wing groups looked with distrust at the socialist stronghold of Vienna. At the same time, they showed a deep interest in the presence of the many Heimwehr units in the provinces. If properly trained and disciplined, these armed bands could become a powerful counterforce to Austrian socialism and could serve as a bulwark against any future communist threat. Towards the end of 1919, German and Hungarian rightist groups, which had been in contact with __________

each other since the summer of the same year, began to establish contacts with the Austrian Heimwehr, to include the latter in their plans to establish an anti-bolshevist front extending across Germany, Austria, and Hungary.\textsuperscript{12}

The initiative to establish contacts with the Austrian defense formations came from Bavarian circles. In Germany, as in Austria, large numbers of volunteer bands had been created after the war to help maintain order, and in Bavaria in particular, to help government troops in their struggle against communism. As in Austria, these civilian guards (Einwohnerwehren) were armed and sanctioned by the government. Some units were formally connected with the government by being incorporated into the army. When the communist menace was over, most of these civilian guards were officially disbanded, although unofficially many remained intact and armed. The most extreme of these formations found their way to Bavaria, where the bulk of them came under the influence of Georg Escherich.\textsuperscript{13}


Escherich was a former German forester who had established his own right-wing group called Orgesch (Organisation Escherich) in Bavaria. His purpose was to unite all anti-bolshevist forces in Germany and Austria to instill in them a nationalist (pro-Anschluss) sentiment.\textsuperscript{14} Although, according to its statutes,\textsuperscript{15} Orgesch was declared to be an unpolitical and unmilitary organization,\textsuperscript{16} it was armed—the Einwohnerwehren which it incorporated became its armed guard—, took a deep interest in political developments in Germany, and became involved in a Hungarian-inspired plot to overthrow the socialist regime of Karl Renner in Austria.\textsuperscript{17}

Escherich's goal to establish an anti-communist front and to spread a German-nationalist spirit throughout the German-speaking areas of Central Europe caused him to direct his attention to the conservative volunteer

\textsuperscript{14}It was Escherich's avowed pro-Anschluss aim which brought the Austrian, German, and Hungarian right-wing groups to their parting ways.

\textsuperscript{15}These statutes can be found in the Public Record Office. See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, January 11, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 716/3, No. CI168.

\textsuperscript{16}By becoming formally affiliated with Orgesch, an unarmed and unpolitical organization according to its articles of association, the civilian guards sought to make themselves acceptable to the Entente. \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{17}Kerekes, "Die Weisse Allianz," pp. 356-363.
bands in Austria. The job of bringing the Austrian Heimwehr into an affiliation with Orgesch was given to one of Escherich's lieutenants, Rudolf Kanzler. Kanzler was a capable organizer—he stood at the head of his own organization (Orgka)—and through his membership in the Bavarian parliament had connections with wealthy Bavarian circles, who provided him with material support. Once relations were established with the Austrian Heimwehr, Kanzler found little difficulty in persuading his Bavarian backers to extend their support to the Austrian formations. ¹⁸

Contacts¹⁹ between Kanzler and the Austrian volunteer bands were made via Salzburg and Tyrol, the provinces in which the Heimwehr was first constituted. ²⁰ Although not much is known about the Heimwehr in Salzburg before the spring of 1919, around April Dr. Hans Oellacher and his brother began organizing the various volunteer bands in

¹⁸Rudolf Kanzler, Bayerns Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus. Geschichte der bayerischen Einwohnerwehren (Munich: Parkus Verlag, 1931), p. 34.

¹⁹Contacts between Austrian and Bavarian volunteer bands had been made as early as in the spring of 1919, when Bavarian armed formations went to Carinthia to assist in its struggle against the Slavs. However, there were no ulterior motives in these connections. See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, November 16, 1920, Public Record Office (London), File 414/3, No. C11812.

their province. Funds were supplied by Dr. Heinrich Mataja, a Christian Social deputy of the Austrian parliament, and arms were sent from Styria. In mid-November negotiations were opened with Bavaria and an agreement was reached whereby each side (Orgesch and the Salzburg Heimwehr) promised to send to the other a detachment of 400 men in the event of disorder in either place.\textsuperscript{21}

On February 28, 1920, Kanzler personally came to Salzburg to witness the formal founding of the \textit{Salzburger Heimwehrdienst} through the publication of its statutes.\textsuperscript{22} These statutes reflect the heavy influence of Escherich's organization in that they are almost identical with the Orgesch's charter. According to the statutes of the Salzburg Heimwehr, it was to be constituted as a private organization having neither military nor political connections with any government. Its primary purpose was to help the central authorities to maintain law and order and to safeguard the rights of the individual. Nothing was said of its arms, its connections with Bavaria, and its obvious anti-socialist character.\textsuperscript{23} It was innocuous

\textsuperscript{21} Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, January 11, 1921, \textit{ibid.}, File 716/3, No. C1168.

\textsuperscript{22} Kanzler, \textit{Bayerns Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus}, p. 86.

\textsuperscript{23} The statutes of the Salzburger Heimwehrdienst were printed in their entirety in \textit{Salzburger Wacht}, June 24, 1923, pp. 2-3.
statutes like these (which were duplicated in the other provinces) which made it possible for the provincial governments to give formal recognition to the Heimwehr\textsuperscript{24} and made it almost impossible for the Inter-Allied Military Commission of Control in Vienna to enforce article 128 of the Treaty of St. Germain, which prohibited sporting and other clubs (such as the Heimwehr) from occupying themselves with any military matters.\textsuperscript{25}

After Kanzler's visit to Salzburg on February 28, 1920, at which time he left a subsidy of 2,000 marks,\textsuperscript{26} the organization expanded rapidly in that province. At the time Kanzler had attended the founding ceremonies, the membership of the Salzburg Heimwehr stood at roughly 1,200.\textsuperscript{27} Through large doses of subsequent Bavarian support, in the form of money, arms,\textsuperscript{28} and men (serving

\textsuperscript{24}The Heimwehr in Salzburg was officially approved by the provincial government on October 15, 1920. See Heimatschutz in Österreich (Vienna: Verlag des Österreichischen Heimatschutzes, 1934), p. 207; and Salzburger Wacht, June 24, 1923, p. 3.


\textsuperscript{26}Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, January 11, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 716/3, No. C1168.

\textsuperscript{27}Heimatschutz in Österreich, p. 206.

\textsuperscript{28}There were many rumors of arms being smuggled from Bavaria to Salzburg. For one such rumor which was substantiated and caused heated debate in the provincial diet on December 4, 1920, see War Office Memo to Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, December 22, 1920, Public Record Office
as military advisers), membership had risen to roughly 15,000 by the end of 1920. The organization included members of both a military and civilian nature. The latter formed a contingent called the technische Nothilfe, which were to man the communications services in the event of a socialist strike, in the hope that they could thereby neutralize its effect.²⁹

Contacts were established between Bavaria and the Tyrolese Heimwehr several months after they had been made with Heimwehr headquarters in Salzburg. The Heimwehr organization in the Tyrol, with which Kanzler came into contact on March 17, 1920, was still very weak and just then being newly reconstituted. The original volunteer guards organized in the last days of the war had been dissolved in January, 1920, due to spirited protests by the socialists.³⁰ Richard Steidle, former head of the Tyrolean Defense Committee, and, therefore, in command of the original volunteer bands, began a program of reorganization in February. Appealing to the conservative Tyrolese peasant and the traditional shooting clubs (which were legal and well armed), Steidle's recruitment efforts met with spectacular success. By the end of 1920

³⁰ Ibid.
his Tyrolean Heimatwehr had almost 25,000 members.\textsuperscript{31}

No doubt, this growth was in large part attributable to the generous material and moral support provided by Escherich and Kanzler after March, 1920.\textsuperscript{32} On the 17th of that month Kanzler and a representative of the Tyrolean Heimwehr met in Rosenheim to discuss the possibility of closer collaboration between Orgesch and the Heimwehr of Tyrol. Although no formal promise of material aid to the Tyrolean organization was made by Kanzler, he did agree to send one of his military aides to assist in the organization of Steidle's association. By April 9 relations were on a much closer footing, for Kanzler himself attended a conference of Tyrolean Heimwehr leaders. On May 12, 1920, he sent several of his closest advisers to be on hand to witness the ceremonies which brought the Tyrolean Heimatwehr formally into being.\textsuperscript{33}

Subsequently plans were made for Orgka men to take part in a shooting match scheduled for November 20, 1920, in Innsbruck. The plans were cancelled at the last minute when railway traffic between the two regions came to a

\textsuperscript{31}Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, December 17, 1920, \textit{ibid.}, File 11591/3, No. C14276.

\textsuperscript{32}The \textit{Arbeiter Zeitung} accused Steidle of receiving 80,000 marks from Bavarian sources. See \textit{Arbeiter Zeitung}, July 17, 1920, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Orgesch," Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).

\textsuperscript{33}Kanzler, \textit{Bayerns Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus}, pp. 79-81.
halt due to a socialist-engineered railway strike. It can be assumed that a commensurate amount of material aid went hand in hand with these frequent meetings. And, indeed, evidence shows that during most of 1920 Steidle was receiving 14,000 marks per month from Bavarian sources.

Although Kanzler's principal contacts were with the Heimwehr associations in Salzburg and the Tyrol, to a lesser degree he also participated and assisted in the formation of Heimwehr organizations in the other provinces. His relations with the Heimwehr in Vorarlberg were established in the summer of 1920. The volunteer guards in this tiny mountain province were in a particularly weak state in that they lacked organizational talent and material support. This weakness of the province's paramilitary forces had aroused widespread feelings of insecurity among the inhabitants of the province during

34 Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, December 28, 1920, Public Record Office (London), File 192/3, No. C192. The success of the socialist railway strike shows that the "technische Nothilfe," the civilian strike breaking guard of the Tyrolese Heimwehr, was not yet very effective or strong, even though it had been created for just such an emergency. See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, November 16, 1920, Public Record Office (London), File 414/3, No. C11812.

35 The allegation by the Arbeiter Zeitung that Steidle received 80,000 marks from Bavarian circles seems to be substantiated by evidence in the German archives. See Earl Edmonson, "The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics, 1918-1938" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1966), p. 23.
the heyday of communism in Bavaria in the spring of 1919, and had lent weight to the voices of those in the province who were calling for union with Switzerland or for some kind of a security alliance with that country's military forces. When Kanzler came into contact with the Vorarlberg Heimwehr in 1920, calls for Anschluss with Switzerland were still being heard. He rightly calculated that if the Heimwehr forces of Vorarlberg were substantially strengthened, the feelings of uncertainty and the pro-Anschluss attitudes could be dispelled at the same time. After a considerable amount of material aid and attention from the Bavarians, the Heimatsdienst, which was formally founded on November 24, 1920, grew to a force of about 3,000 well-armed troops by the end of the year.36

In Carinthia the relationship between the Heimwehr and Orgka was particularly close. Ever since Bavarian volunteers (though not connected with Kanzler) had participated in the struggle against the Yugoslavs in 1919, the Carinthians were in a most receptive mood for subsequent ties with Bavarian elements. In the ensuing months after the fighting had stopped in June, 1919, Kanzler and his men played a crucial role in the reorganization, development, and arming of the Carinthian

36 Kanzler, Bayerns Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus, pp. 92-93.
Heimatschutz, of which the original thirty volunteer companies became the nucleus.\textsuperscript{37} So successful were the recruitment policies of Orgka and the Carinthian Heimwehr that the latter's membership was near 40,000 men at the end of 1920.\textsuperscript{38}

The reasons for the rapid expansion of the Heimwehr in Carinthia can be attributed to two factors. In the first place, the continuing presence of Yugoslav forces in Carinthia before the plebiscite of October 10, 1920, provided the Heimatschutz with an impetus and raison d'être which otherwise it would not have had. Secondly, the organization and growth of the Carinthian Heimwehr was conducted in a planned and systematic way—under Bavarian auspices.

The Bavarian agency which directed the impressive growth of the Heimatschutz was the Heimatdienst, the propaganda organ of Orgesch which was responsible for spreading German-nationalist ideas.\textsuperscript{39} During the days


\textsuperscript{38}War Office Memo to Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, January 28, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 194/3, No. C2080.

\textsuperscript{39}Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, October 28, 1920, \textit{ibid.}, File 142/3, No. C10375.
of the Carinthian plebiscite the Heimatsdienst had directed the Austrian propaganda effort in the two zones in southern Carinthia which were claimed by both the Austrians and Yugoslavs. \(^{40}\) At that time its agents, in collaboration with provincial officials, established secret advisory councils (Heimräte) in the southern zone (Zone A, which was occupied by Yugoslav troops). These councils contacted and instructed the people of that area on how to vote in the upcoming election of October 10, 1920. After the successful outcome of the plebiscite, \(^{41}\) the agency, with its propaganda apparatus intact, diverted the energies of its staff towards procuring men, money, and supplies for

\(^{40}\) After the fighting in southern Carinthia had stopped in June, 1919, the four power council of the allies decided to split the region into two zones. Zone A, the southern area, was to be occupied by Yugoslav troops and governed by Yugoslav laws. Zone B to the north was to be administered by the Austrians. The date for the plebiscite was set for no later than three months after the ratification of the Treaty of St. Germain by the Austrians (July 16, 1920). If the people in Zone A opted for Yugoslavia, a second election in Zone B would be held within three weeks to determine if the entire disputed area was to go to Yugoslavia. However, if the inhabitants of Zone A voted to join Austria, a second election would not be necessary, and the entire area could then be annexed by Austria. This plan is spelled out in article 50 of the Treaty of St. Germain. See Quellenbuch zur Österreichischen Geschichte, pp. 51-53.

\(^{41}\) In the plebiscite held in Zone A on October 10, 1920, 22,025 inhabitants cast their vote for Austria and 15,279 voted to become a part of Yugoslavia. Austria, therefore, came into possession of both areas. See Volksabstimmung, 1920-1935, p. 95.
the Heimwehr in that province. Directing its attention particularly to the many sporting clubs of the province, the Heimatsdienst, as we have seen, was spectacularly successful in drawing new members to the Heimwehr's fold. It was equally efficient in procuring arms for the new adherents.\textsuperscript{42} By late 1920, with weapons flowing freely from Bavaria into Carinthia, the Heimatschutz under Colonel Thomas Klimann became one of the best armed and largest of the provincial organizations.\textsuperscript{43}

In Styria the transformation of the volunteer bands into anti-socialist forces occurred without the aid of right-wing elements from Germany.\textsuperscript{44} The change from volunteer guards to anti-socialist formation took place under the guidance of conservative groups within the province. The earliest of the volunteer battalions were organized in the last days of the war, and, as elsewhere, workers and peasants fought side by side, especially in southern Styria, where raids by Yugoslav marauders were

\textsuperscript{42} War Office Memo to Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, January 28, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 194/3, No. C2080.

\textsuperscript{43} Kanzler, Bayerische Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus, pp. 96-97; Heimatschutz in Österreich, pp. 158-159.

\textsuperscript{44} Attempts apparently were made to subordinate the Heimwehr in Styria to the Orgka, but they proved unsuccessful. See War Office Memo to Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, January 28, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 194/3, No. C2080.
not uncommon. The initial formation of these guards was directed by the Social Democratic provincial councilor, Resel, who had been appointed supreme commander of all military forces in the province in the last days of the war. Under his supervision, about 8,000 rifles were allotted to the various worker and peasant guards. Shortly thereafter (late in 1918) Resel, under intense pressure from his own party, dissolved the peasant battalions and replaced them with workers' guards of advanced socialist outlook.

The peasant guards did not accept their disbandment by Resel. They seized the rifles which had earlier been allotted to them (but not distributed) and began to regroup under new leaders. In central Styria a Heimwehr guard was organized by Jakob Ahrer, a member of the Christian Social Party. In western Styria another group was founded by the avid nationalist Walther Pfrimer. Yet another faction was formed in southern Styria by Dr. Willibald Brotmann.

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45 Johannes Hawlik, "Steirischer Heimatschutz" (unpublished seminar paper, Institute for Contemporary History, University of Vienna, 1966), pp. 5-6.
47 Heimatschutz in Österreich, p. 121.
48 War Office Memo to Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, January 18, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 194/3, No. C2080.
In the immediate aftermath of the war these defense units cooperated in a spirit of harmony, though differences were apparent. They accepted the tacit leadership of the Christian Social governor Anton Rintelen, who supported them all alike and who helped imbue them with a belligerent anti-socialist spirit.\textsuperscript{49}

In the spring of 1920, when deputy governor Ahrer tried to place all of the Heimwehr units under the direction of the Christian Social Party, i.e., under his own control, the conflicting loyalties of the defense organizations flared into the open. Pfrimer's faction represented the interests of the extreme nationalist who advocated union with Germany. Brotmann's unit was composed primarily of peasants and represented the interests of the farmer. Although all of the organizations were staunchly anti-socialist, both Pfrimer and Brotmann were adamant in their insistence on remaining outside party control. Only thus, they felt, would they be truly able to represent the interests of their cohorts. Through Kanzler's mediation in April, 1920,\textsuperscript{50} the different groups

\textsuperscript{49}Anton Rintelen, \textit{Erinnerungen an Österreichs Weg} (Munich: Bruckmann Verlag, 1941), pp. 124-134. See also Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, November 17, 1920, Public Record Office (London), File 414/3, No. C11813.

\textsuperscript{50}Kanzler, \textit{Bayerns Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus}, pp. 94-95.
agreed temporarily to be governed by an executive commit-
tee in which the three factions had an equal voice. In
September Dr. Brotmann, through his resignation, apparently
agreed to permanently subordinate his group to Christian
Social control. 51 Pfrimer, however, remained unyielding.
In the spring of 1921 he broke away from the alliance
and went his separate way. 52 Until 1927, when Pfrimer was
elected sole Heimwehr leader in Styria, two conflicting
organizations existed side by side. 53

Although the transformation of the volunteer defense
units into anti-Marxist forces did not always proceed
smoothly, as was the case in Styria, on the whole, the
change-over and the subsequent expansion of the anti-
socialist paramilitary formations in Salzburg, the Tyrol,
Vorarlberg, Carinthia, and Styria must have been considered
a success by those who were responsible. Collectively,
their strength numbered around 100,000, 54 making them at

51 War Office Memo to Under Secretary of Foreign
Affairs, January 28, 1921, Public Record Office (London),
File 194/3, No. C2080.

52 Franz Winkler, Die Diktatur in Österreich (Zürich:

53 Josef Hofmann, Der Pfrimer Putsch. Der steirische
Heimwehr-Prozess des Jahres 1931 (Graz: Stlašny Verlag,

54 As has already been noted, the estimated strength
of the Heimwehr in 1920 was as follows: Carinthia,
40,000; the Tyrol, 25,000; Salzburg, 15,000; Styria,
12,000; and Vorarlberg, 3,000. In Upper Austria, Lower
least as strong as the Arbeiterwehren in Salzburg, the Tyrol, Carinthia, and possibly Styria, and only slightly weaker in Vorarlberg. Through their connections with Orgesch, they were assured of large supplies of weapons and effective leadership. By their socialist opponents the Heimwehr organizations in the above provinces must have been considered formidable foes.

In Upper Austria, Vienna, and Lower Austria, however, the Heimwehr was greatly outmatched by the far superior

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Austria, and Vienna there were no Heimwehr forces of any significance until much later. The sources for the estimates of the strength of the Heimwehr in Carinthia, the Tyrol, Salzburg, and Vorarlberg have already been given. For the figure for Styria, see Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, January 11, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 716/3, No. C1168.

Another document in the Public Record Office suggests that the membership for the Styrian Heimwehr was probably much larger than 12,000. See War Office Memo to Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, January 28, 1921, ibid., File 194/3, No. C2080.

In a conference of July 25, 1920, in Munich the Heimwehr associations of Tyrol, Carinthia, Styria, Salzburg, and Vorarlberg agreed to accept the leadership of Orgesch. Kanzler was given the superior command. See Neue Freie Presse, August 1, 1920, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Orgesch," in the Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).

Although the Heimwehr was formidable, the Arbeiterwehr was superior in arms, organization, and mobility. In an armed showdown the Arbeiterwehr would probably have won the day in that it could count on the support of the regular army, the Volkswehr, which until 1920 was controlled by the socialists. See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, January 11, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 716/3, No. C1168.
socialist forces. In Upper Austria citizen defense units were established in 1918-1919 by members of the landed gentry and bourgeois elements to protect themselves from the depredations of workers in Steyer and Linz. The formations were weak, ill-armed, and of no real consequence. In July, 1921, a newly-organized Heimwehr did come formally into being, but it, too, remained weak by virtue of the fact that it did not receive the wholehearted support of important conservative elements in the province. Until 1925, when it was finally recognized and supported by the governor, the Upper Austrian Heimwehr was a negligible force.59

In Vienna and Lower Austria no Heimwehr organizations came into being until the spring of 1921. In these two provinces the functions that were assumed by peasant and bourgeois defense units in the provinces were carried out by workers' guards which were from their origin controlled by the predominant Social Democrats. Although bourgeois remnants were active in some of the socialist formations, these quickly disbanded once their role had been fulfilled. The workers' guards, however, did not disband. They were well-armed from the army's arsenal

59Heimatschutz in Österreich, p. 73.
in Vienna, and they received the official support of Julius Deutsch, minister of the army, until the fall of 1920. 60

In the face of the socialist preponderance in Vienna and Lower Austria, an anti-socialist paramilitary organization was not officially founded until May 10, 1921, although it seems to have had an unofficial existence since mid-1920. It was known as the Selbstschutzverband Wien und NiederÖsterreich (Self Defense League of Vienna and Lower Austria) and was headed by Field Marshall Josef Metzger. 61 Its purpose was to draw together all non-socialist organizations, armed or unarmed. 62 However, like many of the associations with which it had ties, it suffered from factional splits. Two factions were active within the movement: the clerical-monarchist wing headed by Count Albrecht Alberti, 63 and the nationalist wing led

60 War Office Memo to Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, January 28, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 194/3, No. C2080.


63 Die österreichischen Putschisten. Erste wahrheitsgemässige Geschichte der Heimwehrbewegung, in Archiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, Manuscript Number 2252, p. 17. This account of the Heimwehr's history is written with a strong pro-socialist bias and must be used with caution.
by General Alfred Krauss. Krauss, who was also president of the Nationalverband (National League)—an organization of veterans dedicated to Anschluss—actively agitated for union with the fatherland to the north. In addition, his followers demanded that their leader be placed at the head of Orgka and that the Vienna Heimwehr recognize the superior position of Orgka, thereby subordinating all of the Heimwehr organizations to Krauss' leadership.

The monarchist faction, however, would hear nothing of this. They strenuously objected to placing the Heimwehr under the leadership of an organization such as the National League, whose principal aim was union with their northern neighbor. Nor were they in favor of forming intimate ties with Orgka, since it, too, was an organization dedicated to promoting Anschluss. In the end, apparently as a compromise solution mediated by Kanzler,


66 Ex-emperor Karl was opposed to Bavarian rightist intrigues and told his followers to have nothing to do with those (Escherich and Kanzler?) wanting to suppress the idea of an independent Austria. See ibid.; and Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, November 3, 1920, ibid., File 414/3, No. C10730.

the Self-Defense League of Vienna and Lower Austria agreed to become affiliated with Orgka, but it insisted that its interests in that association be represented by the more moderate leader Field Marshall Metzger. 68

By keeping Krauss and his followers in check, the Alberti wing gradually gained ascendancy over the entire movement in Vienna and Lower Austria. Thus, until 1927, when a host of new paramilitary organizations came into being, the clericals and monarchists were the chief representatives of the Heimwehr movement in the capital. Although the Alberti wing gradually declined as the memory of the empire faded away, and the desire to return to it weakened, it was influential in the immediate post-war years. It won the support of the Christian Social Party and developed close connections with important groups in Vienna, which included the League of Bankers, an organization of Viennese nobles known as the "Wiener Kasino," 69 and a number of wealthy Carlist supporters who allegedly provided Count Alberti with 400,000 Austrian crowns in 1920. 70

68 Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, January 11, 1921, ibid., File 716/3, No. CL168.

69 The Vienna Casino was secretly known as the Vereinigung für Ordnung und Recht (Association for Law and Order) and had connections with Hungarian reactionaries. See Kerekes, "Die 'Weisse Allianz,'" p. 357.

70 Die Österreichischen Putschisten, p. 20.
Although the Vienna and the Lower Austrian Heimwehr was dominated by the clerical monarchists,\textsuperscript{71} it had close ties with other anti-socialist formations that did not necessarily have in common the clerical-monarchist point of view but did share the hatred of the left wing of the Vienna socialists. One such organization with which the Vienna and Lower Austrian Heimwehr was intimately connected was the Frontkämpfervereinigung (Front Veterans Association). Although it, too, had its monarchist faction, it was primarily a counterrevolutionary force of a more nationalist, anti-Semitic character. The organization had a close relationship with the Austrian Heimwehr\textsuperscript{72} and subsequently played an important role in the history of the First Republic.

