

## **Abstract**

*The times we live in. Witnessing the rise of fascism in Austria from 1930 to 1934*  
MA Thesis Hannah M. Buchinger, 2019

The experiences of contemporaries have been neglected in the research of the far-reaching changes in Austria in the early 1930s. With the historiography focussing on institutions and structures as well as mostly the time since 1933, significant gaps exist and underlying assumptions which do not reflect the experiences of people living in the troubled times. In contrast, this thesis uses a bottom-up approach to unravel the lives of contemporaries, their hopes and fears and the impact of the various crises in politics, economics and identity from 1930 to 1934. It thus asks how ordinary members of society experienced their times and witnessed the slow slide towards fascism and how they reacted to it.

Based on the accounts of seven diarists, these troubled times are analysed through the lenses of contemporaries writing soon after the events and often still under the impression of them. Hence, they paint unblurred pictures of their times influenced by their surroundings. Their views shed light on the past as it ‘actually was’ and unravel the stories beyond the institutions.

The first chapter analyses the end of parliamentary democracy in Austria in 1934 as witnessed by the diarists with a focus on the turning point of February 1934. The second chapter situates the diarists within the political and financial crises of the violent times. Lastly, the third chapter looks at the profound unsolved questions of identity, linked to religion and political decisions within the framework of the diarists’ perceptions of the past.

In this fascism in Austria is understood as existing in two similar yet distinct variants: clerical Austrofascism and Nazism. The former tried to establish itself foremost by eliminating its biggest enemy, the Socialists, at the same time as creating a collective identity based on religion, German nationalism and the Habsburg past.

The diarists’ experiences change the external narrative especially in view of February 1934: they showed the necessity of reinterpreting February 1934 as the turning point in the

timeline of Austrian history as which it was perceived in comparison to the *Anschluss* in 1938. Furthermore, the accounts revealed the interconnectedness of the many crises of their times and how these as well as the remembered past and anticipated future shaped their perceptions and everyday life. However, also the split into distinct 'Lager' and the thesis of Austrofascism opposing the threat of Nazism have to be revisited. The latter was insofar challenged as the step from democracy to an authoritarian regime was seemingly more impacting the diarists' lives than the step from one variant of fascism to another.

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Finding diaries was difficult, but thanks to the efforts of Dr Gerhalter (Frauennachlässe), who also supported me far beyond her responsibilities, and Mag. Müller (Dokumentation lebensgeschichtlicher Aufzeichnungen), I was able to uncover most diaries used in this thesis. I also want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Edith Seeböck, the granddaughter of diarist Karl Macher, Ludwig Pullirsch and Mag. Kopper, who made their relative's diaries available for my research. Karl Macher's diaries have never been researched before.

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Hannah M. Buchinger

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**The times we live in  
Witnessing the rise of fascism in Austria from  
1930 to 1934**



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## **List of Abbreviations**

BA	Diary of Bernhardine Alma
CSP	Christlichsoziale Partei (Christian Social Party)
ELu	Diary of Elsa Lux
ELi	Diary of Erna Lippert
FB	Diary of Franz Bauer
KM	Diary of Karl Macher
LP	Diary of Ludwig Pullirsch
NS/Nazi	National Socialists
PCK	Private collection family Kopper
PCS	Private collection family Seeböck
SDAP	Austrian Socialdemocratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei Deutsch- österreichs)
SFN	Sammlung Frauennachlässe am Institut für Geschichte an der Universität Wien
TL	Diary of Therese Lindenberg
VF	Vaterländische Front (Fatherland Front)

## Introduction

On 27 July 1934, Therese Lindenberg ended her diary entry with the line: ‘What times! –’ (figure 0.1).<sup>1</sup> Just hours before the chancellor of the Austrofascist regime, Engelbert Dollfuß was shot by National Socialists in a coup attempt.<sup>2</sup> Her words resonate beyond this particular incident by illustrating the overall feeling of uncertainty experienced not only on this day but in the early 1930s in general.