The Front Veterans Association appears to have grown out of a parent organization called the "Gagisten-Verband."\textsuperscript{73} This league, by the terms of its articles

\textsuperscript{71}In 1925 the Vienna and Lower Austrian Heimwehr separated, thereby ending the clerical-monarchist domination of the Lower Austrian group. See Stein, Der Niederösterreichische Heimatschutz, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{72}The Front Veterans Association was officially incorporated into the Heimwehr in 1928.

\textsuperscript{73}Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, June 23, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 13714/3, No. C13714. The Gagisten-Verband may also have gone by the name of Bund für Ordnung und Wirtschaftsschutz (League for Order and Economic Protection). See Peter Scheiner, "Die Entstehung der Frontkämpfervereinigung und ihre politischen Ziele" (unpublished seminar paper, Institute for Contemporary History, University of Vienna, 1961), p. 2.
of association, was a kind of a trade union of former officers dedicated to improving the welfare of its less fortunate members. As such, it was entirely free from politics or any kind of conspiracy. Most of its members were officers of no particular political persuasion. In September, 1919, Colonel Hermann Hiltl joined the ranks of that league and attracted to himself those few members of the league who were inclined towards a more militaristic outlook and who held anti-socialist and anti-Semitic opinions. Using those officers as a core from which to build a new organization, Hiltl broke away from the Gagisten-Verband in February, 1920, and formally founded the Front Veterans Association on March 8, 1920. Its executive committee, which was installed in office on the same day, consisted of a number of men who later became prominent in the Heimwehr, the most noteworthy of whom was Emil Fey. 74

On April 30, 1920, the Front Veterans Association held its first plenary session. At this meeting its statutes were approved by those who were present. According to its charter, the Front Veterans Association was constituted as a mutual aid society, thereby hiding its true nature as a counterrevolutionary force. Its program was to unite non-Jewish ex-soldiers, cultivate

74 Scheiner, "Die Entstehung der Frontkämpfervereinigung," pp. 3-4.
the ideas of fatherland and comradeship, provide for the welfare of the indigent soldier, and work for the reconstruction of the German fatherland, leading to the union of the entire German people. These were its avowed intentions. Its secret program was to unite all bourgeois elements against the Red Jewish International. Its program, in short, was the same as that of the Heimwehr, except that the Front Veterans Association as a whole was not armed, and it was distinctly more anti-Semitic.

In terms of membership the Front Veterans Association was highly successful. By the end of 1920 it had attracted at least 50,000 members to its lists, thus making it the largest of the paramilitary formations in Austria. Although the bulk of its members came from Vienna, membership was by no means limited to the capital city. By the end of 1920 it had over 100 locally affiliated organizations in the provinces. Its members consisted of three


77 Ibid.

types: those who served at the front, those who were mobilized but did not serve in the front, and those who were not mobilized. Thus, anyone who was not a Jew could become a member. Each group carried out a specific function. The adherents of the first group were the only ones provided with arms—usually revolvers. Their function was to aid the police in time of trouble. The second group served as the "technische Nothilfe." It was called into action during strikes; its primary assignment was to keep communications open between the provinces. The members of the third group were used as liaison officers. Collectively, the members of the Front Veterans Association had nothing in common except anti-Semitism and anti-socialism. Politically, the association was neither Pan-German, nor Christian Social, nor monarchist, since it prohibited discussion of both the Anschluss and the restoration of the monarchy, and did not allow its members to become officially associated with any party.

79 The Front Veterans Association, in fact, made an urgent appeal to workers of a non-socialist persuasion to join its ranks. The appeal, which appeared in the first issue of the association's newspaper, went to great lengths to assure the working class that it was welcome. See Der Frontkämpfer, August, 1920, p. 4.

However, like the Heimwehr, the League of Front Veterans had its problems with factions. It was split into two parties: the Habsburg supporters, who were known as the "Orel" party, and the Pan-Germans. As was the case in the Vienna Heimwehr, dissension was fostered by General Krauss, of the National League, who publicly accused the association of being hostile to Anschluss but in favor of the restoration of the monarchy. Krauss requested the members of the Nationalverband to leave the Front Veterans Association or face the prospect of losing their place in his organization. Krauss' appeals were not too effective, however, since even the members of his own National League refused to drop their membership in the Front Veterans Association.

On July 25, 1920, apparently in an attempt to bring greater unity to the Austrian paramilitary organizations, particularly to the Vienna Heimwehr and Front Veterans Association, Georg Escherich called together a conference

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82 General Krauss and his National League were in close touch with General Erich Ludendorff. Krauss and about 1,200 of his officers supported the "intrigues" emanating from Ludendorff's quarters. See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, November 3, 1920, ibid., File 414/3, No. 10730.

of all Austrian Heimwehr formations and asked them to affirm their affiliation to Orgesch and its program. It was the avowed purpose of his organization, Escherich declared in his opening statement to the delegates assembled in Munich, to gather into a single organization all elements who "wish to take up the struggle against Bolshevism by upholding the constitution and by maintaining order in the state."  

The Heimwehr, as well as Orgesch, should welcome as members all those who accept this as their program, regardless of their particular political beliefs. He continued: "I greet most heartily the Austrian brothers within our organization, and I assure them of all assistance which they shall require."  

To allay the fears of those who suspected his intentions, Escherich emphatically renounced any desire to become "involved in Austria's domestic affairs." In particular, he denied the rumors which claimed that his organization was being used as a front to advance the causes of the secessionists who wished to create a Bavarian kingdom under the Wittelsbach dynasty. On the contrary, his organization believed resolutely in the unity of the

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84 *Neue Freie Presse*, August 1, 1920, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Orgesch," in the Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).


German people and was opposed to all currents which would threaten that unity.\textsuperscript{87}

The Heimwehr leaders present at Munich were satisfied with the assurances made to them by Escherich. On the initiative of Richard Steidle, the delegates issued a statement in which they agreed to subordinate the Heimwehr organizations in the individual provinces to Bavarian leadership.\textsuperscript{88} Specifically, they concurred in becoming incorporated into Orgka, and they agreed to recognize Kanzler as their superior commander.\textsuperscript{89}

It is ironic that exactly one month after Escherich had promised not to become involved in Austria's internal affairs, Kanzler, his aide, was in Budapest discussing with Hungarian governmental officials, among other things, the possibility of a forceful overthrow of the Social Democratic regime of Karl Renner.\textsuperscript{90} Kanzler, along with certain elements of the Austrian right,

\textsuperscript{87}\textit{Ibid.} See also \textit{Innsbrucker Volkszeitung}, August 3, 1920; and \textit{Arbeiter Zeitung}, July 17, 1920, in \textit{ibid.}

\textsuperscript{88}\textit{Neue Freie Presse}, August 1, 1920, in \textit{ibid.}

\textsuperscript{89}Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, January 11, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 716/3, No. C1168.

\textsuperscript{90}Kanzler actually had made previous trips to Budapest in June and July, 1920. However, the discussions which he held with Hungarian officials at that time did not concern Austria. See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, December 28, 1920, \textit{ibid.}, File 192/3, No. C192.
contemplated ways in which the Renner government might be ousted from power. In their deliberations the possibility of a coup d'état was not excluded.\textsuperscript{91}

The possibility of forceful action against the Renner government had, in fact, been discussed earlier between representatives of the Austrian right and the conservative group in control of the Hungarian government. In December, 1919, the governor of Styria, Anton Rintelen, and deputy governor, Jakob Ahrer, had been in Budapest to talk about the possibility of undertaking united action against the Austrian socialists. Although various possibilities of Hungarian intervention and aid were considered, nothing substantial came out of this meeting.\textsuperscript{92}

More significant contacts between Austrian and Hungarian reactionaries were made in January, 1920. That month a member of the Hungarian embassy in Vienna got in touch with the \textit{Wiener Kasino}, the legitimist society


\textsuperscript{92} Kerekes, "Die Weisse Allianz," p. 356. The English government apparently was aware of Rintelen's Hungarian contacts and was, in fact, worried about his true intentions as head of the Styrian Heimwehr. See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, November 17, 1920, Public Record Office (London), File 414/3, No. C11813; and Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, June 23, 1921, \textit{ibid.}, File 13714/3, No. C13714.
which served as a cover for the secret organization—the Association for Law and Order—and offered that organization considerable material assistance to enable it to put a right-wing government into power. In return for such assistance, the Hungarian government demanded the favorable solution of the problem of West Hungary—i.e., the cession of Burgenland to Hungary—once the desired change in government had been effected. After receiving such assurances from the Viennese organization, the Hungarian government provided the reactionary society with a subsidy of ten million Hungarian crowns, which it paid to Prince Johann Lichtenstein, a representative of the Association for Law and Order.  

In March, 1920, contacts between the Hungarians and Austrians reached a formal level. On March 13, 1920, Ignaz Seipel, leader of the Christian Social Party and a member of the Vienna Casino, continued the discussions about the prospects of joint action against the Renner government with the Hungarian embassy. Although he was not clear as to what should be done to bring about the collapse of the Renner government, Seipel indicated to his Hungarian friends that a strong paramilitary organization was needed in Austria to meet the threats of the socialists. To him

the Heimwehr was a perfect tool for this purpose. But money was needed to build it up into a formidable association. The Christian Social leader felt that fifty million Austrian crowns would be necessary to transform the Heimwehr into a strong fighting force. In return for such support, the Austrian leader promised quickly to solve the problem of West Hungary. Seipel's negotiations seemed to satisfy the Hungarians. In the subsequent months large Hungarian contributions came into the coffers of the Vienna Heimwehr organization under Field Marshall Josef Metzger.\textsuperscript{94}

In the summer of 1920 the Bavarian Right was drawn into the discussions between the conservatives of Austria and Hungary. In the negotiations which followed in the next several months three alternative plans of action against the Renner government emerged: a Bavarian, a Hungarian, and an Austrian plan. The Bavarian scheme was offered by Colonel Max Bauer\textsuperscript{95} in Budapest in the summer of 1920. It called for the union of Austria and

\textsuperscript{94}Kerekes, "Die Weisse Allianz," pp. 357-358.

\textsuperscript{95}Colonel Bauer was an envoy of General Ludendorff and did not necessarily present the views of either Kanzler or Escherich. Ludendorff claimed that he was not a supporter of either Escherich or the Bavarian government of Gustav von Kahr. The plan which Bauer offered, nevertheless, envisaged an important role for the Heimwehr (perhaps to the exclusion of Orgesch and Orgka). See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, November 3, 1920, Public Record Office (London), File 414/3, No. G10730.
Germany to provide a common border with Hungary. In
Vienna a group of well-armed and trustworthy men (the
Heimwehr) were to be established to facilitate a change
in the government. Hungary was to provide the money to
equip and train these forces. Initially, about fourteen
million Hungarian crowns would be necessary for this
purpose. The money should be offered not as an outright
gift but as a loan to be repaid gradually once an
acceptable government had been established. 96

The Hungarian plan envisioned a more violent course
of action. It called for no less than the overthrow of
the Vienna socialists by force if necessary. This coup
was to be organized by Orgka and carried out by Orgka's
affiliates in Austria, the Heimwehr. All Social Democratic
leaders were to be arrested; public buildings and trans-
portation buildings were to be occupied; and the Volkswehr
was to be disarmed. After the putsch was successful,
Hungarian troops were to march into Vienna to safeguard
the outcome. To guard against a Yugoslavian invasion,
the Heimwehr and Orgesch were quickly to station men
along the Carinthian and Styrian borders. If necessary,
Hungarian troops could be enlisted to aid the Heimwehr.
Also envisioned was the occupation of Czechoslovakia so
that a powerful counterrevolutionary bloc could be

established in Central Europe. Hungary was to undertake the major financial responsibility for the entire plan.  

The Austrians presented their plan at discussions held in Budapest on August 25-26 and in Munich on September 6-7. At the latter meeting the Austrian rightists offered a scheme which they believed was far more realistic than a coup that of defeating the socialists by ballot in the next elections. If the bourgeois parties could gain a majority in parliament, they could form a regime of their own which could then make provision for disarming the Volkswehr and other leftist guards. The army could then be reorganized and the Heimwehr strengthened to provide an adequate force to meet any subsequent socialist or communist threats.

Events led the Hungarians and the Bavarians to believe that the Austrian plan might be the right one. The Renner regime was forced to resign on June 10, 1920, over a quarrel involving a new defense law. On July 7 a coalition government was formed by Michael Mayr, thus setting the stage for the full-fledged takeover of the government by the bourgeois parties after the general elections of October 17, 1920, in which they elected

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97 Ibid., pp. 360-361.
98 Ibid., p. 361.
enough deputies to gain a majority in parliament. 99

Nevertheless, even though the elections of 1920 brought the bourgeois parties to power and although subsequent talks were held between right-wing circles in Austria, Bavaria, and Hungary, about the Marxist menace in Austria, the possibility for a cooperative venture against the leftists in Austria became remote. With the bourgeois parties in power, the Austrian Right no longer showed any desire to take part in any military action against the Austrian socialists. They had always been cool towards such a plan, and after October, 1920, forceful intervention was no longer necessary to oust them from power. The Hungarian reactionaries, however, still considered the socialists a grave enough danger to their interests to continue assisting the Austrian Right with a monthly subvention of two million crowns until the fall of 1921. 100

Although it is impossible to determine exactly how much was received by Austrian paramilitary organizations from Bavarian and Hungarian sources, evidence indicates

99 Ibid., p. 363.

100 Ibid.; Kerekes, "Italien, Ungarn und die Österreichische Heimwehrbewegung," p. 3. One of the reasons why the Hungarians discontinued their aid to the Austrian Right after 1921 seems to have been the awarding of Burgenland to Austria. See Walter Goldinger, Geschichte der Republik Österreich (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1962), p. 64.
that it was considerable. It now appears that the conservatives in Bavaria and Hungary took the strong socialist party in Austria very seriously and were willing to go to great lengths to undermine the socialist base of power. For a time they even contemplated using force to achieve their aims. However, when forceful action against the Austrian leftists proved inexpedient, it was decided to continue arming the Austrian Heimwehr formations in the hope of transforming them into powerful anti-socialist counter forces to the socialist workers' guards. Such a policy necessitated a considerable expenditure of effort on the part of foreign conservatives.

Until 1921 Hungary was the Heimwehr's primary financial backer and Bavaria was its major source of arms. In the official history of the Heimwehr movement published by the Heimwehr in 1934, it is stated that "during the first year of its existence the Tyrolese Heimwehr was entirely dependent on support from Bavaria."\textsuperscript{101} In the correspondence between the English ambassador in Austria and the British Foreign Office numerous references appear about the illegal smuggling of arms from Bavaria into the Tyrol and other provinces.\textsuperscript{102} Also of great interest is

\textsuperscript{101}Heimatschutz in Österreich, p. 239.

\textsuperscript{102}For just a few of these references, see Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, June 25, 1920, Public Record Office (London), File 414/3, No. C414; Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, November 3, 1920, \textit{ibid.}, File 414/3, No. C10730; Lindley to Curzon,
an article appearing in the *Arbeiter Zeitung* on July 17, 1920, in which the money and weapons flowing into the Tyrol were mentioned. The author stated:

The weapons which have been handed out to the Tyrolese Heimwehr under the leadership of Dr. Richard Steidle were donated by the leadership of the Bavarian Einwohnerwehren. The leaders of the Bavarian civilian guards acquired these weapons from a well-known Bavarian firm. The money to buy these arms was received from reactionary monarchist elements in Bavaria. The 80,000 marks which recently was delivered to Dr. Steidle was also monarchist money.\(^{103}\)

Although it is not known from what source the author of the article derived his information, the allegation seems credible insofar as the German consul in Innsbruck contended that the Tyrolese Heimwehr was receiving 14,000 marks a month for some time in 1920-1921.\(^{104}\)

Additional evidence is at hand to confirm the role of Bavarian rightists as the Heimwehr's patron. Both Julius Deutsch and Otto Bauer, the leader of the Social Democratic Party, refer to the smuggling of arms

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\(^{103}\) *Arbeiter Zeitung*, July 17, 1920, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Orgesch," in the Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).

from Bavaria into Austria in a number of their books. Deutsch was particularly vocal in his accusations that the Heimwehr was receiving arms from foreign conservatives. His concern centered around the fact that the Heimwehr was establishing a network of arsenals in various cloisters, castles, and private homes throughout Austria. He feared that these weapons were no longer intended to be used for purposes of self-defense but rather for a future offensive against the Austrian workers.

Others were also able to attest to the traffic of arms from Bavaria into Austria. An Englishman who was in the Tyrol after the war gives the following account:

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106 It is interesting that Deutsch, who was the Heimwehr’s most vociferous opponent, was also the most ardent supporter of the Arbeiterwehr. It is known, for example, that after the war he supplied the workers’ guards of Vienna with over 30,000 rifles from the army’s arsenal in Vienna. See War Office Memo to Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, January 28, 1921, Public Record Office (London), File 194/3, No. C2080. Another report by the English ambassador states that Deutsch had handed out 45,000 rifles to Vienna workers. See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, December 2, 1920, ibid., File 351/3, No. C13025.

"The black Reichswehr and the Orgesch sent carloads of rifles and machine guns to the Tyrol. . . . I saw in those early postwar years huge motorlorries filled with rifles and ammunition going from Bavaria to Reutte and other places in the Tyrol."  

Prince Starhemberg, in his unpublished memoirs written in France during the winter of 1938-1939, states that he himself was responsible for smuggling at least 4,000 rifles and a high number of machine guns from Bavaria into the Tyrol in 1920-1921.  

Although Hungary and Bavaria were probably the Heimwehr's chief material backers in the early postwar years, support from domestic sources was not inconsiderable. Particularly instrumental in helping to build up the Heimwehr in the early years of its existence were several provincial officials. In almost all the provinces they worked hand in hand with local Heimwehr units and provided them with much-needed funds.

The collaboration between the Heimwehr and provincial officials can be traced in some detail from the available sources.

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109 Lebenserinnerungen des Fürsten Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg. Typescript in the archives of the Institute for Contemporary History, University of Vienna, p. 3.
evidence. For example, on March 5, 1921, Dr. Jakob Ahrer, the lieutenant governor of Styria, acting as go-between for the Heimwehr, held a conference with Austria's leading bankers, industrialists, and landholders and requested each group to offer a proportionate amount of financial support for the Styrian Heimwehr. The meeting was a success. Ahrer was able to persuade them to make an initial donation of five million crowns. The bankers and industrialists were to supply two million crowns each, and the landowners one million. Furthermore, they agreed to provide subsidies of a similar nature in subsequent years if Austria's economic and political conditions remained stable.\footnote{See Arbeiter Zeitung, March 24, 1921; Arbeiterwille, June 17, 1921, both of which are in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Steiermark," in the Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna); Deutsch, Die Faschistengefahr, pp. 14-15.} Whether or not that promise was kept cannot be ascertained. It appears that Austrian industrialists were able to make a substantial contribution in the immediate years that followed,\footnote{Charles Gulick alleges that the Austrian industries in 1922 provided the Heimwehr with a subvention amounting to one per cent of the wages paid out to their employees, and maintains that such contributions probably continued in ensuing years. See his Austria from Habsburg to Hitler (2 vols., Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1948), Vol. I, p. 131. The Arbeiterwille, on the other hand, contends that the annual contributions amounted to two percent of the wages of the employees in Austrian industry. See Arbeiterwille, November 26, 1927, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Finanzierung," in the Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).} but that
the bankers and landowners did not again offer significant aid until after July, 1927.

Instances of more direct collaboration between the Heimwehr and provincial governments also exist. In Upper Austria weapons were procured with the aid of lieutenant governor Franz Langoth. He helped obtain and distribute these weapons among the various Heimwehr groups in his province. In Carinthia, the Heimwehr had an especially close association with the provincial government in the early postwar years. On account of the Yugoslav occupation of parts of southern Carinthia until October, 1920, the officials of that province not only recognized the Heimwehr bands but did everything in their power to arm and maintain them. Nor did the close connections between the Carinthian government and the Heimwehr deteriorate in the ensuing years. Vinzenz Schumy, governor of the province after 1923, recounts that he was many times in the position of being able to come to the Heimwehr's aid—often providing it with funds from a secret police account. In a speech to the provincial

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diet on September 7, 1920, Dr. Otto Ender, governor of Vorarlberg in the early 1920's, publicly defended the Heimwehr's right to receive weapons from Bavaria. No man did more for the Heimwehr in its early days than Dr. Anton Rintelen, the governor of Styria. Rintelen was especially effective in obtaining weapons. In his memoirs he estimated that he delivered about 17,000 rifles with ammunition, 286 machine guns, twelve cannon, and approximately 1,000 pistols to the various Heimwehr organizations in his province. In addition to these weapons, he was even able to provide the Heimwehr with several small airplanes left over from the war. If the weapons were originally distributed for purposes of self-defense, very few of the provincial officials insisted upon the return of these weapons once the anti-socialist tendencies of the Heimwehr formations became apparent. Self-defense could mean defense against the internal "communist" enemy as well as against a foreign foe, and it was construed as such by many elements in postwar Austria.

114 Kanzler, Bayerns Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus, pp. 92-93.

115 Rintelen, Erinnerungen an Oesterreichs Weg, pp. 129-132.
Another way in which arms were procured for the Heimwehr in the various provinces was through out-and-out theft. Prince Starhemberg, later to become an important figure in the Heimwehr movement, described several instances of theft in which he himself took part in the Tyrol in the winter of 1920-1921. The young prince was commissioned by Waldermar Pabst, subsequently the mastermind of the entire Austrian Heimwehr movement, to supervise a number of thefts from nearby arsenals of the Volkswehr. It was known that the artillery pieces contained in these governmental depots were shortly to be transferred to the Italians as surplus arms. If they were to be secured for the Heimwehr, quick action had to be taken. Starhemberg and his helpers, an innkeeper and a locksmith, carried out the raid with precision. The guards of the storehouse were easily overcome after they had been served generous portions of wine. Once they were out of the way the path was clear. In all, twenty-one Skoda mountain howitzers were stolen. Nineteen of these guns were dragged into the nearby mountains, and two of them were conveyed to Innsbruck.\footnote{Ernst Rüdiger Prince Starhemberg, Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rüdiger Prince Starhemberg (New York: Harper Brothers, 1942), pp. 7-11; Ernst Epler, Akt Starhemberg (Vienna: Verlag der Kommunistischen Partei Österreichs, 1955), p. 6. For other examples of thefts by the Heimwehr, see Giftgas Über Österreich (Vienna: Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1932), pp. 2-4.}
Starhemberg recounts another somewhat more daring assignment, in which he and several of his colleagues dressed themselves in the uniforms of the Volkswehr and stole a huge quantity of ammunition and shells from a depot in Innsbruck. In still another operation, the prince relates an incident in which his men stole a membership list of the Socialist Arbeiterwehr in Innsbruck which also listed the weapons it had at its disposal. From this information Heimwehr men were able to make a number of subsequent thefts from the socialist warehouses housing the arms of their opponents.117

After 1921 the intensive arming of the Heimwehr tapered off significantly. This was due largely to the fact that its two major contributors, Hungary and Bavaria, discontinued their support of the Austrian paramilitary organizations in that year--Hungary because of the mutual animosities created by the Burgenland dispute, and Bavaria because of the declining fortunes of both Escherich and Kanzler and the latter's differences with some of the Austrian armed formations.

In June, 1921, the Bavarian civilian guards, including Orgka and Orgesch, were disbanded. As a result,

117 Starhemberg, Between Hitler and Mussolini, pp. 11-12; Lebenserinnerungen des Fürsten Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, pp. 36-37.
both Escherich and Kanzler lost their base of power. Kanzler was also implicated in the Carlist restoration attempt in Easter, 1921, thereby arousing the suspicions of nationalistic and non-monarchist elements in Austria and Bavaria. His frequent trips to Budapest were used by his enemies in Bavaria to incite the mistrust of the Austrians. Kanzler was therefore forced to resign as head of the Orgka and Heimwehr. On August 19, 1921, he sent letters of resignation to the provincial leaders in Austria. The Austrian who was chosen as his successor as chief of the Heimwehr was unable to keep the organization united. This allowed the strong provincial character of the Heimwehr organizations to assert itself and made it almost impossible for any type of centralized organization to be created subsequently.

As we have seen, between 1918 and 1921, the Heimwehr developed from its humble beginnings as voluntary vigilante

118 Generally speaking, the Heimwehr formations in the provinces were not in the least interested in the intrigues of the monarchists. The peasants, who were the primary backers of the Heimwehr in terms of membership, were much more concerned about the intentions of the socialists. They were not monarchists. See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, November 3, 1920, Public Record Office (London), File 414/3, No. C10730. Johann Schober, president of the Vienna police, was also of the opinion that the peasants were not inclined to support any restoration attempts. See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, November 17, 1920, ibid., File 414/3, No. C11813.

bands into strong, well-financed provincial organizations. After the communist revolutions in Bavaria and Hungary, the voluntary bands slowly changed into anti-socialist forces. This transformation could hardly have come about without the help and leadership of reactionaries and counterrevolutionaries in Austria, Hungary, and Bavaria.

By 1921 the Heimwehr was entirely in the hands of conservatives. Because of the conservative nature of the provincial governments, it usually enjoyed the full support of those governments. This widespread patronization in the early postwar years allowed the organizations to develop under very favorable circumstances.

However, after 1921 the Heimwehr movements experienced a sharp decline. As the material support from Bavaria and Hungary came to an end membership fell off and interest in the various Heimwehr organizations all but disappeared. Also, bickering within some of the provincial formations caused many to lose faith in their organization. The Heimwehr movement went into abeyance until late 1926.
CHAPTER TWO:

THE YEARS OF RELATIVE STABILITY

1922-1927

For the First Austrian Republic the years 1922-1927 represented a time of moderate stability. The confusion and chaos which had existed in the immediate postwar years had now generally subsided. The threat of a communist revolution had all but disappeared. Conditions along Austria's borders with Yugoslavia had become normalized. No longer was there a fear of widespread famine and starvation. Indeed, with the stabilization of the Austrian currency after 1922, Austria enjoyed a modicum of economic prosperity and political stability.

The beneficial turn of events for the country as a whole worked to the detriment of the Heimwehr organizations in the provinces. The appearance of more peaceful times created attitudes of complacency among members of the various provincial groups, resulting in a significant drop in membership.¹ As the need for an anti-

¹The Heimwehr's membership may have dropped to as low as 18,000 by 1927 from an earlier high of about 100,000. See Die Österreichischen Putschisten, p. 29.
socialist paramilitary force was felt less and less, concern for the Heimwehr dropped proportionately. The waning interest in the Heimwehr by conservative elements in Austria, coupled with the loss of Hungarian and Bavarian material support after 1921, placed the Heimwehr in serious financial and moral straits. In both Vienna and Styria the Heimwehr split into quarreling factions, and it was not until 1927 that some semblance of unity was reached in those two provinces. In the Burgenland, by the mutual agreement of the socialists and the bourgeois bloc, no Heimwehr association was created. In the other provinces the Heimwehr did well to hold its ground.

Vinzenz Schumy believed that the only thing which kept the Heimwehr from disintegrating between 1922 and 1927 was the frequent clashes between the Heimwehr and the socialist armed detachments. ² These incidents were

²See his Ungedruckte Aufzeichnungen, p. 5. The frequent encounters between the socialist and anti-socialist armed formations in these years were a cause of deep concern for the Inter-Allied Military Commission of Control. Although the Commission made frequent representations to the Austrian government about the existence of these armed guards (which was contrary to Article 128 of the Treaty of St. Germain), the central authorities were either unwilling or unable to enforce the treaty. In August, 1922, the Commission provisionally suspended all meetings of armed formations in the Tyrol on account of the open military maneuvers the Heimwehr had carried out earlier that month. Although pressure was brought to bear on the federal government, it could do nothing to curtail subsequent activities of a military nature by the Tyrolese armed guards because they had the full support of the provincial government. See Hardinge to Curzon, Paris,
usually minor skirmishes between roughnecks from both camps, but occasionally they became encounters of major significance.

This was especially the case with the clash in November, 1922, in Waltersdorf, a small village near Judenburg in Upper Styria, when members of the local Arbeiterwehr began a search for Heimwehr weapons in nearby farms. Although very few weapons were found, the peasants of the surrounding area became highly agitated by these unwarranted searches and contemplated taking legal action. Walther Pfrimer, the leader of about 10,000 Heimwehr troops, in which many farmers were represented, became the spokesman for the peasants. He indicated to the governor of the province, Anton Rintelen, that if something were not done soon about the illegal searches he could not be held responsible for the actions of some of his men. Rintelen promised that he would send representatives of the gendarmerie to arrest those who were accused. Pfrimer offered the assistance of his men as an auxiliary force in case the gendarmes encountered difficulties.

Upon hearing of the arrest of some of their colleagues, the workers in Judenburg immediately went on strike. About

3,000 of their number went to Graz, where the prisoners had been taken to stand trial, to protest the judicial proceedings against their cohorts. As the situation seemed to be getting more and more out of hand, the inspector of the gendarmes requested the assistance of some of Pfrimer's Heimwehr men. Pfrimer was more than happy to comply with the request. He mobilized about 6,000 of his men and placed them at the inspector's disposal. The combined Heimwehr and gendarme troops formed a formidable threat to the workers, who now realized that armed resistance would be useless and would lead only to bloodshed. They reluctantly consented to the demands of the provincial government by returning to their homes and places of employment. The Heimwehr seemingly emerged triumphant.\(^3\)

To Pfrimer, the incident was a boon. It put not only himself but also his men in the limelight. He had been able to test the effectiveness of his men to ascertain whether or not they would obey his orders and how well they would carry them out. The episode proved that Pfrimer's men were a force to be reckoned with and that in Upper Styria at least the socialists now had a worthy

\(^3\)Osterrichisches Heimatschutz-Jahrbuch (Graz: Verlag des Heimatschutzverbandes Steiermark, 1933), pp. 58-59.
opponent. Rintelen was pleased with the outcome of the clash and the way Pfrimer had handled the situation. As he wrote, "Finally a man has appeared who has found the courage to break the red terror by force of arms. You have done the public a very great favor." ⁴

The entire affair contributed significantly to Pfrimer's rise to power in the Styrian Heimwehr. By 1923 he had attained effective leadership of all of the Heimwehr factions in Styria, ⁵ although he was not formally elected to that superior position until December, 1927. ⁶ Between 1923 and 1927 Pfrimer consolidated his control over the Styrian Heimwehren so that by 1927 the entire Styrian movement had become inculcated with a strident nationalism. It displayed the swastika in its banner ⁷ and was pro-Anschluss, anti-Semitic, and anti-democratic.

Pfrimer's background did not portend his subsequent role as the head of a large paramilitary organization. He was born in Marburg on December 22, 1881, and as a student he came under the influence of Georg Ritter von Schönerer,

⁴ Rintelen, Erinnerungen an Österreichs Weg, pp. 135-136. Also quoted in Hofmann, Der Pfrimer Putsch, p. 9.
⁵ Hawlik, "Steirischer Heimatschutz," p. 16.
⁶ Österreichisches Heimatschutz-Jahrbuch, p. 63.
⁷ Langoth, Kampf um Österreich, p. 81.
from whom he adopted his radical ideas. He studied law at the University of Graz, where he received his degree in 1906. He served in the provincial government for a number of years. Later he opened his own law practice in Upper Styria. When the war broke out, his bad health limited his military experience to several months of service in the year 1917. In the latter part of the same year Pfrimer became president of a newly formed German People's Council (Deutscher Volksrat) in Upper Styria, which included representatives of all the bourgeois parties. His activities in the German People's Council involved him in the security matters of the province and brought him into contact with the many self-defense units in Styria. His duties in the German People's Council allowed him to assume the leadership on one of the Heimwehr groups in Upper Styria, which he shortly molded into a well trained, disciplined force, free from the influence of political parties.

The establishment of the First Republic of Austria in November, 1918, came as a deep shock to Pfrimer--a man who was naturally inclined towards authoritarian ways. He was

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8 Reichspost, September 14, 1931, p. 1. Schumy characterized him as an "old Burschenschafter, a nationalist in the truest meaning of that word." Ungedruckte Aufzeichnungen, p. 106.
deeply distrustful of the party system and fought stubbornly in the early years of the Heimwehr's development to keep it free from all party control. His insistence on maintaining the Heimwehr's independence from the parties involved him in many controversies with his associates and resulted in a deep rupture between his own association and the organization controlled by the Christian Social Party. Although Pfrimer gradually gained ascendancy over both groups, the differences between the two organizations were not fully resolved until their formal merger in December, 1927.  

The actual split between the two groups had occurred in April, 1921, at which time all of the local groups who did not want to be dominated by the party agreed to band together to form a common organization called the Selbstschutzverband Steiermark (Self Defense League of Styria). Initially the League was headed by Dr. Hertle. Hans Rauter, previously leader of the Styrian Studentenwehr (Student Defense), became military chief of staff. In the autumn of 1923 Pfrimer replaced Hertle as leader, and on January 1, 1924, he changed the name of the organization to the Heimatschutzverband Steiermark.

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9 Hofmann, Der Pfrimer Putsch, p. 9; Reichspost, September 14, 1931, p. 1; Edmondson, "The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics," pp. 36-37.
(Home Defense League of Styria). By 1927 his organization had become the predominant one in Styria. The incorporation into it of the Christian Social faction in December brought additional strength; with that merger the Styrian Heimwehr became one of the more formidable provincial paramilitary forces in Austria. 10

The problems which plagued the Styrian Heimwehr did not exist in the other provinces. The two provinces in which the Heimwehr remained the most active and alive between 1922 and 1927 were Carinthia and the Tyrol, particularly the latter.

As a whole, the Tyrolese Heimwehr was better armed and trained than the associations in the other provinces, and it was fortunate in the exceptional support it received from the provincial government. Without doubt, it also had the most capable leadership in Richard Steidle, the later national leader, and in Waldemar Pabst, a German émigré, who was considered one of the most important figures in the Austrian Heimwehr movement. 11


Pabst was born in Berlin on December 24, 1880. Commissioned as an officer in the German army in 1899, he served on the German general staff in World War I. After the war he played a crucial role in putting down the Spartacist revolt in January, 1919, where he gained the dubious distinction of being the chief-of-staff of the division which arrested Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. In March, 1920, he took part in the abortive Kapp putsch, and when a warrant was issued for his arrest he was forced to flee the country. Exactly where he went immediately after the putsch is not known, but in the winter of 1920 he appeared in the Tyrol under the pseudonym of Walter Peters.\(^\text{12}\)

Pabst very early recognized how the Heimwehr might be useful as an anti-socialist force and, although he was not appointed as Steidle's chief-of-staff before May 1, 1922, he was already the mastermind of the Tyrolean Heimwehr in early 1921.\(^\text{13}\) Between 1921 and 1927 he worked diligently behind the scenes to make the Tyrolese Heimwehr the best armed and best trained in all Austria.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{12}\)Die österreichischen Putschisten, pp. 22-24. See also Volkszeitung, January 5, 1924; and Die Stunde, January 26, 1924, both of which are in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Deutsche Beziehungen," in Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).

\(^{13}\)Österreichisches Heimatschutz-Jahrbuch, p. 32.

\(^{14}\)For a brief article on Pabst, see "Waldemar Pabst," in Der Spiegel, Vol. XVI (April 18, 1962), p. 39. Also of
Besides being a brilliant organizer, Pabst was also able to promote the interests of the Heimwehr through his connections with conservative and reactionary forces in Germany. Just how many contacts he had in Germany can not be determined, but it is known that one of his more important ones was with Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann. For a while at least, Pabst received a yearly stipend of 12,000 German marks from the German foreign ministry—apparently as one of Stresemann's intelligence agents who reported regularly to him on Austrian and Tyrolean affairs.\footnote{Annelise Thimme, \textit{Gustav Stresemann} (Hannover: Norddeutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1957), p. 101. See also \textit{Der Abend}, October 26, 1929, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Finanzierung," in the Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna); and Hans W. Gatzke, \textit{Stresemann and the Rearmament of Germany} (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1969), pp. 51-53.} He apparently also had connections with the German Reichswehr and an organization called the \textit{Bund Oberland}, from which the Heimwehr procured many arms. He even seems to have enjoyed the support of the wealthy nationalistic publisher Alfred Hugenberg. He was also among the first persons, and probably even the first, to establish contacts with the Italian fascists.\footnote{\textit{Die Österreichischen Putschisten}, pp. 22-23.}
From the earliest days of the Heimwehr's history, Pabst, both a convinced anti-socialist and a confirmed anti-democrat, believed that the Heimwehr would eventually come to power in Austria. He also felt that Anschluss with Germany was inevitable, but he believed that Austria had to be transformed into a healthy German state, i.e., that the Social Democrats had to be liquidated before this could be accomplished. To play its part in achieving these goals, the Heimwehr had to be organized into a powerful and popular fighting force. In order to do so, he thought that it was necessary (1) to achieve the complete military centralization of the movement under Steidle's leadership; (2) to place Heimwehr men into the army, gendarmerie, and police so that these agencies could not function at the time of a putsch; and (3) to strengthen Heimwehr organizations in areas designated as "red" territory, especially in the larger cities.\textsuperscript{17} In such a way, Pabst believed that Austria would eventually become a Heimwehr-dominated state.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 22-24. The Heimwehr's aims were also revealed by Steidle in a speech on December 11, 1924. See \textit{Tiroler Heimatwehr-Blätter}, December 21, 1924, p. 3. According to Steidle the Heimwehr had five goals: (1) to work towards the elimination of party differences; (2) to work for the welfare of each individual in the community; (3) to free the German worker from international communism; (4) to win the youth over to the Heimwehr; and (5) to establish a high state of military preparedness in the Heimwehr by inculcating its members with a military mentality.
Pabst's control of the Tyrolean Heimwehr did not always meet with the approval of all who were active in its ranks. Early in 1924 a movement was underway among some of the organization's local leaders to force his resignation. Pabst's Prussian background and his involvement in the German Kapp putsch of March, 1920, caused him to be mistrusted among many members of the Heimwehr. His heavy-handed methods as chief-of-staff of the Tyrolean Heimwehr had aroused additional resentment and outright hatred among a few. In January, 1924, a list of accusations\(^{18}\) was drawn up against him and circulated among Heimwehr adherents. These charges against the Heimwehr leader not only called into question his background and past but also accused him of using the Heimwehr as an instrument to further his personal and political interests by involving it in the schemes of German reactionaries.\(^{19}\)

\(^{18}\) The accusations against Pabst were printed in the *Innsbrucker Volkszeitung*, January 5, 1924. See the folder entitled "Heimwehr-Deutsche Beziehungen," Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).

\(^{19}\) For example, the socialist newspaper *Die Stunde* accused Pabst of attempting to involve the Tyrolean Heimwehr in Hitler's "beer hall" putsch of November 8, 1923. According to the paper, Pabst had appeared in Munich several days before the attempted coup d'\'état to be briefed by General Ludendorff about the upcoming revolt. They apparently also discussed the possibility of using the Tyrolean Heimwehr in some kind of role in the planned putsch, although nothing definite seems to have been decided upon. See *Die Stunde*, January 26, 1924,
The resignation of Pabst, demanded by some of the local leaders, did not follow, due to the fact that it received little support from the rank and file. Steidle, too, stood firmly by his right-hand man and refused to give in to the pressure of a few of his subordinates. Steidle realized perhaps better than anyone else how valuable Pabst's organizational talents were for the Heimwehr. Although Steidle was subsequently strongly criticized by some of his men for the unequivocal support he gave his chief-of-staff, both he and Pabst remained the guiding spirits of the Tyrolese and the Austrian

in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Deutsche Beziehungen," in the Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna). On the alleged involvement of the Heimwehr in the Hitler putsch, see also Epler, Akt Starhemberg, p. 9; and Reichspost, January 31, 1924, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Nationalsozialisten," in the Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna). The Reichspost reported an interview with Richard Steidle in which he emphatically denied any part in the Hitler putsch. He admitted that he and one of his aides (Pabst?) went to Munich on a fact-finding mission a few days before the putsch, but he maintained that their mission had nothing to do with the November 8 coup. Steidle, however, admitted that the Tyrolese Heimwehr had been put on an alert on the evening of November 9, but he maintained this was done only to prevent the uprising from spreading into the Tyrol.

The feeble attempt to force the resignation of Pabst and the subsequent criticism of Steidle may have been a part of a scheme which was designed to remove both men from the Heimwehr leadership in the Tyrol. See the Innsbrucker Volkszeitung, January 5, 1924, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Deutsche Beziehungen," in the Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).
Heimwehr movement for the next six years.  

If Pabst was the Heimwehr organizer working behind the scenes, Richard Steidle was the man who worked actively and openly to promote the organization. Steidle was born in Meran, South Tyrol, on September 20, 1881. His political life began shortly after the war. Between 1919 and 1934 he served in the Tyrolean diet as a representative of the provincial Bauernbund (Peasant League). Since the Peasant League had close ties with the Christian Social Party, he also had connections with some important members of that organization. Between 1925 and 1931 he also served in the upper chamber of the federal parliament, the Bundesrat.

Steidle had a great gift for speech. On the podium he was a commanding figure and often overpowered those who heard his rhetoric. As a politician, however, he was much less effective. Nevertheless, he enjoyed great popularity, both among his men and the populace in general;

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21 In 1930 Pabst was expelled from the country.
23 One of the people whom he influenced was Prince Starhemberg. In his unpublished memoirs, Starhemberg states that when he heard Steidle speak in the early 1920's he was greatly impressed by his oratory, and he expressed a wish that he would one day become as accomplished a speaker as Steidle. See his Lebenserinnerungen, pp. 34-35.
and, with Pabst working behind the scenes, he was able to make the Tyrolese Heimwehr one of the more important of all the provincial organizations.  

In 1924 the Tyrolese Heimwehr became the first provincial organization to print a newspaper. The first issue of this paper, the Tiroler Heimatwehr-Blätter, appeared on October 7. Subsequently it came out every two weeks. The paper, although claiming to be above party politics, from the beginning assumed a stridently anti-socialist stance. In January, 1926, the name of the paper was changed to Alpenländische Heimatwehr. The change in name reflected the expanding role that the paper was assuming. It now became a mouthpiece for the Heimwehr in all the Alpine provinces, including Carinthia, Vorarlberg, and Salzburg, as well as the Tyrol.

The Carinthian Heimwehr, like its Tyrolean counterpart, engaged in considerable activity during these relatively stable years. It was especially a time for

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25 Tiroler Heimatwehr-Blätter, October 7, 1924.
26 Alpenländische Heimatwehr, January 26, 1926.
27 Tiroler Heimatwehr-Blätter, November, 1925, p. 2. The change in name was announced in the last issue of the Tiroler Heimatwehr-Blätter.
parades, demonstrations, and military maneuvers. There was also great competition between the Heimwehr and the socialists, particularly in their attempts to break up each other's meetings. Two events which aroused a great deal of attention during these years were Ludendorff's visit to Carinthia in February, 1923, and a flag dedication and parade in Klagenfurt in September of the same year. Ludendorff came to Carinthia to lend his presence to a Heimwehr parade\textsuperscript{28} and to help mend differences among the various Heimwehr leaders.\textsuperscript{29}

Although Ludendorff's visit was of no real consequence, the demonstration at Klagenfurt on September 22-23 was an important occasion for the Heimwehr. It was one of the first times when detachments from nearly every province were represented in a mass demonstration. Almost 15,000 Heimwehr men took part in the festivities, and both Pfrimer and Steidle were present to lead their contingents. The attendance of Austrian Church dignitaries at the parade gave added significance to the occasion. By giving its official blessings to the proceedings, the Austrian Catholic Church showed that it strongly supported the anti-socialist paramilitary

\textsuperscript{28}\textit{Heimatschutz in Österreich}, p. 162.

\textsuperscript{29}\textit{Die Österreichischen Putschisten}, p. 24.
associations. It was an early indication of the close ties that were subsequently to develop between the Church and the Heimwehr. The Church's sanction of the Heimwehr gave it a measure of respectability and greater popularity and made it possible for it to gain a much larger following among the Catholic populace than it could otherwise have attained. The presence of Catholic prelates, together with the attendance of Heimwehr units from throughout Austria, made the September, 1923, demonstration truly a noteworthy achievement.\(^{30}\)

The intimacy between the Heimwehr and the Austrian Catholic Church was particularly important because the bulk of the Heimwehr's membership came from the peasantry—a class deeply dependent on the church for moral direction. Even though the peasants probably had less to fear from the socialists than other social groups, they were the most prone to be influenced by anti-socialist propaganda and the least able to distinguish between socialism and communism. It was not only their conservative nature but also their deeply religious convictions which made them look upon the socialists as a

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dreaded enemy. No doubt, the Church's preaching against the irreligious Social Democrats did much to confirm the peasants in their hatred of the socialists. Moreover, the peasants were all too ready to believe the rumors spread by Heimwehr propagandists that the socialists wanted to set on fire the farms of the Austrian peasantry. 31

Other elements which made up the Heimwehr membership were ex-soldiers, 32 disillusioned and frustrated youths, reserve officers who missed the excitement of war and used the Heimwehr as an outlet for their talents, and professional officers and aristocrats. It was especially the latter two classes who formed the core of the Heimwehr leadership and kept the Heimwehr from falling apart between 1922 and 1927. 33 In short, the Heimwehr's membership included elements of all of the conservative classes whose common platform was a fear of communism. As Wandruszka explains, the Heimwehr was an all-inclusive movement which could count among its followers all of the non-Marxist elements: "Christian Socials, Pan-


33 Die Österreichischen Putschisten, pp. 1-3.
Germans, the Landbund (Agrarian League), monarchists, pro- and anti-Anschluss followers, radical anti-Semites and cosmopolitan Jews, exponents of industry and labor, and numerous leagues who joined the movement with their own traditions—veteran organizations, the Bund Oberland, German gymnastic clubs, the student freecorps movement, the Christian Social Farmer's League, and workers' organizations.\(^{34}\) In other words, belonging to the Heimwehr were all elements which were anti-Marxist and which believed in and approved of the slogan "to battle against Marxism and to believe in the fatherland and folk."\(^{35}\)

At the onset, the ordinary Heimwehr member regarded the Heimwehr primarily as a defensive organization. That it served as a bulwark against communism was something they could all agree on. This defensive mentality was retained by most Heimwehr members throughout the twenties. However, by the end of 1926 a more aggressive attitude can be detected among the Heimwehr's leadership, who began to think in terms of achieving some type of military or

\(^{34}\) Wandruszka, "Österreichs politische Struktur," pp. 362-363.

political ascendancy over their enemies, the socialists, perhaps by taking forceful action against them. They felt that the Heimwehr should no longer be simply a bulwark against change; it should become a vehicle for change—an instrument to realize the aspirations of the Heimwehr's leaders: an authoritarian government run by Heimwehr men. 36

It was perhaps no coincidence that the Heimwehr assumed a more militant stance about the same time the socialist camp displayed an increased aggressiveness. Since a "tougher" attitude was first noticeable in socialist circles, one is led to believe that the militant line adopted by the Heimwehr in 1926 was but a response to the "tough" attitude displayed earlier by the socialists.

In the summers of 1925-1926 the socialist party guard, the Schutzbund, held a number of large demonstrations 37 in Vienna. These demonstrations, attended by

36 Although it is common to point to July 15, 1927, as the date when the Heimwehr experienced a kind of "rebirth," there are some students of the Heimwehr who claim that the Heimwehr witnessed a considerable increase in activity in 1926. For this point of view, see especially Edmondson, "The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics;" and Franz Schweiger, "Geschichte der niederösterreichischen Heimwehr von 1928 bis 1930, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des sogenannten Korneuburger Eides (Mai 18, 1930)" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Vienna, 1965).

37 One such demonstration on July 11, 1926, was attended by about 100,000 Schutzbund forces. See Lord
socialist paramilitary forces from Germany,\textsuperscript{38} were of such an obviously military character—arms were openly displayed and military maneuvers were carried out for all to see—that the Inter-Allied Liquidation Committee made immediate representations to the Austrian government. The Committee claimed that the demonstrations were in violation of Article 128 of the Treaty of St. Germain, which specifically prohibited such military exercises by associations of any type, and demanded quick and effective action by the Austrian government to put an end to such activities. However, the protest by the Liquidation Committee was made largely in vain since the central authorities could do little to stop such demonstrations without the support of the provincial governments. The overall effect of these large military gatherings, therefore, was to arouse the fears of the non-socialist population and to provoke aggressive actions from the opposing camp.\textsuperscript{39}

The trend toward greater aggressiveness, noticeable within the socialist camp in the summers of 1925–1926,

\textsuperscript{38}Notably the German \textit{Reichsbanner}.

was given formal expression at the Social Democratic Party Congress at Linz in early November, 1926. At this meeting, Otto Bauer, the party chairman, pledged that his party would use force, if necessary, "to conquer the power of the state in a civil war . . . and break the resistance of the bourgeoisie by the instrument of dictatorship."\(^{40}\) Prior to making this statement, Bauer had promised that his party would work within the framework of democracy if the bourgeois parties did the same. However, if the socialists ever attained a majority in parliament, they would not hesitate to use force to perpetuate their rule and the existence of the republic. Taken out of context, Bauer's comments could be construed to mean that the socialists advocated the use of force to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat.\(^{41}\)

The recent actions within socialist circles evoked a militant response from the Heimwehr. Steidle, in an article in the November issue of the *Alpenländische Heimatwehr*, echoed the hard line the Heimwehr now assumed. In it, the Heimwehr leader attacked both the socialists and the bourgeois parties. It was clear to him that the


\(^{41}\)Deutsch especially was worried about how easy it was to misinterpret Bauer's remarks. See Deutsch, *Ein weiter Weg*, pp. 163-164.
socialists would not hesitate to use force to come to power. This was the overriding advantage that the socialists had over the bourgeois parties. The latter wished to maintain the existing order but were not prepared to defend it by force of arms. The Heimwehr was the only organization available to come to an active defense of the state in case of an attempted socialist putsch. Steidle continued:

It must be clear to all people loyal to the fatherland that passive self-defense must pass over to active self-help. This self-help must become a movement for freedom, the freedom of the entire populations, and not a freedom, which, according to Bolshevik doctrine . . . is limited to one class / and \ implemented by force. . . . It must be a movement for freedom which wants to represent and win over the people, and it must show intellectual and material worth . . . and use intellectual and material means in the struggle for power. . . . To reach power in the state requires a sacrifice from the entire people, if it wants to be free. . . . The work which lies ahead will be difficult but doubly pressing because the gong is sounding out the twelfth hour.42

In the same month of November Steidle was busy trying to organize the Heimwehr movements in the Alpine provinces into a political organization under his leadership. By the end of the month the Heimwehr leaders of Carinthia, the Tyrol, Styria, Salzburg, Upper Austria, and Vorarlberg had agreed to form a loose confederation called the

Austrian Self Defense Leagues). The individual organizations retained a great deal of autonomy within the association. Steidle was given the title of Bundesführer (federal leader). Actually, he became chairman of the executive committee and served only in a titular role as federal leader.

It is no surprise that the militant language increasingly used by both sides after 1926 eventually engendered violence and bloodshed. On January 3, 1927, a boy and a worker were killed in a clash between members of the Schutzbund and the Frontkämpfervereinigung in Schattendorf, a small town in Burgenland. It all began when both of the above organizations announced plans to hold demonstrations in Schattendorf on the same day. Permission had been granted to the Front Veterans Association to hold its parade, but it had been denied to the Schutzbund. The socialists apparently arrived in the village before the members of the Front Veterans Association. When they heard that the reactionary veteran's organization had also scheduled a meeting for the same day and that a number of the Association's members were shortly to arrive in Schattendorf by train,

43 Reichspost, February 1, 1927, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Kärnten," in the Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).
44 Österreichisches Heimatschutz-Jahrbuch, p. 35.
a contingent of the Schutzbund men went to the railroad station to harass the incoming veteran's group. A brawl ensued, and was broken up only after the arrival of the gendarmes. Both sides retreated, the detachment of the Front Veterans away from Schattendorf and the Schutzbund back to where they had come from: the Moser tavern.

While marching back to their tavern, the Schutzbund men passed the Tscharmann tavern, where the main force of the Front Veterans Association was in the meantime holding its meeting. The workers stopped in front of the inn and began goading those inside to come out and meet them in a fist fight. A number of socialists even went inside to pick fights. While this was going on, some of the Association's members went to a residence lying across the street from the tavern. Among those who went there were the two sons of the owner of the tavern. They began shooting at the Schutzbund men with three hunting rifles and a military carbine. These shots cost the lives of two people—a seven year old boy, Josef Grössing, and a disabled veteran, Matthias Czmaritz.45 Socialists throughout the country protested these murders loudly.

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45 These events are discussed in detail in Hanns Leo Mikoletzky, Österreichische Zeitgeschichte. Vom Ende der Monarchie bis zum Abschluss des Staatsvertrages 1955 (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1962), pp. 111-113.
and awaited the upcoming trial set for July in Vienna.46

Before the trial was held, the general election of April 24, 1927, took place. The elections all but erased the memory of Schattendorf from most Austrians. In preparation for them, the Pan-Germans and the Christian Socials, on the urging of Seipel, had formed a unity list which was in general supported by the Heimwehr. The Carinthian Heimwehr, in its own paper, the Heimat- schutz-Zeitung, which began publication a few days before the election, made scathing attacks on the socialists and appealed to all people who cherished their freedom to vote against the Marxists. Although the paper was lukewarm in its support of the bourgeois parties and pessimistic about the outcome of the elections, it argued that a vote for the unity list was a vote against Marxism and thus preferable to not casting one's ballot at all.47

The fears of the Heimwehr leaders seemed partially justified. The outcome of the elections was not particularly favorable to the bourgeois parties. The Pan-Germans and Christian Socials attained a total of eighty-

47 Heimatschutz-Zeitung, April 14, 1927, pp. 1-2; April 23, 1927, pp. 2-3.
five mandates in the National Council compared to the socialist representation of seventy-one, which amounted to only two less than the number of representatives the Christian Socials elected. Seipel, who headed the bourgeois bloc, was able, however, to persuade the Landbund to join his coalition. The addition of the nine delegates of the Agrarian League gave him a parliamentary majority of ninety-four to seventy-one and represented a great tactical victory for him. The Heimwehr's leaders, though less than happy with the outcome, realized that Seipel had made the best out of a difficult situation. They were prepared to tolerate the new government and in return hoped to receive a free hand in their scheduled attacks on the Social Democrats. 48

On July 3, 1927, Steidle continued the Heimwehr's assault against the socialists. In a long boisterous speech delivered in Wels, Upper Austria, before a Heimwehr audience, the Tyrolean leader violently attacked the Austrian socialists, accusing them of using terror tactics and branding them as the second bolshevist party in Europe. The Austrian socialists, he maintained, were

48 Leopold Kunschak, Österreich, 1918-1934, pp. 84-86. See also Gulick, Austria from Habsburg to Hitler, Vol. I, p. 713; and Alpenländerische Heimatwehr, October, 1926, p. 2; September, 1926, p. 2, for examples of Heimwehr attacks on democracy.
distinguished from other socialist parties by their willingness to use force to put their ideas into effect. It was through the use of force that the socialists were attempting to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat. The Social Democratic Party, the party which talked most about fascism, Steidle charged, had established a type of fascism in its own party guard. Whereas the Austrian socialists were prepared to implement their program by any means possible, the bourgeois parties suffered from timidity, self-disappointment, and indolence. In strong terms, Steidle indicted parliamentary democracy as it existed in Austria:

Parliament has today become a place in which Social Democracy has become the preponderant party, he asserted, although this party does not have a majority. The majority does not rule; it can only do what the Social Democrats allow. The hour has come for those men who are determined to do so to secure freedom for the fatherland through force, if necessary. . . . The Heimwehr must protect true democracy from the red dictatorship, even if this involves civil war and the use of arms.49

Steidle seems almost to have sensed what lay ahead. The storm which he predicted was not far off. Only two days after his speech the three men accused of murder at Schattendorf went on trial in Vienna. The proceedings took thirteen days and ended with the acquittal of the

49 Neue Freie Presse, Abendblatt, July 5, 1927, p. 3.
accused. The minor demonstrations which had been going on during the trial showed that tempers were very high. Although the Social Democratic leadership had met to discuss what should be done in case of major disturbances, no effective precautionary steps were taken for such an eventuality.

The powder keg was set off by an article in the *Arbeiter Zeitung* by its editor Friedrich Austerlitz. It was a "singularly flaming indictment, which the already aroused readers could easily interpret as a call to action."\textsuperscript{50} The workers had been deeply insulted by the verdict of the jury, Austerlitz asserted. Justice was proved to be nothing but a mockery—a farce which the workers could not tolerate. The Austrian workers should realize that justice has sunk to the level of a comedy. Austerlitz then went on to say: "The bourgeois world is constantly warning about a civil war; but . . . the acquittal of men involved in the murder of workers is in itself an act of civil war. We warn everyone that the injustice which was perpetrated yesterday can only lead to a terrible disaster."\textsuperscript{51}

The disaster about which Austerlitz gave warning

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{50}Deutsch, *Ein weiter Weg*, p. 166.
\textsuperscript{51}*Arbeiter Zeitung*, July 15, 1927, p. 1.
\end{footnotes}
was much nearer than even he dreamed. On the morning of July 15 strikes broke out in all parts of Vienna. Workers went off their jobs to demonstrate against the acquittal of the Front Veterans Association men. Socialist masses poured into the inner city. Most of the trades went on strike, and the transportation system was paralyzed. The mobs which assembled were infiltrated by elements bent on violence. Originally the streets were packed with both peaceful and unruly demonstrators. Before the day was over both groups turned into violent mobs.

One group of demonstrators marched on the university building, trying to break open its iron gates. This effort failed. Then they marched to the parliament building. Here they were met head-on by a detachment of police on horseback, who had just turned back a communist mob that had stormed the parliament building. In a clash between the police and workers one of the policemen was pulled off his horse and seriously injured. It soon became apparent to the authorities that the demonstrations and strikes were mushrooming into a full-scale revolt. To the chief of police, Johann Schober, it seemed only expedient to arm his men with weapons and ammunition for their own protection.

Another group of demonstrators who had been turned back from the parliament building marched towards the
palace of justice. The building was set on fire, and the huge mob gathered around it prevented both the fire department and units of the Schutzbund, as well as the mayor, from gaining access to it. The building went up in flames, destroying many valuable records and documents. The police were finally forced to use their weapons to clear the way. The ensuing melee resulted in deaths and injuries on both sides.\footnote{The total number who died during the rioting was 88. See Friedrich Remhofer, "Österreich von 1918 bis 1932," in 1918-1968: Österreich - 50 Jahre Republik (Vienna: Verlag Ferdinand Hirt, 1968), p. 89.}

The Social Democratic leadership was unable to control the masses. By the evening of July 15 the revolt had spread to the outskirts of the city and to the provinces. In the hope of gaining some sway over the rebellious workers, the socialist leadership called for a general strike for a twenty-four hour period, which was to be followed by an overall communications strike. In addition to gaining sway over the workers, it was hoped that a general strike would force the Seipel government to resign. Seipel, however, refused to be intimidated by the socialist pressure. He proceeded, instead, to take a forceful stand against the striking workers.

In Vienna order was ultimately restored by the
state authorities. In the provinces the Heimwehr played a prominent role in bringing an end to the general strike. In all of the provinces concerned the Heimwehr acted vigorously and promptly. It played a significant role in causing the strike to fail in Upper Austria, Vorarlberg, and Carinthia, and its actions in the Tyrol and Styria were crucial in bringing an early end to the disorder. In Upper Austria and Styria the Heimwehr leadership sent ultimatums to the provincial governments, warning them that they themselves would take immediate action and occupy all communication centers if they were not operating by the morning of July 18.\(^5\) In virtually every province Heimwehr units occupied railroad stations and telegraph offices and restored them to working order by the morning of July 18, thereby reducing the effect of the strike considerably.\(^4\)

In Styria the Heimwehr under Pfrimer was mobilized on the morning of July 16. Almost six thousand men responded to Pfrimer's call, most of them armed with rifles and some with machine guns. It was an impressive show of force, and the provincial socialist leaders were

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\(^5\) Heimatschutz in Österreich, pp. 74-75, 122-123.

quick to realize the need for hasty negotiations if bloodshed was to be avoided. Pfrimer demanded that the strike be called off within six hours and that further acts of terror cease immediately. The socialist leaders of Upper Styria agreed to Pfrimer's demands. Pfrimer, with the backing of Nationalrat deputy Anton Rintelen, then hurried to Graz and made similar demands of the governor, Richard Paul, who had begun negotiating with socialist leaders on the night of July 17-18. Pfrimer was invited to attend the negotiations. As they continued into the early hours of the morning with no agreement in sight, the Heimwehr leader, in a fit of anger, threatened grave consequences unless his demands for an immediate cessation of the general strike were met. Apparently intimidated by Pfrimer's wild remarks, the socialist negotiators promised to end the strike that very day. The Social Democratic executive committee, aware of the dangerous situation in Styria and the other provinces, decided to call off the nation-wide strike on the evening of the 18th.\textsuperscript{55}

The collapse of the general strike on the evening of July 18 signified a clear victory for the Heimwehr forces throughout Austria. In the subsequent months they became the darling of the non-socialist population. With their newly won popularity another chapter was opened in the history of the Heimwehr—a chapter which was to see the Heimwehr reach the zenith of its influence within the next two years.
CHAPTER THREE:
FROM OBSCURITY TO NATIONAL PROMINENCE:
JULY, 1927, TO SEPTEMBER, 1929

July 15, 1927, was a turning point in the history of the Heimwehr movement. Its role in helping to defeat the nation-wide strike in the July days brought it to the attention of the Austrian people as hardly any other event could have. Almost overnight it became a movement of national prominence. After having been little more than a loose federation of social clubs of only local importance, the provincial organizations now became a movement of major significance. With the subsequent backing of right-wing elements in Austria, Hungary, and Italy, the Heimwehr was able to wield a considerable amount of influence by 1930.

Significant in the Heimwehr's rise to a position of power between 1927 and 1930 was its increase in membership. Although exact figures are not at hand, estimates of the Heimwehr's growth can be made from the evidence that is available. From a reputed high of 100,000\(^1\) in the

\(^1\)See Lindley to Curzon, Vienna, January 11, 1921,
immediate postwar years, membership may have fallen to less than 20,000 by 1927.\textsuperscript{2} After July, 1927, this increase in membership jumped dramatically. By early 1928 there were roughly 150,000 Heimwehr members,\textsuperscript{3} and this number rose steadily until 1930. Large additions were made to the Heimwehr's ranks with the merger of various paramilitary organizations in late 1928 (including the Front Veterans Association), and the inclusion of the Bauernbund (Peasant League) in August, 1929. At its peak, the Heimwehr's membership was

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\textsuperscript{2}Die Österreichischen Putschisten, p. 29. The exact number given in this document is 18,000.

\textsuperscript{3}The British ambassador in Vienna estimated the Heimwehr's strength at 120,000 in January, 1928. The membership of the Schutzbund was placed at 96,000. But the latter was considered much superior to the Heimwehr in organization, training, and equipment and would probably have "won the day" in an armed showdown. See Viscount Chilston to Austen Chamberlain, Vienna, January, 14, 1928, Public Record Office (London), File 546/3, No. C546. Hungarian sources placed the Heimwehr's membership at 150,000 in the spring of 1928. See Steidle's memorandum to the Hungarian and Italian Governments, Innsbruck, May 23, 1928, in \textit{Acta Historica}, Vol. XI (1965), Doc. No. 2, p. 310. The figure 150,000 is also given by \textit{Der Turm}, July 2, 1928, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-militärische Vorbereitungen," Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).
\end{quote}
probably around 350,000.  

Most of the additional members came from the Austrian peasantry, although some also belonged to the working class. The peasant was the natural ally, if not avid supporter, of the Heimwehr. To him the Heimwehr still represented the best means of defense against a possible "communist" invasion of his home and property. Although never a zealous supporter of the Heimwehr—his strongest loyalty was towards the Church or local peasant organizations—the peasant, nevertheless, constituted a majority of the Heimwehr membership.  

The working class, on the other hand, was traditionally dominated by socialist proclivities, and hardly any other socialist movement in Europe had a firmer control

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4 This figure is the one given by Bruce F. Pauley in his "Hahnenschwanz and Swastika," p. 81. However, the number of Heimwehr men that were armed and trained was probably much lower than 350,000—possibly as low as 20,000. See, for example, D. Nemes, "Die österreichische Aktion der Bethlen Regierung," Acta Historica, Vol. XI (1965), p. 225. Nemes states that no more than 17,000 Heimwehr members had arms. That figure, however, did not include the 10,000 armed men of the Front Veterans Association and the 26,000 men of the Akademische Legion and the Deutsche Turnerbund, which had close ties with the Heimwehr. See Lajos Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie: Mussolini, Gömbös und die Heimwehr (Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1966), p. 13.

of the workers than the Austrian Social Democrats. They completely dominated such cities as Vienna and Wiener Neustadt, and even to think that Heimwehr converts could be made from the ranks of the worker seemed impossible. Nevertheless, in spite of the powerful hold that the Austrian socialists had over the working class, the Heimwehr gradually gained support in socialist-dominated territory after 1927. The first serious advance into socialist strongholds was made in the province of Lower Austria. Oddly enough, the attempts to win over the worker were made not by the Heimwehr organizations of that province but by the Styrian Heimwehr under Walther Pfrimer. His group met with partial success particularly in the cities of Mödling, Neunkirchen, Gloggnitz, and Wiener Neustadt.

The number of workers who were eventually won over to the Heimwehr's fold was apparently large enough to enable the Heimwehr to establish its own workers' unions. By 1929 many large industrial centers had Heimwehr-dominated unions which were actively competing with their socialist counterparts for adherents.


7Stein, Der Niederösterreichische Heimatschutz, pp. 16-17.
The Heimwehr unions, called the "Unabhängige Gewerkschaften" (independent unions), were founded on May 20, 1928, in a meeting between representatives of the Heimwehr and Austrian industry at Leoben, Styria. At this session, which was chaired by Fritz Lichtenegger, a Heimwehr man, both parties agreed to cooperate in the establishment and the expansion of these unions. Industry offered its services by donating office space and an initial 6,000 schilling subsidy. At the conference nothing was said about the goals of these organizations. Both groups had different objectives in mind for the Heimwehr unions. The industrialists wanted the workers' unions to serve as a strike-breaking guard in time of emergency. The Heimwehr members, on the other hand, thought that by joining the unions they would enjoy certain advantages over their socialist counterpart such as the greater security in his job and a greater likelihood of being considered for promotion. In actual practice, their privileges were of minor importance, for in wages, pensions, hospital insurance, and other benefits they remained behind.\(^8\) Eventually Heimwehr unions spread

\(^8\) *Arbeiterwille*, August 18, 1929; *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten*, March 12, 1930. Both are in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Unabhängige Gewerkschaften," in Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna). See also Heimatschutz in Österreich, pp. 299-306; and Kunschak, *Österreich 1918-1934*, p. 94.
from Styria into Lower Austria, Carinthia, Upper Austria, and even Vienna. By the end of 1928 their total membership stood at roughly 10,000.\(^9\)

In early 1929 several other anti-socialist workers' associations merged with the Heimwehr unions to form a large anti-Marxist front known as the Bund der Unabhängigen Gewerkschaften (League of Independent Unions). In addition to the original Heimwehr unions, the League included the Deutsche Arbeiterbund (German Workers' League) of Graz, unions in Lower and Upper Austria, and the Deutschvölkische Arbeitergemeinschaft (German People's Worker's Community) of Carinthia.\(^10\) By late 1929 the association had a reputed membership of 25,000.\(^11\)

The growth of Heimwehr membership between 1927 and 1929 was a good indication of the Heimwehr's rising fortunes. Equally indicative of growing Heimwehr strength was the trend towards consolidation and unification within the movement. In this regard, a meeting held on October 16, 1927, at Baden, Lower Austria, was of particular

\(^9\)Heimatschutz in Österreich, p. 303.

\(^10\)Die Presse, July 24, 1929, as found in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Unabhängige Gewerkschaften," in Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).

importance. Agreement was reached at this conference to merge the various Heimwehr groups into a national organization. Leaders from Vienna, Lower Austria, and the Alpine provinces agreed to form the **Bund Österreichischer Selbstschutzverbände.** Richard Steidle was elected federal leader, but he was given no real power or definite responsibilities. It was clear that the delegates at Baden were averse to creating a strong, centralized organization. They feared that a leader with broad powers would threaten the autonomy which they enjoyed as provincial organizations. Strong provincial sentiments such as those expressed at Baden were to be a perpetual stumbling block to efforts to create a formidable national organization.  

The trends towards unification continued in other provinces as well. In Styria the two quarreling factions at long last settled their differences. In meetings held on November 6 and 7, 1927, leaders of the two wings, one representing bourgeois interests and the other the more radical wing, which advocated a rabid

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nationalist program (pro-Anschluss, anti-Semitism, etc.), agreed to merge into a single organization. In a later meeting held in December, 1927, Walther Pfrimer, the leader of the radical group, was elected head of the combined Styrian organization.\textsuperscript{13} Hans Rauter became his chief-of-staff; Baron Prankh, his military adviser; and Bachofen-Echt, his first deputy, next in line to Pfrimer himself.\textsuperscript{14} With Pfrimer's ascendancy in Styria, the entire movement developed an uncompromising nationalistic attitude and became increasingly pro-Nazi. In 1933 the Styrian organization joined the German National Socialist Party en masse.\textsuperscript{15}

This process of unification also took place in Lower Austria and Vienna. In October, 1928, the differences between the Styrian and Lower Austrian Heimwehr were settled, and in the spring of 1929 Julius Raab was placed at the head of all Lower Austrian contingents.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} Österreichisches Heimatschutz-Jahrbuch, p. 63
\textsuperscript{14} Heimatschutz-Zeitung, November 10, 1927, pp. 2-3; Alpenländerische Heimwehr, November, 1927, pp. 1 and 4.
\textsuperscript{15} Wandruszka, "Österreichs politische Struktur," p. 366.
\textsuperscript{16} Stein, Der Niederösterreichische Heimatschutz, p. 18; Österreichisches Heimatschutz-Jahrbuch, p. 64.
On December 17, 1928, various paramilitary organizations in Vienna united to form the Selbstschutz Wien. This union brought the Vienna Heimwehr under Emil Fey, the Vienna Heimatschutz, the Freiheitsbund under Leopold Kunschak, the Christian Social Gymnasts, the Reichsbund, and the Front Veterans Association together in a single organization that was one of the stronger organizations in Austria, even though it suffered from the constant rivalry of its leaders. The Selbstschutz Wien became affiliated with the national organization under Steidle and Pfrimer (the latter had been elected co-leader of the national organization on July 17, 1928).\(^{17}\) Its leaders agreed to take their orders from the national leadership.\(^{18}\)

This tendency to consolidate was an important factor in the Heimwehr's rise to prominence and power. The national unification of the movement presented a picture

\(^{17}\)Stein, *Der Niederösterreichische Heimatschutz*, p. 11.

\(^{18}\)Wache, *Deutscher Geist in Österreich*, pp. 242-243; *Heimatschutz in Österreich*, pp. 8-9. The Selbstschutz Wien, however, brought together in a single organization only relatively few of the many paramilitary groups in Vienna. One student of the Heimwehr estimates that there were almost forty paramilitary organizations in Vienna at that time. See Gerhard Lueghammer, "Die Wiener Heimatschutzbewegung, 1927 bis 1932: Organisation, Führer, innere Konflikte" (unpublished seminar paper, Institute for Contemporary History, University of Vienna, 1966), p. v.
of strength, at least outwardly. In theory, when one of the two federal leaders spoke, he represented the entire movement. National unification lent force and meaning to his words. As long as internal differences could be hidden from the public the leader's voice could command respect. It was precisely because the Heimwehr was able to offer this appearance of unity that it was able to wield considerable influence in the late 1920's. When it lost this unity, as was the case after 1929, it lost its power.

Chancellor Ignaz Seipel played an important role in helping to mold the Heimwehr into a unified force. Recent evidence has shown that Seipel was very closely associated with the Heimwehr,¹⁹ and on numerous occasions he came to its defense in speeches and in other ways.

In many respects, he was the movement's guiding spirit, who "shaped its ideas, directed it,"\(^{20}\) and for the first time gave it a purpose.\(^ {21}\) Seipel had taken an interest in the Heimwehr as early as 1920,\(^ {22}\) but it was only after July, 1927, that he seriously considered using the organization for his ends.

Just exactly what role Seipel envisioned for the Heimwehr is not clear. It is known that after 1927 he became increasingly disillusioned with democracy and the Austrian Social Democrats, and he might have seen in the Heimwehr a possible ally with which to revamp Austrian democracy and reduce the power of the socialists. As a paramilitary force, the Heimwehr could be used as auxiliary troops in time of emergency, particularly in case a socialist-inspired general strike broke out or in the unlikely event of a socialist coup d'état effort. Furthermore, through Heimwehr demonstrations and marches the socialist monopoly of the streets could be broken, and the streets could be made safe.


for all citizens. Finally, Seipel even contemplated using the Heimwehr as a coalition partner in parliament to create his "true" democracy. In the meantime, until the Heimwehr was strong enough to put up its own party list, Seipel would be its promoter.

Seipel, however, completely misinterpreted the

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25 A favorite phrase used by Seipel was "true" democracy. It is difficult to know what he meant by this phrase. His definition of democracy undoubtedly meant that the power of the Social Democrats was somehow to be reduced. Democracy had become nothing more than party politics. To reduce the power of the parties, Seipel wanted to have the constitution revised in such a way that the powers of the federal president would be considerably strengthened and that the other elements of society, such as the Heimwehr, could have a voice in the government. For differing views on what Seipel meant by "true" democracy, see especially Alfred Diamant, Austrian Catholics and the First Republic: Democracy, Capitalism, and the Social Order, 1918-1934 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 106-116. Diamant believes that Seipel did not want to do away with democracy. There are many others, including politicians within his own camp, who felt that by "true" democracy Seipel meant nothing less than a military dictatorship. See in particular Ernst Karl Winter, "Österreich und der Nationalsozialismus," Wiener Politische Blätter, Vol. I (December 3, 1933), pp. 198; and Phipps to Henderson, Vienna, October 17, 1929, Public Record Office (London), File 149/3, No. 07967.
intent and meaning of the movement. He actually regarded "the Heimwehr as a force protecting democracy" and did not realize its potential danger to the First Republic. He thought he would be able to "keep the movement within bounds" and to direct it in such a way as to use its strength to alter the political balance in his favor. Having infinite confidence in his own ability to remain on top, he could not comprehend the possibility of becoming a pawn of a force more powerful than he. He considered his relationship with the Heimwehr a one-sided affair in which he would use it to further his own ends. It did not occur to him that in this relationship he might become a stepping-stone for the Heimwehr. The Heimwehr's leaders realized this, but Seipel never did.

In his role as the Heimwehr's patron after July,


28 Reimann, Zu gross für Österreich, pp. 84-85.

1927, Seipel's influence was of particular usefulness in helping to procure funds for the movement. If the Heimwehr was to grow, it needed money. Although he never supplied it with funds from the state treasury (as far as is known), he did encourage Austrian industries and bankers to make contributions. As early as 1921 he had undertaken the role of go-between for the Heimwehr and wealthy elements in Austria.\textsuperscript{30} After 1927 Seipel's efforts to secure money for the Heimwehr were especially successful. The Tyrolese chief Steidle openly admitted that Seipel had succeeded in obtaining "generous support" for his organization from manufacturers and industrialists.\textsuperscript{31}

The amount of financial assistance the Heimwehr received from Austrian sources was considerable. Help came from many conservative elements—industry, banks, and large property owners. Careful investigation allows us to determine who the Heimwehr's largest financial

\textsuperscript{30}Edmondson, "The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics," p. 75.

\textsuperscript{31}Arbeiter Zeitung, June 16, 1929, pp. 1-2; Gulick, Austria from Habsburg to Hitler, Vol. II, pp. 778-779.
backers were. The greatest proportion of money came from industry, although the banks were not far behind. On October 24, 1927, at a joint meeting of the bankers' and manufacturers' associations it was decided to put an initial sum of 55,000 schillings at the Heimwehr's disposal. Thereafter regular subsidies were made on a monthly basis by the Alpine Montangesellschaft of Styria. Between October, 1927, and the summer of 1930, this company paid the Heimwehr about 300,000 schillings yearly. Out of this amount, each of the provincial organizations were paid approximately 4,000 schillings per month, and another 4,000 a month was placed directly at the disposal of the federal leadership. Large parades and demonstrations were paid for

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32 Most of the information concerning Heimwehr finances, though oftentimes slanted, comes from socialist sources. The Heimwehr rarely made public the source and the amount of its financial support.

33 Glick, Austria from Habsburg to Hitler, Vol. II, p. 779. The same date and amounts given in Alexander Klein, "Die entthüllten Putschisten," Der Schutzbund, August, 1929, in the Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).

34 Fifty-six per cent of the stocks of the Alpine Montan Company were owned by a German concern, the Vereinigten Stahlwerke (United Steel Works), whose general director was a Dr. Vögeler, a member of the German People's party. Thus, one could argue, at least theoretically, that the Heimwehr was being subsidized by German sources (which it probably actually was through connections established by Pabst). See Arbeiterwille, November 14, 1929, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Deutsche Volkspartei," in Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).
separately.\textsuperscript{35} One of the benefits of the substantial financial backing from Austrian industry after 1927 was to make it possible for the Heimwehr to pay basic salaries to its lower echelon leaders in the provinces. The local village leader received roughly 300 schillings monthly. What higher officials received is not known. No doubt, their salaries were more remunerative.\textsuperscript{36}

The banks and large landowners also made contributions. According to Vinzenz Schumy, the Austrian bankers' association supplied the Heimwehr with 25,000 schillings monthly.\textsuperscript{37} When these payments began and when they ended is not clear. Equally vague is the assistance offered by the landed gentry. That some aid was forthcoming may be surmised by an article which appeared on May 3, 1929 in the \textit{Arbeiterwille}. This socialist newspaper reported that all large property owners were encouraged to make a contribution of

\textsuperscript{35}For example, the Wiener Neustadt march of October 7, 1928, cost the industrial league no less than 400,000 schillings (a sum which is rather hard to believe). See \textit{Die Österreichischen Putschisten}, pp. 27-28.

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid.; Kerekes, \textit{Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie}, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{37}Schumy, \textit{Ungedruckte Aufzeichnungen}, p. 56. This sum is confirmed in Langoth, \textit{Kampf um Österreich}, p. 82. See also Hofmann, \textit{Der Pfrimer Putsch}, p. 23.
ten Groschen for every hectare they owned. This payment was to be made "in addition to the support given to the local Heimwehr." Whether these contributions were actually made and what they might have amounted to we can only conjecture. At any rate, an intelligent guess might place the total amount of financial support from Austrian sources for the period between 1927 and 1930 at near 1,500,000 Schillings.

This sum is surprisingly close to the overall monetary assistance supplied by Italy, the Heimwehr's greatest single patron. Paid in several installments over a period of two years (1928-1930), the total Italian subvention amounted to 1,493,319 Schillings. Mussolini's financial support of the Heimwehr allowed him to play an inordinately large role in the Heimwehr's affairs and even in Austrian domestic politics. His

38 Klein, "Die enthüllten Putschisten." A similar appeal had been made earlier. Specifically, between 500 and 1,000 Schillings was requested from Austria's landowners. See Der Abend, February 17, 1926, p. 3, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Unternehmer," ibid.


40 Mussolini's influence over the Heimwehr and Austrian domestic affairs continued in the 1930's. See especially the revealing correspondence between Mussolini and Dollfuss in Geheimer Briefwechsel Mussolini-Dollfuss (Vienna: Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1949).
connections with the Heimwehr can now be investigated more closely due to the recent publications of the Hungarian historian Lajos Kerekes. His accounts, based on the archives of the Hungarian foreign ministry, offer incontestable proof of the close collaboration between the Heimwehr and the fascist governments of Italy and Hungary. 41

Contacts with and pecuniary aid from Hungary were nothing new for the Heimwehr. In 1920 the Hungarian government had sponsored a scheme to topple the Renner regime, in which the Heimwehr, with the strong backing of Hungary, was to have played an important role. Although that plan had come to nothing, the financial support received by the Heimwehr at that time had helped place relations between Austrian and Hungarian reactionaries on a firm and cordial footing. 42 Contacts between the Heimwehr and Hungary were allowed to lag in the mid-twenties but were vigorously resumed in early 1928. The mushrooming popularity of the Heimwehr after July, 1927, had again brought the organization to the


42 See ante, pp. 28-33.
attention of the conservative Hungarian government, which was once more ready to come to the active aid of Austria's Heimwehr formations. In its overtures to the Heimwehr leaders in 1928, the Horthy regime was prepared to offer material support, and more important, to serve as mediator between the Heimwehr and the potentially powerful patron to the south—Benito Mussolini. 43

Hungary's intimate relations with both the Heimwehr and Mussolini placed her in the proper role to serve as go-between. In early April, 1928, István Bethlen, the Hungarian prime minister, held lengthy discussions with the duce in Rome during the course of which he broached for the first time the possibility of Italian support for the Heimwehr. Bethlen argued

43 Although the Heimwehr leaders had early expressed occasional interest and even admiration for Italian fascism (see Alpenländerische Heimatwehr, May, 1926, p. 2), cordial relations between the Heimwehr and Mussolini were precluded by the thorny problem of the South Tyrol. Until 1928, when the Heimwehr leaders agreed to drop the issue in their public utterances in return for Italian material support, the fate of the inhabitants of that region remained a bitter source of contention between the Austrians and the Italians. So united were the Austrians in their concern for their southern brethren that there was even talk in 1926 of joint Heimwehr-Schutzbund cooperation in the event of an invasion by Italy. See Ludwig Jedlicka, Ein Heer im Schatten der Parteien (Graz: Verlag Böhlhaus, 1955), p. 49; and Hartmund Boese, "Die Zusammenarbeit von Bundesheer, Heimwehr und Schutzbund in Tirol, 1925-1926" (unpublished seminar paper, Institute of Contemporary History, University of Vienna, 1967).
that if an adequate amount of aid was provided for the Heimwehr at this time, the movement could be made strong enough to influence political events in Austria. Through strong pressure from the Heimwehr, important constitutional changes could be expected, which would eventually lead to the weakening of the socialists and to the establishment of a rightist government. A rightist regime would benefit both Italy and Hungary, since it would delay Anschluss with Germany, bring the South Tyrol problem under control, and safeguard communications and "trade in arms between Hungary and Italy." Mussolini's response to Bethlen's arguments, which he gave on April 6, deserves to be quoted at length:

I am ready to place at your disposal for transfer to the Austrian rightest organizations one million lire, either in lump sum or in installments, I am also prepared to hand over to them at the frontier the arms they require, provided that they indicate when and in what measure they will seize power in the foreseeable future. Yes, when this has been accomplished, I shall be ready to deal with the new government about improvements in the lot of the German minority in the South Tyrol.  

44 See notes on the discussions between Italian Minister-President Mussolini and the Hungarian Minister-President Bethlen, Milan, April 2, 1928, Acta Historica, Vol. XI (1965), Doc. No. 1, p. 309.  
45 Ibid.  
46 Ibid.
In spite of Mussolini’s apparent willingness to come to the support of the Heimwehr, the assistance which he promised was temporarily delayed. Before the transfer of money and arms could take place a written declaration was demanded from the Heimwehr leadership promising that they would refrain from publicly mentioning the South Tyrol problem. The Heimwehr, as well as any rightist regime which come to power, was to regard the South Tyrolese question as a matter of Italian domestic policy that was of no concern to Austrians.  

Mussolini’s demand, communicated to the Heimwehr leadership in the early summer of 1928, was given a quick reply by federal leader Steidle. Seemingly without any compunction, he offered such a written statement on August 1, 1928, thereby opening the way for the first supply of money and arms from Italy.

On August 23, 1928, two checks arrived totalling 1,620,000 lire (600,000 schillings). They came via the

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47 This demand by Mussolini and Steidle’s acceptance of it caused a great deal of friction within the Heimwehr’s ranks. Steidle’s order prohibiting public discussion of the South Tyrol problem by Heimwehr members led, in more than one instance, to resignations from the movement by lesser leaders. See Franz Schweiger, “Der Korneuburger Eid” (unpublished seminar paper, Institute of Contemporary History, University of Vienna, 1962), p. 23.

48 Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 23.
Hungarian embassy in Italy to the Hungarian foreign ministry in Budapest. Here they were cashed by Gabor Apor, permanent representative of the Hungarian foreign office. He transferred the money to Tibor Miklos, a Hungarian general consul who was responsible for administering this "special fund." From Miklos the money passed into the hand of Béla Janky, a Hungarian embassy official in Vienna who had been specifically assigned to handle all matters concerning the Heimwehr. Sometime in late August Janky personally delivered the money to Steidle.\(^4^9\) The promised supply of arms came much later, due to the difficulty of transporting it across the border.\(^5^0\) But this delay was inconsequential, since the Heimwehr's stockpiles of arms were sufficient to meet all immediate needs.\(^5^1\)

The massive support the Heimwehr was receiving by the end of 1928 from Austrian and foreign sources made

\(^4^9\)Ibid., pp. 23-24 and 36.

\(^5^0\)Although careful plans were made to smuggle weapons across the border from Italy into Austria in the fall of 1928, probably no such weapons were delivered until the winter of 1932-1933, when their discovery caused the great scandal known as the "Hirtenberg weapons affair." Ibid., pp. 23-24. See also Gulick, Austria from Habsburg to Hitler, Vol. II, pp. 1008-1016; and Starhemberg, Between Hitler and Mussolini, pp. 30-35.

it possible for it to assume a much more aggressive stance in Austrian internal affairs than before. Particularly since the Hungarians and Italians demanded strong action, its leaders were no longer content to play a passive role in Austrian politics. In a memorandum to his Hungarian friends in early June, 1928, Steidle clearly expressed the tougher attitude the Heimwehr was now prepared to assume. He declared:

The Heimwehr is at present in a state of transition; from being purely a defensive organization it is becoming an organization with national and political aims. The momentum generated by the intense anti-Marxist outlook of its members must and will force the so-called 'ruling parties' to alter the semi-bolshevist constitution which came into being under pressure from the reds of Vienna, no matter what resistance or other reactions this provokes. The 150,000 men now organized in the ranks of the Heimwehr . . . are prepared to stake their lives on the triumph of their beliefs. . . . They insist on having their share in fashioning the state.52

Quite in tune with this new outlook was the Wiener Neustadt demonstration of October 7, 1928, the first mass demonstration held by the Heimwehr in socialist-dominated territory. The march was planned by Walther Pfirmer. It was designed to serve both as an occasion to celebrate

the union of the Raab and Pfrimer Heimwehr factions in Lower Austria and to give public testimony to growing Heimwehr strength.\footnote{It was also hoped that holding demonstrations in socialist territory would attract new converts to the Heimwehr. See Eric Phipps to Lord Cushendon, Vienna, September 13, 1928, Public Record Office, File 4630/3, No. C7026; \textit{Osterreichisches Heimatschutz Jahrbuch}, p. 64; and \textit{Heimatschutz in Osterreich}, p. 42.\textsuperscript{53}} It became an event of major significance when the socialists decided to hold a mass parade on the same day in Wiener Neustadt. The possibility of demonstrations by both groups on the same day was a foreboding thought, and unless the government took stern measures to prohibit the marches or else took steps to keep the two armed groups apart if they were allowed to meet, the likelihood of an armed conflict appeared on the horizon.\footnote{England's ambassador to Austria felt that the likelihood of an armed conflict on October 7 was enhanced all the more because the socialists were negotiating with the Austrian communists about the possibility of taking joint action against "Austrian fascism" if skirmishes would break out between the Heimwehr and Schutzbund. See Eric Phipps to Orme Sargent, Vienna, September 13, 1928, Public Record Office (London), File 4630/3, No. C7026. See also Edmondson, "The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics," p. 87.\textsuperscript{54}}

Karl Buresch, the governor of Lower Austria, had every intention of prohibiting the demonstrations when it became clear that an armed conflict might ensue. He knew full well the dangers involved in a simultaneous
march of Schutz bund and Heimwehr forces and recommended that both armed demonstrations be prohibited.\footnote{55} When it seemed that Buresch was about to issue an order forbidding the marches, Seipel, however, stepped in and persuaded the governor to permit them. He insisted that any group, the Heimwehr as well as the Schutz bund, had the democratic right to demonstrate and to express its views. However, to keep the peace, he advised sending a sizable contingent of federal troops to the city to keep the peace at any cost.\footnote{56}

On the day of the demonstrations Wiener Neustadt resembled an armed camp. Acting in accord with a pre-arranged plan, whereby the two groups were to use different parts of the city at different hours,\footnote{57} 19,000


\footnote{56}{For the government the cost of keeping the peace on October 7 was considerable. G. E. R. Gedye estimates the government spent well over £60,000. See his Heirs to the Habsburgs (London: Arrowsmith Publishers, 1932), p. 93. The New York Times estimates the cost at between $250,000 and $1,000,000. See the issue of October 8, 1928, p. 1.}

\footnote{57}{The Heimwehr was to march from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. and the Schutz bund from mid-day onwards. A neutral zone was to be maintained between them by the gendarmerie and the army. See Eric Phipps to Lord Cushendon, Vienna, October 4, 1928, Public Record Office (London), File 4630/3, No. C7462.}
Heimwehr men and 14,000 Schutzbund men, separated by
8,000 government forces, met in the city of 37,000 to
march and listen to their speakers. Pprimer and
Steidle spoke to the Heimwehr. Steidle again called
attention to the Heimwehr's change from a defensive to
an offensive organization. To him the demonstration
at Wiener Neustadt was a sure sign of the movement's
expanding role. He insisted that the events of October 7
signified the beginning of a new phase in Austrian
history which would lead to the complete "liberation"
of the people.

The October 7 demonstrations at Wiener Neustadt
passed by without incident. In spite of threatening
speeches and the open display of arms, no blood was
spilled. On account of the peaceful nature of the
Wiener Neustadt demonstrations, October 7 has been
represented as a political victory for Seipel. He had

58 Kunschak, Österreich, 1918-1934, p. 97; Gedye,
Heirs to the Habsburges, p. 93.

59 Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, pp.
28-29. By "liberation" Steidle, of course, meant
freeing Austria from the influence of the Social
Democrats.

60 Phipps wrote that October 7 passed by "without
any damage beyond deplorable expense." See Phipps to
Foreign Office, Vienna, October 8, 1928, Public Record
been able to keep the peace, and had demonstrated his ability to use the Heimwehr for his own purposes. 61

The Wiener Neustadt march, however, was a disappointment for the Heimwehr and its foreign promoters. Both fervently had hoped that a dramatic show of force by the two opposing groups would lead to a clash, thereby offering them a pretext to order the mobilization of the entire Heimwehr organization. It might even have provided the Heimwehr with an excuse to "march on Vienna," they hoped. 62 Evidence suggests that the Heimwehr was expecting something "bigger" to happen. On October 7 paramilitary organizations were put on alert throughout Austria; 63 and, more significantly, Waldemar Pabst, the Heimwehr chief-of-staff, was given access to the communications system of the Austrian police to enable him to control and coordinate the activities of that day. 64

61 Friedrich Austerlitz claims that Seipel used the Heimwehr masterfully to his advantage on October 7. It had performed an important service to him by putting pressure on the socialists. Friedrich Austerlitz, "Seipels siebenter Oktober," Der Kampf, Vol. XXI (November, 1928), pp. 532-538.

62 As was hoped by the Hungarians and Italians. See Kerekes, Abendhämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 29.

63 Starhemberg, Lebenserinnerungen, p. 61.

64 Die Österreichischen Putschisten, p. 33; Neue Freie Presse, October 1, 1930, Abendblatt, p. 5.
Fortunately, no opportunity presented itself for the Heimwehr to take any type of "action." The federal authorities had provided too much "protection" for the opposing camps.\(^65\) The presence of the government's 8,000 soldiers had precluded the outbreak of the "decisive action" so ardently awaited by both the Heimwehr and its foreign friends. Mussolini was deeply disappointed over the fact that nothing significant had happened on October 7, and he even contemplated cutting off his funds from the Heimwehr. However, thanks to Hungary's prompt intercession on the Heimwehr's behalf, Italian money continued to flow into the Heimwehr's coffers.\(^66\)

Nevertheless, in spite of Mussolini's disappointment in the Wiener Neustadt demonstrations, October 7 was still one of the biggest events in the Heimwehr's history,\(^67\) and it was Seipel who had made the march

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\(^65\) According to Ernst von Streeruwitz, later chancellor of Austria, the "army was the victor of the day." It had shown itself capable and effective at Wiener Neustadt. See Ernst von Streeruwitz, Springflut über Österreich (Vienna: Bernina Verlag, 1937), pp. 230-231.


\(^67\) Oskar Helmer claims that it was a big political victory for the Heimwehr. See his *50 Jahre erlebte Zeitgeschichte* (Vienna: Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1957), p. 119.
possible. He had lifted the movement from obscurity and forged it into a strong political weapon (his, he thought). His very association with it made it a movement to be reckoned with.\textsuperscript{68} Seipel's subsequent patronization of the Heimwehr assured it of continuing importance.

On December 18, 1928, in a speech at Graz, Seipel openly aligned himself with the movement. Apparently in answer to Leopold Kunschak's earlier criticism of the Heimwehr's anti-democratic tendencies,\textsuperscript{69} Seipel came out with the strongest words yet in defense of the Heimwehr and what it stood for. He declared:

In this connection /speaking of the greater need for collaboration among parties/ may I be allowed to say a word concerning the Heimwehr? The desire for democracy is one of the strongest motives behind the Heimwehr movement. It is for this reason that I trust it and confess that I am an adherent. Therefore I decline to suppress it merely to reach an apparent peace. Its object is to prevent the Social Democrats from having the sole privilege of organizing processions and demonstrations in the streets, for

\textsuperscript{68} Both Julius Braunthal and Julius Deutsch agreed that without the support of the bourgeois parties and especially of Seipel the Heimwehr would have been a negligible force hardly to be reckoned with. See Julius Braunthal, "Untaugliche Argumente für die Koalition," Der Kampf, Vol. XXI (February, 1928), pp. 51-52; and Julius Deutsch, "Reaktion und Verwaltung," ibid., Vol. XXI (March, 1928), p. 111. However, both of these assessments were made before October, 1928, and without the foreknowledge of subsequent Italian support.

\textsuperscript{69} Kunschak, Österreich, 1918-1924, p. 99.
such a privilege would in the end be misused as a kind of weapon for a terrorist organization. What causes some difficulty and danger is that the Heimwehr is not under the orders of anyone of the majority parties nor under those of all of them. I do not, on the other hand, wish that each political party in Austria should have its guard. We do not envy the Social Democrats their Republican Schutzbund.70

With these words, Seipel tried to improve the relations between the Heimwehr and his own party. There were, however, many within the bourgeois camp, Kunschak among them, who had a much better appreciation of the true nature of the Heimwehr. Kunschak in particular was aware of the increasing anti-democratic direction which the Heimwehr was taking.71 This anti-democratic trend was made abundantly clear in the numerous speeches,

70 Eric Phipps to Austen Chamberlain, Vienna, December 19, 1928, Public Record Office (London), File 4630/3, No. C9767; Seipel, Der Kampf um die Österreichische Verfassung, p. 133. It is strange that Seipel should have made this assessment of the Heimwehr given the fact that on December 17, 1928, only one day before Seipel’s speech at Graz, Steidle had made a speech in Vienna vehemently attacking Austrian democracy. See Kunschak, Österreich, 1918-1934, p. 99, for excerpts from the speech. The British ambassador’s appraisal of Seipel’s speech is interesting. He states that Seipel delivered the speech not because of his love of the Heimwehr but “with a view to throw dust in their eyes.” Phipps claimed that Seipel wanted to use the Heimwehr to discard the Pan-Germans so that he could stop paying lip service to Anschluss. See Phipps to Austen Chamberlain, Vienna, January 15, 1929, Public Record Office (London), File 149/3, No. C572.

parades, demonstrations, and field exercises staged by the Heimwehr during the following year.

Nineteen hundred and twenty nine was truly a year of Heimwehr demonstrations.\textsuperscript{72} Heimwehr forces took to the streets almost weekly. Often held in socialist strongholds, their demonstrations frequently ended in violence. Quite in keeping with Italian and Hungarian desires, the massed demonstrations led to rising tensions within Austria and brought increasing pressure on the government to move to the right. Like the activities of October 7 at Wiener Neustadt, the armed parades during the following year were "intended to drive the hesitant government, and above all Dr. Seipel, into altering the constitution, perhaps through some kind of putsch or coup d'état."\textsuperscript{73} Many, including Mussolini, felt that the government should be driven to take stern measures against the Social Democratic Party and its party guard the Schutzbund only if the Heimwehr engaged in some kind of forceful action. Mussolini in particular

\textsuperscript{72}Otto Bauer, in an interview with Phipps on January 11, 1929, warned of the trouble the Heimwehr would make in the coming spring through its armed parades. See Phipps to Austen Chamberlain, Vienna, January 15, 1928, Public Record Office (London), File 149/3, No. 0572.

wanted to see the street demonstrations take a course which would ultimately be detrimental to the Austrian socialists. He knew many of them personally, and he hated them "with the single-mindedness of a renegade."  74

Since it would be tedious and unrewarding to give an account of all of the Heimwehr demonstrations in 1929, only the most significant will be mentioned here.  75 Two in particular warrant specific attention. One was held in Wiener Neustadt on February 3; the other in Vienna on February 24. Both contributed to making the internal political situation within Austria more tense.

The demonstration of February 3 was one of many that erupted into violence and that was indicative of the Heimwehr's growing militancy--a militancy in part superficially staged to please Italy and Hungary. The demonstration also illustrates the growing tendency of the socialists to fight back. The occasion for the February 3 demonstration was a socialist meeting at which the vice-mayor of Wiener Neustadt was scheduled

74 Ibid.

75 For a description of a number of lesser Heimwehr demonstrations, see Die Heimat, May 15, 1929, p. 5.
to speak on the "Lies of the Heimwehr." Members of the local Heimwehr organizations were invited to attend. The invitation was a mistake. During the course of the vice-mayor's speech, which was repeatedly interrupted by heckling and catcalls, the speaker was hauled from the platform and severely beaten. Others around the platform became involved in a fist fight which eventually spread through the entire hall. A general melee resulted in which many on both sides were seriously injured.76

The February 24 demonstration was the first such event in which Heimwehr units marched through the streets of Vienna on a large scale. It had implications similar to those of the massive Heimwehr meeting at Wiener Neustadt the previous year in that both sides insisted on marching on the same day, thereby forcing the government to intervene. Again a clash was avoided only because of the government's determination to prevent bloodshed. As at Wiener Neustadt, federal troops played a conspicuous role in keeping the two opposing forces apart. But, even though the demonstration of February 24 ended peacefully--contrary to the expectations of

some—the presence of thousands of Heimwehr forces in the midst of Vienna was most satisfying to the Heimwehr leaders. They could now boast that they had broken the socialist monopoly of the streets in the very heart of the socialist domain. 77

It is interesting to note that Seipel approved of the Heimwehr demonstrations and even encouraged the movement's leaders to assume a more militant stance in any demonstrations planned for the future. On March 23, 1928, in an extended conversation with co-leader Steidle the Austrian chancellor went so far as to suggest that in subsequent armed parades confrontations with the Schutzbund should not be avoided, for he hoped that an armed clash between the two formations would rally public opinion behind his government. Once the Austrian people were behind him, it would not take long, the chancellor claimed, to pass legislation which would reduce the effectiveness of the Social Democratic Party as a political organization and to institute reforms beneficial to the Heimwehr. In the meantime, until such a favorable political climate was at hand, the Austrian chancellor declared

77 Reichspost, February 25, 1929, p. 1; Arbeiter Zeitung, February 17, 1929, p. 1.
that he was prepared to sanction any demonstrations planned for the future.78

It is paradoxical that only ten days after Seipel had confirmed his intentions to work in close harmony with the Heimwehr, he resigned from his position as chancellor. Whatever the reasons for Seipel's resignation,79 his startling decision to step down as chancellor aroused ambivalent feelings, if not outright consternation, among the Heimwehr leaders. Seeing their strong supporter removed from the most powerful position in the state was a serious matter.

78 Incidentally, in the conversation between the Austrian chancellor and the Heimwehr leader the latter informed Seipel of his plans to create a special force of storm troopers to enable the Heimwehr to deal more effectively with its socialist counterpart in the event of an armed clash. See Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 35; and Steidle's memorandum to the Hungarian and Italian governments, Innsbruck, May 23 1928, Acta Historica, Vol. XI (1965), Doc. No. 2, pp. 309-310, informing the Hungarians and Italians of his intentions to create his special storm troop contingent and requesting 100,000 schillings from the Italians for that purpose.

for them.  

In the immediate days after Seipel's resignation the Heimwehr leadership was torn between taking two courses of action. To influence the choice of the next chancellor the Heimwehr debated between legal and illegal action. Some, including Pfrimer, argued that the time was ripe for a march on Vienna. Others, including Steidle and Pabst, represented the view that a putsch would be futile at this time. They recommended, instead, that the Heimwehr make an attempt to influence the nomination of the new chancellor and his cabinet through negotiations with the bourgeois parties. The latter view prevailed. Once this course of action had been decided upon, Pabst and Steidle rushed to Vienna to participate in the discussions going on within prominent Viennese political circles.

Ernst von Streeruwitz was the man who was selected as chancellor after almost four weeks of political

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80 Tzöbl, "Ignaz Seipel," p. 599.


82 The three governmental parties agreed on April 11, 1929, to confer with the Heimwehr in choosing a successor to Seipel. See Phipps to the Foreign Office, Vienna, April 12, 1929, Public Record Office (London), File 149/3, No. C2611.
maneuvering. He was not the Heimwehr's choice. Streeruwitz was a respected member of the Christian Social Party. He had served with honor as a cavalry officer in the Habsburg army and had later held important positions in Austrian industry.\(^3\) Thus, by all accounts, he should have been favorably inclined towards the Heimwehr. From the beginning the Heimwehr, however, found itself at odds with the new chancellor. Not only was it unrepresented in the new government, but the newly elected chancellor openly expressed his dislike for the organization. He regarded the Heimwehr not as auxiliary troops but as a kind of condottieri detachment which might one day pose a serious threat to the state and which should either be disbanded or else brought entirely under the control of the government.\(^4\)

The Heimwehr's leaders made no attempt to conceal their disdain for the new head of the government. Streeruwitz was made aware of their contempt for him early in his reign. On May 7, 1929, while delivering his inaugural address before the members of parliament he was rudely interrupted by one of the Heimwehr

\(^{3}\)Goldinger, Geschichte der Republik Österreich, p. 142.

\(^{4}\)Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 35.
sympathizers in that body. As Streuerwitz relates in his memoirs, the delegate presented him a message from the Heimwehr which vaguely demanded that he take "special sharp measures"\(^85\) against the socialists in the near future and that he meet with the Heimwehr immediately after the speech. That insult was shortly afterwards followed by a contemptuous speech by Steidle, in which the Heimwehr leader boldly predicted the imminent replacement of the recently appointed chancellor by his predecessor.\(^86\)

Obviously rankled by the Heimwehr's condescending attitude, the chancellor decided to strike back. He ordered his minister of the interior, Vinzenz Schumy, to issue a decree which would prohibit the presence of steel helmets, spades, and pickaxes at any demonstration.\(^87\) At the same time Streuerwitz successfully encouraged the governor of Lower Austria to prohibit demonstrations by either the Heimwehr or the Schutzbund from mid-May to mid-September.\(^88\) Through these actions the chancellor hoped to diminish the possibility of

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\(^{88}\) *Neue Freie Presse, Morgenblatt*, May 15, 1929, p. 4.
conflict between the armed formations of the right and the left.

The Heimwehr virtually ignored these orders. Their marches and demonstrations continued unabated in the spring and summer months of 1929. Frequently the Heimwehr would circumvent the ban on demonstrations by holding what were called flag dedications—Heimwehr demonstrations which the Church officially sanctioned. An integral part of such a demonstration was a mass at which church dignitaries would give their blessing to the Heimwehr flag. Just as often the Heimwehr made no attempts to disguise its armed parades thereby showing its open contempt for Schumy's directive. Examples of such flagrant disregard of the authorities were the demonstrations on May 18 in Aspang and on June 2 in Mödling and Graz and the bloody encounter with the socialists in St. Lorenzen on August 18.

Even while the Heimwehr was making a mockery of the government's decrees, Seipel publicly defended the Heimwehr movement. In a speech at Tübingen on July

89 For accounts of the flag dedications, see Gulick, Austria from Habsburg to Hitler, Vol. II, pp. 826-828; Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 38; and Streeruwitz, Springflut über Österreich, p. 410.

90 Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 38.
16 he declared:

In our land of Austria there exists a mighty mass movement which wants to liberate democracy from party rule. The pillars of this movement are the Heimwehr. My criticism of pseudo-democracy is not directed against one particular party alone but against all those who follow its lead. All parties in Austria have their doubts about the rightness and lawfulness of our present system of government except the Social Democratic Party, which refuses to listen to criticism and regards precisely those aspects of our democracy which are not good as sacred. It is actually for this reason alone that the Heimwehr movement is in conflict with the Social Democrats. This has nothing to do with class warfare. The Heimwehr includes citizens of every class among its members and supporters. The world has probably heard very different verdicts on the Heimwehr. Quite understandably, there has been a deliberate campaign to give a false picture of the movement. While it is true that the Austrian Heimwehr exerts a form of military discipline over its members, this is not a sign of militarism. It is done for the sake of discipline. The main danger which it faces, and of which its best members are well aware, is that while engaged in a struggle against the predominance of parties, it may itself degenerate into a political party. Only a discipline similar to that of an army will save them from this danger. It is true that the Heimwehr cultivates a spirit of combat in its ranks and that this spirit has time and again been manifested in defensive struggles against the terrorism which the Social Democrats deny in theory, but which unfortunately they exercise again and again in practice. It is true that the Heimwehr has occasionally also fallen foul of administrative bodies and functionaries of the majority parties. But this has happened only when they clearly displayed the influence of undemocratic party rule. That is the truth.91

91 See Seipel's Kampf um Österreichs Verfassung, pp. 177-178; and Hans Arthofer, 1918-1936--Vom Selbstschutz zur Frontmiliz (Vienna: Verlag Zoller, 1936), pp. 39-40,
With this speech Seipel virtually gave his approval to the Heimwehr's unlawful activities during the summer of 1929.

Seipel could neither have foreseen nor sanctioned the sanguinary engagement between socialist forces and the Heimwehr at St. Lorenzen on August 18. In this little Styrian town the prelude to the later civil war was acted out on a smaller scale. August 18 had been set aside by the socialists to demonstrate and listen to their leader Kolloman Wallisch. The Heimwehr sent a contingent of 2,000 troops deliberately to break up the gathering. As planned, the ruckus they started ended in a serious brawl in which guns, including a machine gun, were brought into play. The confrontation resulted in the death of four of the participants and the wounding of two hundred others. Three of the deceased were socialist workers. Over half of the wounded were Heimwehr men.\(^{92}\)

Enough evidence exists to lead one to believe that the conflict at St. Lorenzen was intended to be much more than a local clash of opposing forces. Although

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rumors of a putsch had been in the air since the spring—and these were causing grave concern in foreign capitals\(^3\)—more concrete evidence is at hand. Franz Winkler frankly states in his published memoirs that it was hoped that the incident at St. Lorenzen would initiate a "march on Vienna."\(^4\) Schumy expresses a similar point of view. In his opinion the conflict at St. Lorenzen was intended to set in motion events detrimental "to the existing constitutional state of affairs."\(^5\) On the 18th most of the Heimwehr's leaders, including Anton Rintelen, Pfrimer, Steidle, and Pabst, were in Vienna.\(^6\) Furthermore, a few days earlier Pabst had transferred the central headquarters of the Heimwehr to the capital city to coordinate the Heimwehr's actions in the event of a putsch.\(^7\) Also quite revealing is Pabst's August 24 interview with the Neue Freie Presse, during the course of which he voluntarily brought up for

\(^3\)The governments of Great Britain and France were particularly disturbed by all these rumors of a Heimwehr putsch. See Phipps to Foreign Office, Vienna, April 12, 1929, Public Record Office (London), File 149/3, No. C2611.

\(^4\)Winkler, Die Diktatur in Österreich, pp. 27-28.

\(^5\)Schumy, Ungedruckte Aufzeichnungen, p. 28.

\(^6\)Ludwig, Österreichs Sendung im Donauraum, p. 68.

\(^7\)Ibid.
discussion the topic of a march on Vienna. Although Pabst's remarks were made after the event, it indicates the extent of his preoccupation with a coup d'état.

Perhaps most conclusive of all is the evidence found in the Hungarian archives. During the summer of 1929 Mussolini had repeatedly suggested to his Hungarian friends that he was less than satisfied with the Heimwehr's performance thus far. In a conversation with the Hungarian ambassador, Andras Hory, on August 10, Mussolini made special reference to his disappointment with the Austrian organization. Their frequent promises of "decisive" action had come to nothing. If further support was to be expected from him Mussolini insisted that he would need more than mere promises. Perhaps if the Heimwehr's leaders issued a written statement outlining how and when action would be taken, he could be persuaded to continue his assistance.

The Heimwehr's leaders were informed about Mussolini's disappointment on that very same day. Wasting no time, Steidle, Pfrimer, and Pabst drafted a

98 Gulick, *Austria from Habsburg to Hitler*, Vol. II, p. 840. Gulick only surmises that it was Pabst who gave the interview.

memorandum dated August 10 in which they pledged themselves to take action no later than March 15, 1930, preferably by effecting a change in the constitution. This timetable could be greatly speeded up if continuing Italian aid was immediately forthcoming. In that case, something might be accomplished early in the fall. With this statement, the Heimwehr bound itself to undertake forceful action at the earliest possible date. Could the promised "action" have been the St. Lorenzen incident? Evidence suggests that it was. Probably the reason why no "march on Vienna" was attempted was that the Heimwehr could not gain the support of any of the state's forces. There was little doubt as to where Streeruwitz and Schamy stood on the question of a putsch. Both would have resolutely opposed a putsch attempt by the Heimwehr. Schober, the

100 See declaration by the Heimwehr's leaders concerning the implementation of the planned "action," Vienna, August 10, 1929, Acta Historica, Vol. XI (1965), Doc. No. 16, pp. 324-325.

101 See Streeruwitz, Springer Über Österreich, p. 412. In his memoirs Schamy writes that in May, 1928, he was asked by a Heimwehr leader whether he "would condone the use of illegal methods to change the constitution of Austria." He, of course, gave a strong negative reply. See his Ungedruckte Aufzeichnungen, p. 24.
president of the Austrian police publicly declared on August 26 that "any putsch attempt, no matter what its origin, will be nipped in the bud." Only Karl Vaugoin, minister of the army, left some doubt as to where he stood on the issue of a coup d'etat by the Heimwehr. In spite of the Heimwehr's failure to expand the conflict of August 18 into a "march on Vienna," Mussolini was apparently well enough satisfied with the August 10 statement to continue aiding the Heimwehr. On September 21, 1929, another payment of 382,000 schillings was made to it. The money was again personally handed over to Steidle by Janky, after having passed through the various channels already mentioned.

This new grant of money was to be used by the Heimwehr to force Streeruwitz to resign. At a September 10 meeting in Rome between the Hungarian foreign minister Lajos Walko and the Italian dictator, the latter once again expressed his concern over the Heimwehr's strength.

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102 See Arbeiter Zeitung, September 7, 1929, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Executive," Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).

103 In a conversation in mid-September with the Hungarian military attaché Daniel Fabry, Vaugoin spoke favorably about the possibility of a combined Heimwehr-government action against the socialist. Whether this meant that he favored a Heimwehr putsch is, of course, conjecturable. See Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 42.

104 Ibid., p. 52.
Rather than force the Heimwehr to premature action, would it not be better, he queried, to work for the downfall of the present government and hope that it would be replaced by one more favorable to the Heimwehr. Personally, he would just as soon see Schober at the head of the new government. He was a recognized politician and a highly respected leader of men. Perhaps he could bring new life into the Heimwehr if he placed himself at the head of the organization.  

The Heimwehr had, of course, been working for the fall of the Streeruwitz government ever since May. It needed little prompting from the duce to continue its attacks against the Austrian chancellor. Increasingly after August, the Heimwehr began to put pressure on the chancellor to make needed changes in the constitution. By the fall of 1929 the Heimwehr had adopted the ideology of the corporate state. It hoped that it could influence the government to espouse its program.  

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In their attack on the existing type of government, the Heimwehr received the unexpected help of the Landbund. On August 25, 1929, the Landbund announced that it, too, favored an extensive revision of the constitution and that it also favored a corporative state. It was the timing that was important. The peasant organization specifically proposed the creation of a stronger presidency, the establishment of a unicameral legislative system in which representation was to be determined not by political parties but by the private corporative sectors of the community. Furthermore, the Landbund proposed a change in the procedure to amend the constitution. A majority vote in parliament should suffice rather than the two-thirds now needed. The leaders of the agrarian league even went so far as to intimate that they might condone the use of "illegal" methods to change the constitution should legal methods bear no fruit. The Landbund's timely demand for

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107 The idea of a corporate state had appeared in the program of the Landbund as early as 1924. Ibid., p. 2. See also Wache, Deutscher Geist in Österreich, p. 230.

constitutional revision strengthened the Heimwehr's hand in bringing pressure on the government. On the whole, the peasant organization favored changes of the constitution similar to those of the Heimwehr—especially a stronger presidency. Although the Heimwehr and the Landbund were probably much farther apart in their goals and how they were to achieve them than they realized, their apparent unanimity gave both groups cause to be optimistic. The Heimwehr in particular felt encouraged by this turn of events. It considered the time had come to offer a bolder front to the Streeruwitz regime.

In mid-September the Heimwehr took its "bold" step. In a newspaper article which was entitled "Last Warning," published in the Alpenländische Heimatwehr, it issued a virtual ultimatum to the Streeruwitz government and demanded "total reforms." If the Streeruwitz government felt itself too weak to effectuate the "appropriate" constitutional reforms, it would have to be removed by force. The upcoming demonstration on September 29109 might be the proper time to

109 The possibility of using the demonstrations of September 29 as a pretext for a putsch was discussed by Daniel Fabry and Karl Vagoin at a meeting in early September. It was also a topic of conversation between the Hungarian foreign minister and Mussolini in their meeting on September 10. Mussolini discouraged a coup d'État on the 29th. Seipel and Steidle met with the
oust the present chancellor from his office.\footnote{110}

By mid-September Streeruwitz' days as chancellor were numbered. He was slowly losing control of the situation. Rumors of an imminent change of government were constantly in the air.\footnote{111} Even worse, the chancellor was being opposed by elements within his own bourgeois bloc. At the end of the first week of September both the Pan-Germans and the Christian Social Party came out for a revision of the constitution.\footnote{112} The \textit{Reichspost} could even declare that the Heimwehr represented "the will of the people in force


\footnote{110}{\textit{Alpenländische Heimatwehr}, September, 1929, p. 1.}

\footnote{111}{See Edmondson, "The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics," pp. 118-119.}

\footnote{112}{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 116.}
and deed."\textsuperscript{113} In several interviews, Seipel emphasized his support of the "irresistible movement."\textsuperscript{114} The Lower Austrian Peasant Union thought it saw the handwriting on the wall and decided to join in the ranks of the Heimwehr's membership.\textsuperscript{115} On September 25 the German ambassador reported that "internal political developments are essentially determined by the Heimwehr movement."\textsuperscript{116} On the same day, Pabst announced: "Before the sun sets, the Streeruwitz government will be overthrown."\textsuperscript{117} His prophecy proved to be true. Shortly after Pabst made his prediction, Vice-Chancellor Schumy informed Streeruwitz that he had been told by his party to leave the government. Upon this, Seipel

\textsuperscript{113} As quoted in Gulick, Austria from Habsburg to Hitler, Vol. II, p. 844.


\textsuperscript{116} As quoted in Edmondson, "The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics," p. 119.

\textsuperscript{117} As quoted in Gulick, Austria from Habsburg to Hitler, Vol. II, p. 854; and Otto Leichter, Glanz und Ende der Ersten Republik. Wie es zum Österreichischen Bürgerkrieg kam (Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1964), p. 86.
hurried to the Ballhausplatz to advise Streeruwitz to resign and name Schober his successor. One hour after his conference with Seipel, Streeruwitz offered his resignation to the Christian Social Club.\textsuperscript{118} Kunschak promptly went to Schober to offer him the chancellorship.\textsuperscript{119} With Schober as the new chancellor, the Heimwehr felt it had reached another turning point in its history.

\textsuperscript{118}Gulick, \textit{Austria from Habsburg to Hitler}, Vol. II, p. 854.

\textsuperscript{119}Kunschak, \textit{Österreich, 1918–1934}, pp. 112–113.
CHAPTER FOUR:

THE GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT: SCHOBER AND THE HEIMWEHR,
SEPTEMBER, 1929, TO SEPTEMBER, 1930

The election of Johannes Schober to the Austrian chancellorship on September 26, 1929, met with the unanimous approval of the Heimwehr. Its leaders had long been on friendly terms with the new head of state. Since July, 1927, Schober had increasingly taken the Heimwehr leaders into his confidence.\(^1\) While president of the Vienna police he had virtually given them the run of his office, and on at least one occasion he had placed the entire communications system of the Vienna police at the disposal of the Heimwehr's chief-of-staff.\(^2\) Its leaders had every reason to believe that the newly-elected chancellor would want to continue his close ties with them. So convinced were they of this that they referred to the new chancellor as "their" man.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Nemes, "Die Österreichische Aktion der Bethlen Regierung," p. 216.

\(^2\) Die Österreichischen Putschisten, p. 33.

\(^3\) Andics, 50 Jahre unseres Lebens, p. 186.
It proved to be one of the Heimwehr's biggest disappointments when, in the months ahead, their position vis-à-vis the chancellor gradually deteriorated.

The formation of Schober's cabinet on the following day might have served as a portent to the worsening relationship between the Heimwehr and the chancellor. Although there were rumors that Schober had contemplated offering two ministerial posts to Heimwehr men,\(^4\) not a single adherent to that movement was represented in the Schober government, although two men, possibly three,\(^5\) were on extremely good terms with the Heimwehr leaders. Karl Vaugoin, minister of the army and now also vice-chancellor, had a long history of close ties with the Heimwehr, as did Franz Slama, the newly appointed minister of justice.\(^6\) Vinzenz Schumy, who

\(^4\)Allegedly, Seipel encouraged Schober to include Steidle and Arbesser in his cabinet, but it was Schumy who talked him out of it. See Schumy, Ungedruckte Aufzeichnungen, \(34\); and Die Österreichischen Putschisten, p. \(52\).

\(^5\)There were some who claimed that the new minister of education, Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, was a Heimwehr sympathizer. See Die Österreichischen Putschisten, p. \(53\).

\(^6\)Slama was a former leader of the Upper Austrian Heimwehr, and it was expected that he would protect the Heimwehr's interests in the Schober regime. See Goldinger, Geschichte der Republik Österreich, p. \(144\).
remained minister of the interior, also had a long-standing relationship with the Heimwehr; but of late he had become skeptical about the movement.

Nevertheless, the early days of the Schober chancellorship gave the Heimwehr leaders some reason to believe that intimate ties would be maintained with the chancellor. Schober was too much of a pragmatist to take the Heimwehr lightly. He was clearly cognizant of the important political position the Heimwehr had been able to attain. He had every intention of remaining on good terms with the movement and of working hand in hand with its leaders. Using his inaugural address to strike the proper mood, he declared:

Men from all classes of the community, honest in their views, joined the Heimwehr with the feeling that many of our public institutions are in urgent need of reform. The manner in which these questions were dealt with in parliament was so slow and unsatisfactory that the demand for reform became ever louder and more urgent. To describe the movement, however, as directed towards a coup d'état would be untrue and unjust, and such suggestions have created an entirely false picture of Austria's internal conditions abroad. . . . We shall regard it as our task to make contact with the Heimwehr and to lead the movement into such paths as will enable us to fulfill their demands, so far as they are justified, in a constitutional manner.  

In an attempt to make good his promise to maintain

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7Kleinschmied, Schober, pp. 211-212.
contact with the Heimwehr, Schober planned to hold lengthy discussions with Steidle sometime after his inaugural speech. Such a meeting with the Tyrolese leader was held in late September. Throughout that conference an atmosphere of cordiality and friendship apparently prevailed. The talk centered on possible ways in which the Heimwehr might be used to strengthen the government's position against the socialists. Steidle suggested that the most effective step the government could take to weaken the socialists was to concentrate on reforming the constitution. His organization might be able to frighten the Social Democrats into accepting an "appropriate" change in the Austrian constitution, the Heimwehr leader felt, by increasing the belligerency of any future demonstration which might be held. Schober concurred, but was quick to emphasize, somewhat to Steidle's chagrin, that such belligerency must stay within the bounds of legality. The chancellor indicated to Steidle that he would not tolerate any illegal action on the part of the Heimwehr both because he himself was repulsed by any type of unlawful activity and because such unlawfulness might frighten away foreign creditors which Austria
badly needed at this time.\textsuperscript{8} Both leaders agreed that any demonstrations planned for the near future would take a strictly legal course.\textsuperscript{9}

It was probably due to Schober's strong plea for calm that demonstrations that had been planned for September 29 (which Vaugoin had earlier predicted would take a "decisive" course) transpired without incident. The simultaneous marches at Mödling, Stockerau, Pöchlarn, and Zwettl\textsuperscript{10} were attended by about 21,000 men and were on the whole peaceful.\textsuperscript{11} In spite of the usual flamboyant language used by the Heimwehr's

\textsuperscript{8}Schober no doubt kept in mind the "warning" he received from Henderson on September 14, 1929, while he was still police chief. The English foreign minister stated that any attempted "march on Vienna," and, indeed, the very talk of a coup d'état could "adversely affect relations between the two countries" and could result in an "embarrassing situation." See Henderson to Schober, London, September 14, 1929, Public Record Office, File 149/3, No. C8109.

\textsuperscript{9}Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 51.

\textsuperscript{10}According to Hellmut Andics, it was Seipel who coordinated and directed these marches from behind the scenes. See Andics' Der Staat den keiner wollte, p. 248. Hungary's foreign minister, Lajos Walko, after his conversation with Seipel on September 19, in which the upcoming demonstrations of the 29th were fully discussed, concluded that "Seipel holds all the strings in his hand." See discussion of the Hungarian Foreign Minister Lajos Walko with Ignaz Seipel, Vienna, September 19, 1929, Acta Historica, Vol. XI (1965), Doc. No. 20, pp. 328-329.

\textsuperscript{11}Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 53.
leaders, the speeches "showed no intent to depart from the legal path."\textsuperscript{12}

These demonstrations, as well as Steidle's earlier promise to Schober to follow the path of legality indicate that the Heimwehr was--at least for the moment--committed to taking only peaceful action. To that effect, it concentrated its energy in the months ahead on bringing about a "favorable" revision of the 1920 constitution--something which the government also wanted. Early in his administration Schober had pledged himself and his regime to reform the existing constitutional system. He had created a commission whose duty it was to draft suggested changes in the old document. He had asked this commission to pay particularly close attention to any proposals offered to it by the Heimwehr.\textsuperscript{13}

On September 30 the Heimwehr offered its reform proposals to the government. Among the more important of the Heimwehr's suggestions included in its draft to the commission were the following: an increase in the power of the federal president, the elimination of

\textsuperscript{12}Neue Freie Presse, Abendblatt, September 30, 1928, pp. 1-3.

\textsuperscript{13}Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 53.
Vienna's status as a province, and far-reaching electoral reforms which would greatly reduce socialist influence and representation in the provincial diets.  

Perhaps more important, and certainly more extreme, was the renewal of a demand made earlier that the government suspend the present constitution until a new one was written. Until this was done the government should rule by councils which would have dictatorial powers. Schumy, who read the document, stated that the Heimwehr's proposals envisioned "no more and no less than an authoritarian corporative state based on fascism."  

The government, of course, ignored the Heimwehr demand that the constitution be suspended, but it did include some of the other major Heimwehr proposals in the constitutional bill which it introduced in parliament on October 18. In fact, almost everyone of the Heimwehr's proposals was included in the government's draft.

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15 For the full text of the documents which spelled out the Heimwehr's proposals in regard to the suspension of the constitution, see Phipps to Henderson, Vienna, October 10, 1930, Public Record Office (London), File 121/3, No. C7797; and Phipps to Henderson, Vienna, November 1, 1930, ibid., File 121/3, No. C8193.

16 Schumy, Ungedruckte Aufzeichnungen, p. 38.
In it was the demand for greatly increased powers of the executive, particularly as concerned his ability to issue emergency decrees. The Bundesrat was to be transformed into a Council of Provinces and Estates, in which Vienna's representation was to be reduced from two-fifths to one-ninth. Vienna was to lose its status as a province, the proportional representation which existed in the provincial governments was to be abolished, trial by jury was to be removed, and further changes in the constitution were to require simple majority votes in parliament and in referendums. In short, according to one writer friendly to the socialist cause, the government's proposals envisioned the creation of an authoritarian, corporative state.  

In the next several weeks of debate in the Nationalrat one after the other of the government's proposals were watered down. Much to the Heimwehr's chagrin, it was Schober himself who undertook the assignment of working out a compromise solution with the socialist negotiator, Robert Danneberg.  


18 In an interview with the English ambassador on October 17, Schober indicated to him that he expected little opposition from the socialists on the issue of constitutional revision. The chancellor explained to
represented nothing less than a betrayal of its trust. Between October 18 and December 7, when the governmental bill was discussed and finally approved by parliament, the relationship between Schober and the Heimwehr seriously worsened. By December the Heimwehr was calling for the chancellor’s resignation.

The leaders of the Heimwehr gave expression to their disenchantment with the Schober government in a demonstration held in Vienna on October 27, 1929, which was attended by 12,800 Heimwehr members. Two thousand of them were from Starhemberg’s Upper Austrian Jäger battalion. It was the first time they appeared publicly in Vienna with their leader\textsuperscript{19} and was one of the first

the ambassador that ever since July, 1927, the socialists were in a very compromising mood and would not put up any major obstacles to the reform bill which he would introduce the following day. See Phipps to Henderson, Vienna, October 17, 1929, Public Record Office (London), File 149/3, No. C7967.

\textsuperscript{19} Starhemberg had become leader of the Upper Austrian Heimwehr on July 18, 1929. As head of that organization, he wanted to create an organization which was entirely free from any party influence or affiliation. From money drawn from his own inherited fortune, he attempted to organize an elite formation of heavily-armed and well-trained men immediately responsible to his command. There were about 6,000 of these men in the Jäger battalion. It cost the prince a great part of his fortune to finance this private army. Late in 1930 he was forced to sue for bankruptcy as a result of his large investments in his personal army. See Barbara Berger, "Ernst Rüdiger Fürst Starhemberg: Versuch einer Biographie" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Vienna, 1967); and Neue Freie Presse, July 19, 1929, p. 8.
indications of the future important role that the Upper Austrian leader was to play in the history of the Heimwehr movement. Speaking before this giant assembly of Heimwehr followers were the federal leader Steidle and the leader of the Vienna Heimatwehr, Emil Fey. Both spoke of the necessity for a thorough revision of the "red" constitution. Fey even declared that "should the /"Schober/ proposal be watered down, the Heimwehr would have the last word, and would, if necessary, take action."²⁰

This threat by Fey caused a great deal of concern in governmental circles. It was not so much that the government feared a coup d'etat at this time but that it was concerned with the reactions Fey's remark engendered abroad. At the time Fey made his provocative statement the Austrian government was involved in delicate negotiations with the House of Morgan about the possibility of a loan. Fey's comments could not help but give the impression that Austria's domestic situation was extremely unstable, and any investor would think twice before committing funds to a country

²⁰Neue Freie Presse, Morgenblatt, October 31, 1929, p. 7; Hofmann, Der Pfrimer Putsch, p. 21.
with a volatile political situation.\textsuperscript{21}

The precarious political balance in Austria was clearly a matter of international concern.\textsuperscript{22} England and France in particular were worried about Austrian domestic stability. On November 4, 1929, Arthur Henderson, England's foreign minister, alluded to Austria's tense internal condition in a speech to the House of Commons. Commenting on the constitutional issues being debated in the Austrian parliament, the foreign minister stated: "A breakdown of the present parliamentary negotiations, if followed by any attempt to deal with the problem by other means, would naturally cause His Majesty's Government grave concern as constituting a serious menace to international stability."\textsuperscript{23} Two days later the French

\textsuperscript{21} The English government, in fact, advised the House of Morgan and Wall Street to turn down the Austrian request for a loan unless the associations were "dissolved and disarmed." See Phipps to Foreign Office, Vienna, November 24, 1929, Public Record Office (London), File 149/3, No. G8939.

\textsuperscript{22} So much so that Czechoslovakia proposed to France and England that the three powers jointly intervene "on behalf of the socialists with a view of preventing armed conflict." See Foreign Office Memorandum, London, October 31, 1929, \textit{ibid.}, File 149/3, No. C8286.

foreign ministry issued a statement strongly supporting Henderson's remarks. It, too, showed grave concern about the armed formations in Austria and was particularly bothered about the "boldness of what is called the fascist spirit of the Heimwehren." 24 Both governments agreed to bring pressure to bear on Schober to proceed vigorously with the disarming of Austria's paramilitary formations. 25

Schober did not take the admonitions of the French and English lightly. On November 18 he met with the leaders of the Heimwehr to inform them of the views of the English and French. He told his Heimwehr "friends" that it would be necessary for him to carry on with plans to bring about the disarmament of the country's armed formations. To refuse to do so would bring down upon him the wrath of foreign governments and would surely result in Austria's failure to procure a much needed international loan. To carry out his plans, the chancellor told them, he would need the support of both the Heimwehr and the Schutzbund. Disarmament could not be a one-sided affair. Both sides

24 Quoted in Gulick, Austria from Habsburg to Hitler, Vol. II, p. 871.

would have to give up their weapons, although it would be possible, Schober maintained, to quickly resupply the Heimwehr with weapons in the event of an emergency. 26

In spite of these favorable terms the prospect of disarming did not strike a responsive chord among the Heimwehr's leaders. Quite to the contrary, it aroused in them a feeling of outright dismay and indignation. They had hardly expected to hear these words from the chancellor's mouth. Steidle went so far as to reject the government's offer with the threat that "the Heimwehr would offer armed resistance to all attempts at disarmament." 27

As a consequence of the November 18 meeting relations between the chancellor and the Heimwehr worsened seriously. Pabst, with Vaugoin's backing, began secret negotiations with Italy to induce that country to "hinder Austria's efforts to free herself from the impediments in the way of the flotation of her loan." 28

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27 Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 58.

28 Phipps to Foreign Office, Vienna, November 24, 1929, Public Record Office (London), File 149/3, No. C8939. See also Kleinschmied, Schober, p. 236; Arbeiterwille, December 4, 1929, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Italien," Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna); and Schumy, Unge- druckte Aufzeichnungen, p. 46.
19, 1929, the leaders of the Tyrolese Heimwehr met in Innsbruck to discuss alternative reactions to the chancellor. Although the possibility of a "march on Vienna" was brought up, the conclusion was reached to issue instead a statement publicly denouncing the Schober regime and its policy of compromise with the socialists.29

Nevertheless, in spite of the decision of the Tyrolese Heimwehr not to take forceful action, rumors of a Heimwehr putsch again filled the Austrian air. Talk of an impending putsch came from various sources. Foreign newspapers devoted an uncommon amount of space to the Heimwehr and its purported radical actions.30 Kurt von Schuschnigg declared that some time in mid-

29 Such a statement followed on November 24, 1929. See Mikoletzky, Österreichische Zeitgeschichte, p. 142.

30 See, for example, the following foreign newspaper accounts as quoted in Austrian newspapers: Neue Züricher Zeitung, in Arbeiterwille, December 4, 1929, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Finanzierung;" Berliner Tageblatt, in Arbeiterwille, November 14, 1929, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Deutsche Volkspartei;" Le Matin, in Arbeiter Zeitung, November 7, 1929, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Deutschland;" and Prager Presse in Arbeiterwille, November 11, 1929, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Deutschland." All these can be found in the Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna). Kerekes, in his Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, pp. 59-61, also gives the reactions of various newspapers in Yugoslavia, Germany, and England to the possibility of a Heimwehr putsch.
November he had been visited by a pensioned officer who had told him that several hundred Heimwehr men were standing in readiness "to occupy the parliament at any given moment, to eliminate the parties, and in this way do away with the constitution by force." Schuschnigg credited these remarks as having a great deal of basis in fact.\(^{31}\) Finally, yet another factor pointing to a putsch was a statement by the banker Louis Rothschild to Steidle on November 18, 1929, in which he indicated to the Heimwehr leader that a quick and bloodless takeover by the Heimwehr would enable him and his affiliates to maintain the stability of the Austrian currency and economy.\(^{32}\)

Both the Social Democrats and the Schober government took the possibility of a Heimwehr putsch seriously. The Schutzbund was kept on night and day alert, and its leaders negotiated with Jugoslavia about the possibility of getting arms.\(^{33}\) More significant perhaps was the


chancellor's reaction. In another of his conferences with Heimwehr leaders in November, Schober stated bluntly that any attempt to overthrow the government by force would be countered with armed resistance by the federal government. With determined opposition by the state's forces, the Heimwehr's attempt to oust him would have no chance of success, he warned. Although the Heimwehr admitted that its troops had been placed on an alert, it declared that it had absolutely no intention of carrying out a coup d'état. Whether this was true or not, the alert was called off on November 20, and conditions were allowed to return to normal.\footnote{Edmondson, "The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics," pp. 132-134.}

For Schober the confrontation with the Heimwehr in November, 1929, greatly enhanced his position vis-à-vis that organization. He now felt himself sufficiently strong to take further steps to reduce the impetus of that movement, or at least to bring it more firmly under his control. Towards the end of the year the chancellor formulated a threefold plan to accomplish the aims. He concluded that in order to make himself master of the Heimwehr he would have to (1) persuade the movement's financial backers to channel their
contributions to the Heimwehr through him, thereby giving him the power to withhold support when he felt such action to be necessary; (2) remove the "triumvirate" (Steidle, Pfrimer, Pabst) now at the head of the association and replace it with a man more to his liking (Starhemberg); and (3) expel the most dangerous member of the movement--i. e., Pabst--from the country. By September of the following year the three points of the chancellor's plan had been realized.

To implement the first part of his plan, the chancellor attempted to endear himself to the Heimwehr's most important backer, the Italian dictator. This policy met with great success. Mussolini needed little persuasion from the Austrian government to stop his monetary support of the Heimwehr. Even before Schober's overtures to him in late 1929 he had decided to terminate the flow of money into the Heimwehr's coffers. Thus,

35 In his unpublished memoirs, Schumy writes that Schober became convinced of the necessity of expelling the German émigré Pabst from the country sometime in November, 1929. See his Ungedruckte Aufzeichnungen, p. 46.

36 See Gabor Apor's letter to the Hungarian envoy in Vienna, Béla Janky, Rome, October 21, 1929, Acta Historica, Vol. XI (1965), Doc. No. 22, p. 331. Apor wrote that even the latest sum recently sent to the Heimwehr was received after "extended and painful negotiations." Any further assistance from Italy would be completely out of the question, he felt.
when he was contacted by the Austrian ambassador late that year the ambassador found the Italian leader eager to work more closely through official Austrian channels rather than through the Heimwehr. By the end of the year Austro-Italian relations had improved to the point where Italy not only withdrew her earlier veto of an Austrian loan but the English ambassador could write on December 17, 1929, that "the first sight that meets our gaze is Signor Mussolini and Herr Schober locked in a close embrace." As Austro-Italian relations continued to improve, the Heimwehr found it increasingly difficult to gain access to the Italian leader.

At about the same time when Schober began establishing more intimate ties with Italy he took the equally important step of cutting off support from the Heimwehr's domestic financial backers. In December, 1929, the

37 In 1927-1928, when Austria had made her previous attempt to float an international loan, Italy had wrecked those plans because of bitter outbursts in the Austrian parliament against her policy in the South Tyrol. In November, 1929, Mussolini agreed to support an Austrian loan, but only on three conditions: (1) Schober would have to carry through his constitutional reform bill; (2) he would have to continue as chancellor after parliament had passed the bill; and (3) Seipel would have to refrain from active participation in the government of the country. See Foreign Office Memorandum, November 29, 1929, Public Record Office (London), File 149/3, No. C9336.

chancellor persuaded Austria's industrialists and bankers to temporarily halt their contributions to the Heimwehr and to resume them only upon his bidding. Between December, 1929, and the spring of 1930 these payments stopped, and when they were resumed they were made via the chancellor's office. 39

The sudden cessation of monetary support to the Heimwehr helped bring about a grave internal crisis within the movement. The constant bickering among its leaders, always a problem but which usually was kept from the public eye, abruptly broke into the open. The infighting began in December, 1929, and lasted until September, 1930, when Starhemberg emerged as sole leader. The factional differences which broke out in December involved a number of issues and personalities. They were not resolved until many months later and by then had caused a profound demoralization among the members of the Heimwehr.

One of the major causes of the dissension within the Heimwehr was the decision by the leadership of the Agrarian League to establish its own party guard. Such

39See Der Abend, December 31, 1929, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Finanzierung" Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna); and Kerekess, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, pp. 62 and 67.
a decision was made on December 14, 1929, and steps were shortly thereafter taken to implement the establishment of a peasant guard. This act by the Landbund was almost immediately attacked by the Heimwehr as rank treachery. The Heimwehr leaders were incensed by this encroachment on their sphere of influence and began to denounce the Landbund leadership bitterly. Their special target of derision was Vinzenz Schumy, not so much because he had been instrumental in establishing the Bauernwehr, but because he had long been a special target of Heimwehr hatred. Moreover, the Bauernwehr incident was used merely as an excuse to attack the minister of interior. On a number of occasions Schumy had criticized the Heimwehr for the anti-democratic course it was taking, and on December 25 he had delivered an especially vituperative speech against the movement and its leaders in which he had warned them against taking any "revolutionary action."  

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41 Phipps to Henderson, Vienna, December 28, 1929, Public Record Office (London), File 149/3, No. O10141; Neue Freie Presse, December 25, 1929; Deutschöster- reichische Tageszeitung, December 25, 1929. The latter two can be found in a folder entitled "Heimwehr- Bauernwehr," Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).
The Heimwehr retaliated by expelling the minister of interior from membership in the Carinthian Heimwehr in mid-December⁴² and by attacking him almost daily in the Heimwehr press and in the speeches of its leaders. At the forefront of the attack against Schumy were Steidle, Pabst, and Ludwig Hülgerth, the leader of the Carinthian Heimwehr. All three harbored a deep personal hatred for the minister of interior. Steidle resented the fact that Schumy could not be won over to condone forceful or illegal methods by the Heimwehr in order to come to power.⁴³ Pabst, even more than Steidle, had reason to hate Schumy because he knew that the interior minister intended to deport him at the earliest occasion.⁴⁴ And Hülgerth's animosity towards Schumy seems to have been motivated by feelings of personal jealousy. There apparently was a bitter rivalry between the two not only because both contended for power within the Carinthian Heimwehr in which both were active but also because both desired positions in the federal

⁴² Heimatschutz in Österreich, p. 181; and Deutsch-Österreichische Tageszeitung, December 25, 1929, in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Bauernwehr," Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).


⁴⁴ Ibid.
government and only Schumy had met with success.\textsuperscript{45}

Even though Schumy was reinstated as a member of the Carinthian Heimwehr on January 23, 1930, his relations with the Heimwehr leadership remained permanently on a bad footing.\textsuperscript{46}

While the controversy between Schumy and the Heimwehr was raging at fever pitch, other signs of a general malaise within the movement became visible. In December, 1929, serious factional differences came to the fore within the various paramilitary formations in Vienna. Although not always clear, the issues and personalities involved were such that one is left with the overall impression that the numerous appearances of factionalism were but a reflection of a larger struggle for supremacy in Vienna between Starhemberg and Fey. Both desired to gain ascendancy--moral or real--over the various paramilitary groups of the capital city, and both attempted to exploit the already existing conflicts to their own advantage.\textsuperscript{47}


\textsuperscript{46}Schumy, \textit{Ungedruckte Aufzeichnungen}, pp. 53-54.

\textsuperscript{47}Leichter, \textit{Glanz und Ende der Ersten Republik}, pp. 101-103.
In December, 1929, several such contentious issues erupted into the open and provided the two Heimwehr leaders with an opportunity to exploit them for their own benefit. One such issue—a long smoldering one—was the question of whether to allow Jews to join the Heimwehr.\textsuperscript{48} Another one equally controversial, was the Heimwehr's pro-Italian policy, and a third was the problem of corruption among the upper echelon members of the movement.\textsuperscript{49}

The long-standing ban by Steidle on making anti-Semitic or anti-Italian comments in public, as well as the feeling among many members that some high-ranking leaders, including Steidle and Pabst, were lining their pockets with money from Italy,\textsuperscript{50} caused the resignation of a number of prominent Heimwehr officials from the Selbstschutz Wien and some of the provincial organizations.\textsuperscript{51} The resignation of these officials from the

\textsuperscript{48} See Neues Wiener Abendblatt, October 9, 1928; Wiener Neueste Nachrichten, April 9, 1929; Die Presse, April 9, 1929; Die Freiheit, May 17, 1929; and Arbeiter Zeitung, June 18, 1929. All can be found in a folder entitled "Heimwehr-Juden," Tagblatt Archiv (Vienna).


\textsuperscript{50} This charge was later leveled by Starhemberg and caused great embarrassment to Steidle. See Kerekess, Abendämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 78.

Selbstschutz Wien resulted in a major shakeup and realignment of Vienna's paramilitary forces. Disgruntled members of the Selbstschutz Wien, led by Fritz Heger, agreed to break away from that organization (whose chief was Emil Fey) to form their own "Heimatschutzverband Wien," which became affiliated with Starhemberg's Vienna based Jägerfreikorps. Heger's move prompted other formations in Vienna to recognize Starhemberg as their leader, causing a major shift in the balance of power between Fey and Starhemberg in the capital city. The latter now seemed to be in a position of ascendancy and appeared to be on his way to a position of still higher responsibility.

The factionalism within the paramilitary organizations of Vienna did not directly involve the national leadership of the Heimwehr or the Austrian chancellor. Both, however, kept a close eye on the developments there. Steidle and Pfrimer appeared to be siding with Fey, whereas the chancellor seemed to be backing the Upper Austrian Heimwehr leader. Of late, Schober had

52 Phipps to Henderson, Vienna, April 2, 1930, ibid., File 121/3, No. C2704; Arbeiter Zeitung, April 1, 1930, p. 2.

53 See Lueghammer's "Die Wiener Heimatschutzbewegung," pp. 1-156, for a detailed account of the realignment of Vienna's paramilitary forces.
begun to show a keen interest in the fortunes of the prince and probably was even at this early date working for the latter's elevation to the top position in the Heimwehr movement.\textsuperscript{54} If this was so, then Starhemberg's growing power in Vienna can be viewed as yet another sign of the deteriorating relationship between the chancellor and the Heimwehr and an indication of Schober's growing mastery over the movement.\textsuperscript{55}

In the meantime, by dealing successfully with a number of pressing domestic problems during the time of the Heimwehr's internal crisis, the chancellor was able to strengthen his hand in his relations with the Heimwehr. On December 10 the government's constitutional reform bill was passed in the Federal Council, and it met with the satisfaction of everyone but the Heimwehr. Since virtually none of its major proposals were included in the final draft, the Heimwehr could hardly consider the

\textsuperscript{54}Schober began openly to take Starhemberg under his wing in June, 1930. Whether he backed the prince during the struggle for power in Vienna in the early months of 1930 can only be surmised. See Kerekes, \textit{Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie}, p. 76.

\textsuperscript{55}There was even speculation that Schober was willing to have himself placed at the head of the Heimwehr movement if this would mean a decline in the power of Steidle and Pabst. He considered both men, especially the latter, as disruptive influences in Austrian domestic affairs and felt that Austria and the Heimwehr movement would be better off without them. See Le Rougetel to Sargent, Vienna, January 16, 1930, Public Record Office (London), File 121/3, No. 0577.
new document acceptable. Of the main features of the new constitution, only one—the strengthening of the federal presidency—was at all agreeable to the Heimwehr. The other measures were contrary to the Heimwehr's earlier proposals. Vienna retained its status as a province, the Federal Council (Bundesrat) experienced little more than a change in name and was not transformed into a corporative body; and the Vienna Community Guard (Gemeineschutzwache) (created by mayor Karl Seitz in the aftermath of July 15, 1927) was not dissolved

56 The president could now dissolve the National Assembly and issue emergency decrees. He was also given the powers of commander-in-chief of the army.

57 Although the Federal Council was changed to the "Council of Provinces and Estates," its real composition and power was to be the subject of subsequent legislation. Karl Renner called this change a "harmless inroad" leading towards the concept of the corporative state. See his Österreich von der Ersten zur Zweiten Republik, p. 86.

58 After urgent protests in July, 1927, by the Inter-Allied Liquidation Commission, the Gemeineschutzwache was changed to an unarmed civil guard. This change satisfied the Liquidation Commission. Mayor Karl Seitz promised that the civil guard would be used only in emergency situations to protect public buildings. The continued existence of the unarmed civil guard (though arms could have been made available readily) was nevertheless a particular cause of concern for the Heimwehr. See Arnold Toynbee, Survey of International Affairs, 1927 (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), pp. 217-218.
as demanded by the Heimwehr. These and other Heimwehr demands failed to be incorporated into the new constitution.\textsuperscript{59} The degree to which the Heimwehr's wishes were ignored signified a major defeat for the movement.\textsuperscript{60}

The peaceful solution of the constitutional question greatly enhanced Schober's prestige both within Austria and abroad.\textsuperscript{61} The settling of the question of constitutional reform provided a proper atmosphere for Schober to turn to problems of an international nature. In January of the new year Schober traveled to The Hague to negotiate personally the termination of Austrian reparation payments to her former enemies. The chancellor encountered little


\textsuperscript{60}Otto Bauer and the Social Democrats called the Heimwehr's abortive struggle to get its demands incorporated into the new constitution the Heimwehr's "first battle of the Marne." See Phipps to Henderson, Vienna, June 16, 1930, Public Record Office (London), File 121/3, No. C4860.

\textsuperscript{61}The British were especially pleased with Schober's handling of the problem of constitutional reform. See Phipps to Henderson, Vienna, December 17, 1929, \textit{ibid.}, File 140/3, No. C9905.
difficulty in getting the former allied countries to agree to his proposals after giving them the promise that he would attempt to disarm Austria's armed formations and would abide by the military clauses of the Treaty of St. Germain. 62

The following month Schober paid a visit to the Italian dictator in Rome. Here, too, the Austrian chancellor was satisfied with what he was able to achieve. After short deliberation the two leaders concluded a treaty of friendship and arbitration. This treaty set the stage for the continuing good relations between the two countries for the next six years. 63

Next their discussions turned to the thornier problem of the future role of the Heimwehr. Here, also, the two heads of state found little to disagree about. Both conceded that the Heimwehr should not be dissolved, but perhaps disarmed, and that it should generally play a less vigorous role in Austria's domestic affairs. 64


63 Kleinschmied, Schober, pp. 223-224.

The duce emphasized the need for new leadership of the Heimwehr since those in power now had shown themselves incapable of significant accomplishments. Mussolini suggested that Schober should attempt to gain full direction over the movement and that he should guide it along those lines which would enable him to use the movement for his purposes—if possible, a further move to the right. Mussolini clearly hinted, much to Schober's satisfaction, that his ties with the Heimwehr were not indissoluble and that he favored the chancellor's efforts to keep the movement in check. If the chancellor were to gain control over the movement, and if further progress towards a more conservative course of action were made, nothing could prevent the growth of their friendship, the duce declared.65

His successful trips to The Hague and Rome placed Schober in an enviable position in his own country. None could deny the importance of both the liquidation of Austria's reparations obligation and Austria's friendship treaty with Italy; and, with the exception of the Heimwehr, which viewed the chancellor's visit with Mussolini with great suspicion, virtually all hailed

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the chancellor upon his return from Rome. The Heimwehr correctly surmised, and later its suspicions were confirmed,\textsuperscript{66} that Schober had promised to work for disarmament at The Hague, and it did not take long for its leaders to discover what had been discussed in Rome.\textsuperscript{67} They calculated correctly that their fortunes were on the decline and that their effectiveness as a non-party paramilitary organization would soon disappear if they would not take "strong" measures against the Schober government.

As a precautionary measure against the proposed disarmament of his organization, Steidle contacted the Hungarian government on March 27, 1930, and requested from it a shipment of arms. He hoped that additional arms might be procured for the Heimwehr and that this acquisition might be made without the knowledge of the government. These arms could then be kept in hiding

\textsuperscript{66} In late March, 1930, the Austrian press found out and revealed Schober's earlier promises of disarmament which he had made at The Hague and had later repeated to the League of Nations. See Phipps to Henderson, Vienna, March 5, 1930, Public Record Office (London), File 121/3, No. C1802; Gulick, \textit{Austria from Habsburg to Hitler}, Vol. II, p. 891.

\textsuperscript{67} Schober personally informed the Heimwehr leadership of his discussions with Mussolini shortly after his return from Rome in mid-February. See Phipps to Henderson, Vienna, February 13, 1930, Public Record Office (London), File 121/3, No. C1226; and Kerekes, \textit{Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie}, p. 67.
and held in reserve for emergency use. He asked for 5,000 machine guns, 2,000,000 cartridges, 300 hand grenades, and 500 gasmasks. But his request was turned down. Bethlen was well aware of the tension between the chancellor and the Heimwehr, and he correctly surmised that the organization wanted the weapons "to remain independent of Schober and to be able to exert pressure on him." The Hungarian prime minister was not prepared to work counter to Schober. 68

Undaunted by its failure to get weapons, the Heimwehr launched a verbal attack against the chancellor. Its leaders hoped that their threats would dissuade or frighten Schober from carrying out his plans for the demobilization of their organization. On May 1 Pfrimer issued the following threat: "I must warn the government in going too far in making such demands for disarmament. . . . Its meddling could lead to a popular storm. . . . We are tired of playing the role of a chained dog, and we are now taking our destiny into our own hands." 69 Several days later he declared: "We shall never give our consent to measures which are directed against the most sacred notions of

69 Der Panther, May 1, 1930, p. 2.
a free people."^70

Even more outspoken was Starhemberg, who stated: "All these rumors about disarmament are idle gossip. . . . It is quite impossible that the government which was brought to power by the Heimwehr could turn against it today. But should it occur to any regime to come forward with disarmament intentions, then the moment would come in which we would turn against the government, since we represent not the interests of the government but the interests of the entire people."^71 The Tyrolean leader Steidle declared: "The Heimwehr . . . must be prepared to begin the attack on today's party system in complete earnestness. . . . Whether this fight is carried out by intellectual weapons . . . or whether the Heimwehr must make use of physical might, only the future can demonstrate."^72 In a speech at Innsbruck on May 10, 1930, he followed up his earlier remarks by saying, "We are the storm troops of the revolution, the patriots who set against the dictatorship of dissolution the dictatorship of

[^70]: *Neue Freie Presse*, May 5, 1930, p. 5.
[^71]: *Der Panther*, May 17, 1930, p. 3.
reconstruction. In times of gravest peril only a few can rule, not great bodies. We want to end the French Revolution on German soil, if necessary, by a German revolution."  

The Heimwehr's attacks against Schober soon expanded into a general indictment of Austrian democracy. On May 18, 1930, at a conference of Heimwehr leaders assembled in the Lower Austrian town of Korneuburg, Steidle proclaimed the "Law and Policy" of the Heimwehr. This document, known in history as the Korneuburg oath, was the organization's most ringing denunciation yet of the Austrian parliamentary system. It showed how thoroughly disillusioned the Heimwehr leadership had become with democracy in Austria and how close it was to believing in the fascist system.

By virtue of its significance in the history of the Heimwehr movement this document deserves to be quoted in full. It reads:

We are determined to rebuild Austria from its foundations! We are determined to bring into being the Volksstaat of the Heimatschutz.

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73 *Der Panther*, May 17, 1930, p. 2.
74 As quoted in Jedicka's "The Austrian Heimwehr," pp. 138-139.
We demand of every comrade:
undaunted faith in the fatherland,
untiring zeal in service, and
passionate love of his native land.

We are determined to take over the state
and to remould it and its economy in the in-
terests of the whole Volk.

We must forget our own advantage, must
subordinate absolutely all party ties and
party interests to the aims of our struggle,
for we are determined to serve the whole
community of the German Volk!
We repudiate western parliamentary democracy
and the party state!

We are determined to replace them with
government by the estates (Stände) and by a
strong national leadership which will consist,
not of the representatives of parties, but of
leading members of the large estates and of
the ablest, most trustworthy men in our own
mass movement.

We are fighting against the subversion
of our Volk by marxist class-struggle and
liberal and capitalist economics. We are
determined to bring about an independent
development of the economy on a corporate
basis. We shall overcome the class struggle
and replace it by dignity and justice through-
out society.

We are determined to raise the standard
of living of our Volk by fostering an economy
based on the soil and administered for the
good of all.

The state is the personification of the
whole Volk; its power and leadership ensure
that the interests of the Stände are contained
within the framework of the needs of the
whole community.

Let every comrade realize and proclaim
that he is one of the bearers of a new German
national outlook, namely:
that he is prepared to offer up his blood and
his possessions, and that he recognizes three
forces only: Faith in God, his own unbending
will, the commands of his leaders!

The significance of the Korneuburg oath lies not so much
in the fact that it revealed the strong fascist tendencies
of the Heimwehr movement—these had long been apparent—
but rather in the fact that it led to a further deterio-
ration of the movement in terms of its position vis-à-
vis the chancellor and its own internal stability.

When Steidle originally presented the document to
his colleagues at Korneuburg he hoped that they would
unanimously approve it as the new program of the Heim-
wehr movement. He unexpectedly read the draft of the
document to those assembled before him and required all
of them to pledge themselves to remain faithful to the
principles just set forth and to reaffirm their
loyalty to him as their leader. Apparently all but
one of the leaders swore allegiance to both the program
and the Tyrolean Heimwehr leader. It thus seemed
that Steidle’s plan had met with great success. He
had received virtually complete acceptance of the
program with which he hoped to transform the Heimwehr

75 For earlier appearances of "fascist" ideas within
the Heimwehr movement, see Hiltl, Ein Gedenkbuch, pp.
79-80; Messerer, "Die Frontkämpfervereinigung Deutsch-
Österreich," pp. 119-121; and Ludwig Jedlicka, "Zur
Vorgeschichte des Korneuburger Eides," Österreich in
146-147.

76 Of the leaders present at Korneuburg, only Josef
Dengler, who represented the Freiheitsbund, did not
swear to the Korneuburg oath. See Franz Schweiger,
"Der Korneuburger Eid," p. 41.
and at the same time had received a strong mandate from his colleagues.

However, as a unifying factor the Korneuburg oath failed almost from the beginning. It gained neither the support of the rank and file nor the support of some of the important elements within and outside the movement, as Steidle had hoped. Rather than creating greater unity within the movement, the Korneuburg oath fostered additional dissent and aggravated the many differences already apparent.

The Korneuburg oath proved to be a miscalculated act for a number of reasons. In the first place, Steidle was wrong in assuming that the ideology of the corporate-fascist state would gain the support of the Austrian peasantry, the mainstay of the Heimwehr movement. He apparently did not realize that the Austrian farmer was basically democratically inclined and could accept authoritarianism no more from the right than from the left.\footnote{This point was made as early as 1938 by Franz Borkenau. See his \textit{Austria and After}, pp. 230-232. For a somewhat similar view, see also F. L. Carsten, \textit{The Rise of Fascism} (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 223-229.} In thinking that the universalist philosophy of Othmar Spann--whose ideas had provided the major inspiration in the formation
of the Korneuburg oath—would ideologically appeal to the instincts of the Austrian peasantry, Steidle showed how badly he misunderstood the disposition of a majority of the movement's followers. Although the Austrian peasant might have found attractive certain of the precepts of the oath—its anti-Marxism, its repudiation of the party state, and its emphasis on the importance of the estates—he hardly understood what any of this meant, and he could not accept the document's stress on the necessity to subordinate one's will to the state or leader. The peasant, no doubt also was suspicious of the fact that the oath, in part, intended to implement a system which seemed to have much in common with the current Italian fascist state.

Generally reluctant to accept any new system, let alone one which he barely understood, the Austrian peasant, as events were to prove, reacted strongly against the oath. 79


79 Borkenau, Austria and After, p. 231.
Almost immediately after the oath was made public it came under attack from individuals expressing the peasant point of view. Otto Ender, long the spokesman for peasants of Vorarlberg and himself a prominent member of the Heimwehr organization of that province, came out with a strong indictment against the fascist principles of the Korneuburg oath. He declared that the Heimwehr of Vorarlberg stands on constitutional soil. Should it ever abandon it, I could no longer remain its leader one hour longer. . . . I cannot swear to defend the constitution as state governor and break it in the Heimwehr / by swearing to the Korneuburg oath / . No one in this state can expect this kind of self-degradation from me. . . . What would we do to our people if we demanded a new revolution? How much misery and suffering would result from that venture? . . . We are not in Italy and I see no Mussolini. **80**

Ender's remarks were followed by the dramatic withdrawal of the Peasant League from the ranks of the organization which it had entered in August of the previous year and by the comments of the league's leader, Josef Reither, that he had never really intended to swear to the Korneuburg oath and that he did so only because of the pressure tactics brought to bear upon him and the others at Korneuburg. **81**

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80 **Neue Freie Presse, Morgenblatt**, May 28, 1930, p. 5.
81 Ibid.
The heavy-handed methods used by Steidle at Korneuburg were, in fact, another reason why the oath caused further dissension within the Heimwehr. Reither was not the only one who resented the manner in which the oath had been foisted upon the leaders at Korneuburg. Julius Raab, the chief of the Lower Austrian Heimwehr, was another of the leaders present at Korneuburg who subsequently not only attacked the methods used there but also criticized the ideas expressed by Steidle at Korneuburg. Raab, long "conspicuous among Steidle's critics," now declared himself virtually at war with the Steidle-Pabst clique and began conspiring with others for its downfall. He had always been firmly on the side of constitutionalism and democracy, and he had consistently come out against the fascist tendencies creeping into the Heimwehr organization. After the events at Korneuburg he sided more strongly than ever with those factions of the movement who wanted to replace Steidle and Pfrimer as federal leaders. He, with many others, became willing


or unwilling allies of Schober and Starhemberg, thus widening the rift within the movement.  

It was, above all, Starhemberg who felt embittered by what had transpired at Korneuburg on May 18. He had purposefully been misled about the proceedings of that day. His invitation for the conference was for the afternoon, and Steidle, who wanted to gain full credit for the day's events, intentionally hurried through the program in order to present the prince with a fait accompli. With Starhemberg absent he knew that it would be easier to railroad through the new program and to be reconfirmed in his position as co-leader of the Heimwehr.  

As it turned out Starhemberg's late appearance, however, proved to be an embarrassment for him. It was an insult which Starhemberg would not soon forget and which he would later have an occasion to repay. But for now the prince took recourse to action which he hoped would help discredit the Korneuburg Program (even though he was probably inclined in favor of its fascist principles) and the men who backed it. He declared the oath unclear, bombastic, and

84 Ibid.
85 Die österreichischen Putschisten, pp. 63-64.
unworkable, and ordered the members of his organization in Upper Austria and Vienna not to swear to it. 86

Finally, the oath, in addition to spreading disunity and dissension among the rank and file and its leaders, contributed to the worsening of relations between the Heimwehr and the governing elements in Austria. Although the reaction to the oath by the Christian Social Party was rather ambiguous, the government’s reaction was not. Two days after the publication of the Korneuburg oath, Schober conferred with Steidle, Pfrimer, Pabst, and Rauter and brusquely stated his opposition to the increasingly apparent anti-democratic tendencies of the Heimwehr. Furthermore, he warned them that he intended to continue with his plans to disarm the Heimwehr. Moreover, he told them that unrestrained opposition to his disarmament bill—which the chancellor was to introduce in parliament on May 23—would force him to deal “decisively” with the organization. 87

The Heimwehr responded to Schober’s remarks by handing to the government an ultimatum on the following day (May 21) demanding (1) that the disarmament of party organizations (the Schutzbund) be implemented

86 *Neue Freie Presse, Abendblatt*, May 23, 1930, p. 3.
with the cooperation of the Heimwehr; (2) that during the period of demobilization the ministry of the interior, the gendarmerie, and the police should be headed by Heimwehr men; and (3) that the Heimwehr would discuss its own demobilization only after the socialist party-guard had already been disarmed. No other procedure would be tolerated. 88

The government completely ignored the Heimwehr’s ultimatum. On the 23rd Schober introduced his disarmament bill on the floor of the National Council and used it as an occasion publicly to denounce the ultimatum delivered to him the previous day. He declared that an ultimatum of the kind presented to him on the 20th could not intimidate him into dropping his plans for the general disarmament of Austria’s paramilitary forces. "As long as there is a constitution in this state and a legal government exists," he declared, "only the stipulations of the government can matter." 89

His remarks were followed by remarks in a similar vein by Schumy, who stated that the Korneuburg oath was


89 Gulick, Austria from Habsburg to Hitler, Vol. II, p. 895; Khuglmayr, Achtung Europa, Gefahr von Osten, p. 287.
at variance with the oath to the Austrian constitution and that it would be

impossible to be a legislator in a democratic country and simultaneously be bound to abolish the existing constitution by illegal means. . . . If citizens believe that they should seize power in this state, then the legal democratic road is open to them. Elections give the federal leadership of the Heimwehr the same opportunity as others to prove that the majority of the population of this state is behind them.90

It was clear that Schober and Schumy were determined to carry out disarmament to the best of their ability and to oppose all illegal action by the Heimwehr at all costs. Both continued in their attempts to transform the Heimwehr into an organization less inimical to democracy and more useful as a tool for the moderate conservative elements of Austria.

During the next few months, while the disarmament bill was being debated in the Nationalrat, Schober continued his efforts to undermine the power of Steidle and Pabst in the Heimwehr organization and to bolster Starhemberg's position at their expense. In mid-June, 1930, he held discussions with Italian Foreign Minister

Dino Grandi, who was passing through Vienna, and informed him of his intentions to elevate the Upper Austrian Heimwehr leader to the top spot in the movement. He advised the foreign minister that Steidle and Pabst were dangerous men who must be eliminated at the earliest opportunity. It would be much easier to remove them, the chancellor declared, if both Italy and Hungary would back him. Grandi appeared more than willing to support any scheme which Schober might offer, and he was especially eager to support Starhemberg's bid for power, since both the Hungarians and Italians were disappointed with the present leadership. Grandi, in his conversations with Schober, also promised the chancellor that he would use all the influence he could muster to persuade the Hungarians and the duce to support Schober's plans.\textsuperscript{91}

While in Vienna Grandi also visited Starhemberg. Both quickly came to an agreement that the Heimwehr must make a greater effort to work with the government in the future. At present too much time was being wasted in intra-factional disputes and attacks on the government. This tendency, both agreed, was the

\textsuperscript{91}Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, pp. 74-75; Phipps to Foreign Office, Vienna, June 16, 1930, Public Record Office (London), File 121/3, No. C4760.
fault of the present leadership. Both concurred that a change was needed at the top. Grandi promised the prince to schedule an interview for him with the Italian dictator and to prepare the way for him as best as he could. 92

At the very time Grandi was in Vienna Schober took the bold step which he had long been planning and which he had just discussed with the Italian minister—the arrest of Pabst. On June 14, 1930, he seized Pabst, "the real organizer behind the Heimwehr" 93 and gave him notice to leave the country immediately. The official reason for Pabst's arrest was that he mingled "in far too active a measure" 94 in Austrian politics and that he in particular had "offered resistance to the passage of a law that was under discussion" 95 (the disarmament bill which was passed on June 13).

This bold step was perfectly timed and caught the


95 Ibid.
Heimwehr completely unaware. Schober made sure that Pabst was arrested while he was in Vienna and not in the Tyrol, where his arrest could have brought the intervention of the provincial governor. In Vienna the Heimwehr chief-of-staff had little chance of receiving any aid from the governor, who had the last word in such matters. As it was, Pabst's appeal to Seitz to prevent his arrest and deportation was turned down. Secondly, Schober wisely had Pabst arrested before June 26, 1930, when he would have been in Austria for ten years and therefore eligible for Austrian citizenship. Since he was legally an alien he could be deported without overtones of illegality. Also important was the fact that neither Seipel nor Vaugoin were in Vienna on the 14th, and neither could therefore effectively intervene on Pabst's behalf.\textsuperscript{96} It was a coup de grâce carried out with consummate skill. Pabst's removal from the scene assured the continued deterioration of the movement. With Pabst gone, chaos was bound to reign.

The extent to which the Heimwehr was shaken by Pabst's arrest can be seen in the fact that the organization was unable to react in any unified or vigorous

\textsuperscript{96}Ibid.
way against the Schober regime for its action. It accepted Pabst's removal timidly. Rather than planning bold steps against the government, the organization decided to act more discreetly. At a meeting on June 16, 1930, the leaders of the Heimwehr decided to elect Hans Rauter as Pabst's successor. They agreed to sever ties with Spann and his disciples (thus giving in to pressure from the government), and voted temporarily to refrain from making radical speeches and resorting to forceful action.97

With Steidle and Pabst fully in retreat, Starhemberg moved to bolster his position. On July 10, 1930, he had an interview with Mussolini and received promises from the latter of his full support. Mussolini encouraged the prince to work hand-in-hand with Schober to mend the differences within the movement and to strengthen the organization militarily, if possible, in order to present a more unified and resolute front against the socialists—the common enemy of both the government and the Heimwehr.98


98 Starhemberg, Between Hitler and Mussolini, p. 27; Kerekes, Abenddämmerung einer Demokratie, p. 77.
As Starhemberg's fortunes were steadily rising, Steidle and even Pfrimer became increasingly alarmed by the actions of the young prince. If Starhemberg was to be stopped, they concurred, they would have to cooperate more closely and act in unity. From July 28 to July 30 Pfrimer and Steidle met with other Heimwehr leaders to discuss how Starhemberg should be stopped. They apparently agreed that somehow peace had to be made with Schober (he had again ordered the industrialists to stop their payments to the Heimwehr) and that a more moderate tone needed to be adopted by the organization. Only in such a manner could stability be restored to the movement, they felt. In the communiqué which they issued on the day following their conference, no strident, radical language could be found. The communiqué presented a picture of complete unity and moderation. It lacked "the usual thrusts against Schober" and represented a "retreat from the Korneuburg position." 99

It appeared that the Heimwehr was now not only in full retreat but under Schober's control. Schober had won away its financial supporters and had cowed its

leader into assuming a more moderate tone. On September 2, 1930, he embarked the final step to take over direction of the movement. At another meeting of Heimwehr leaders at Schladming, Starhemberg, with the chancellor's backing, dramatically issued a challenge to the organization's leadership. He accused Steidle and Pfrimer of corruption and demanded that the records of the Heimwehr's finances be made available to him. He wanted especially to know to what uses the vast Italian sums had been put (it appears that almost 600,000 schillings was unaccounted for) and demanded that a vote of confidence in the present leadership be held if they could not supply the appropriate information. Since Pabst was the only person who knew the exact state of the Heimwehr's finances, neither Steidle nor Pfrimer could satisfactorily reply to Starhemberg's demand. Both felt compelled to resign. In the elections which followed, Starhemberg emerged as the sole leader. It was a great victory for Starhemberg and Schober. However, neither was able fully to enjoy the fruits of their success. Schober was toppled from his position as chancellor later that month and Starhemberg proved unequal to the tasks ahead.

He was by temperament unqualified to provide the steady leadership that was needed to mend the differences within the movement. Rather than molding it into a powerful and responsible organization, he accentuated its weaknesses and accelerated its decline.

The election of Starhemberg as sole leader of the Heimwehr brought to an end the phase of the Heimwehr's history which concerns this writer: the history of the Heimwehr from its origins to the beginning of its decline under Schober. With his election a new chapter in the movement's history was opened. It is a chapter of decline, disintegration, and further internal disputes. It may be said that after September 1930, the movement broke into its component parts. The Pfrimer faction gravitated more and more towards the Austrian National Socialist camp and eventually joined that group en masse in 1933. The Starhemberg and Fey factions in time were won over by the Christian Social chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss and were enlisted by him to combat the growing Nazi menace in Austria. The many other provincial organizations either remained loyal to the federal organization under Starhemberg or else went their separate ways and gradually declined in importance. All in all, the period after 1930 signifies a time of
declining vigor and strength, although it is ironic that even in this weakened state the Heimwehr, by virtue of the eight mandates it had gained in the National Council, was able to exercise an influence on the Dollfuss regime completely out of proportion to its actual strength. It was these eight votes which held the balance in that body and forced the chancellor to accept the Heimwehr as his ally. But, after Dollfuss' assassination on July 25, 1934, the Heimwehr lost even that tenuous hold on the government, for the new head of state, Kurt von Schuschnigg, proved even more reluctant to accept the Heimwehr as his partner. In 1936 he dissolved the organization; thereafter it ceased to have any legal existence.

In the final analysis, how must we judge the Heimwehr's role in Austrian history? It becomes clear, upon careful reflection, that the movement was an inherently weak one and that it reached a position of prominence in Austrian domestic affairs in spite of itself. Its leadership was mediocre at best. Only one of its leaders, Waldemar Pabst, can be considered to have had outstanding abilities, and he was a foreigner. The Heimwehr never represented more than a small fraction of the Austrian populace, and of this
fraction only a handful could be counted among its devoted followers. The national unification of the Heimwehr in 1928 was highly tenuous. Provincial sentiments always took precedence over national ones and on more than one occasion threatened to destroy the national organization. And, furthermore, from the beginning the movement lacked a clear sense of purpose or mission. The Korneuburg program, adopted in May, 1930, served less to bring unity than to aggravate the divisiveness that was already there. Its ideas, a combination of Othmar Spann's philosophy, Italian fascist concepts, and German-nationalist slogans, were not calculated to win the support of either the provincial leaders or the rank and file, since they barely understood what these meant. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that disintegration quickly set in when a number of these lingering problems came to the fore.

Nevertheless, in spite of its many inherent weaknesses the Heimwehr was an important domestic organization. As long as its numerous serious problems could be kept suppressed and its leaders acted, at least outwardly, in a unified manner, it could significantly sway internal developments.
However, as its history has shown, the Heimwehr was never able to act in a convincing fashion without outside guidance and support. Only once, when the Heimwehr defense units were originally constituted, did they display any vigor or forcefulness. That was before they came into contact with and under the control of German and Hungarian reactionaries. Subsequently, the Heimwehr acted dynamically only with the help of outside direction. It was German leadership and Hungarian money which molded the original Heimwehr forces into a well-armed and trained paramilitary organization, and it was Italian money and direction and Seipel's deep interest in the movement which helped the Heimwehr achieve its powerful position in the late 1920's. When Italian monetary support stopped and when Seipel resigned from the chancellorship in 1929 and was no longer in a position of power to aid the Heimwehr, the organization quickly fell prey to its internal difficulties. And, finally, although the Heimwehr continued to exercise considerable influence after 1930, it was never from a position of real strength due to the fact that its eight delegates in parliament (out of a total of 163) came to hold the balance of power in that body and were required by
Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss if he was to stay in power. This point, plus the fact that Dollfuss came increasingly under the influence of Mussolini, who urged the Austrian chancellor to rely on the Heimwehr, gave that organization the ability to sway events all out of proportion to its actual strength. Had the neighboring reactionary governments not taken such a keen interest in the Heimwehr's development, it is doubtful whether the organization would have played a conspicuous role in the history of the First Republic. Certainly it would have been a less pernicious and damaging one.
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Heimwehr-Christlich Soziale
Heimwehr-Deutsche Beziehungen
Heimwehr-Deutsche Volkspartei
Heimwehr-Deutschland
Heimwehr-Deutschmeister
Heimwehr-Eisenbahnerwehr
Heimwehr-Exekutive
Heimwehr-Feuerwehr
Heimwehr-Film
Heimwehr-Finanzierung
Heimwehr-Fliegerverband
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