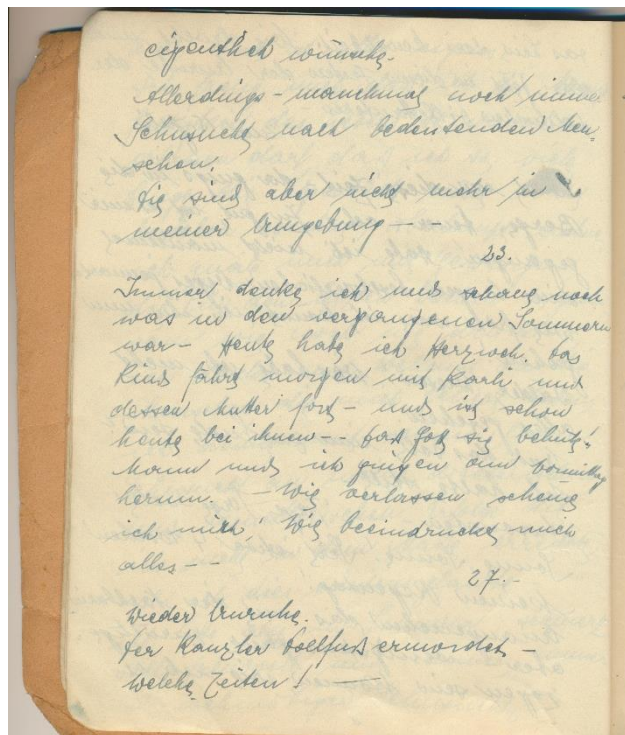


Figure 0.1 – Diary TL, 27 July 1934

Studies on Austrofascism have focussed on the post-1933 institutions and high-politics while neglecting the mindsets of the individuals living in a society rattled by economic and political crises.<sup>3</sup> Strikingly, the fundamental question of how contemporaries thought and reacted to these is not asked in any of the existing literature. Additionally, research on Austrian

<sup>1</sup> SFN 3-TL, 27 July 1934: ‚Welche Zeiten –‘. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

<sup>2</sup> Until today the definition of the government 1934 to 1938 is disputed. Following A. Pelinka, *Die gescheiterte Republik. Kultur und Politik in Österreich 1918–1938* (Vienna, 2017), p. 148 and J. Lewis, ‘Conservatives and Fascists in Austria, 1918–1934’, in M. Blinkhorn ed., *Fascists and Conservatives. The Radical Right and the Establishment in Twentieth-Century Europe* (London, 1990), pp. 98–117 at p. 104 the term ‘Austrofascism’ is used in this thesis.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. E. Tálos, W. Neugebauer ed., *Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem. Österreich 1933–1938* (Vienna, 2013); I. Reiter-Zatloukal, C. Rothländer and P. Schölnberger ed., *Österreich 1933–1938. Interdisziplinäre Annäherungen an das Dollfuß-/Schuschnigg-Regime* (Vienna 2012); F. Weninger and L. Dreidemy ed., *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933–1938. Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes* (Vienna 2013).

history before 1933 in itself is scarce and focusses mainly on economic and political events.<sup>4</sup> The historiography lacks a profound analysis of the continuing consequences of World War I on the people, especially of the eventful times from the mid-1920s to the *Anschluss* in 1938. By contrast, the *Anschluss* is seen as the most significant turning point in the timeline of Austrian history. This resulted in neglecting the history of pre-1938 Austria.

However, fascism and especially its acceptance in the population did not emerge out of nowhere, nor did it appear only through the outside influence of German Nazism.<sup>5</sup> In 1934, four years before the *Anschluss*, a suppressed uprising of the Socialists against the right-wing government marked the completion of the Austrian move towards fascism by eliminating the remaining elements of democracy. February 1934 also seems to be the indispensable precursor to 1938. In retrospect, the years after the last national elections in November 1930 seem crucial in finalising the slow slide towards a fascist state. These years and especially February 1934 and its aftermath also reflect the shift in mindsets towards accepting and even supporting one or the other variant of the two similar kinds of fascism – clerical Austrofascism and Nazism – in Austria.

This thesis, therefore, delves into the minds of contemporary Austrians. By looking at the personal lives of Austrians from different backgrounds, a face is given to those who are all too often overlooked in the narratives of History. The main question, therefore, is how ordinary members of society experienced their times and witnessed the slow slide towards fascism. What were their reactions to it, and how did the various crises influence their lives in the early 1930s?

The existing historiography uses a top-down perspective focussed on structures and high-political actors. But this cannot fully explain the population's relationship to the political system and especially not their perceptions of the troubled times they lived in. Therefore, a

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*; C. A. Gulick, *Österreich von Habsburg zu Hitler* (Vienna, 1976); L. Jedlicka and R. Neck ed., *Vom Justizpalastbrand zum Heldenplatz* (Vienna, 1975).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. T. Lauridsen, *Nazism and the Radical Right in Austria 1918-1934* (Copenhagen, 2007).



bottom-up approach based on qualitative research is necessary. Placed within the broad framework of qualitative research methods, ego-documents such as diaries play an important role as sources. The singularity of individuals offers one yardstick to measure the properties of ‘the past as it actually was’.<sup>6</sup> We cannot understand the past if we do not go beyond institutions and structures. It is essential to look at the people who lived in these times. Diaries as agents encompass heterogeneity and diversity, which also makes them valuable for research.<sup>7</sup>

Written day by day, diaries provide ‘commentary on life as it is lived’.<sup>8</sup> This sense of immediacy pulls the reader in and fuels curiosity. The individual experiences contained by these journals are used to search for a deeper meaning beyond the personal life.<sup>9</sup> Their experiences should be perceived as the connecting point between individual and society.<sup>10</sup> For example, the private sphere is not distinct from the political one but deeply connected. Often diarists refer to political events and make it possible to see how contemporaries perceived them and how these shaped the writer’s thinking and self-identity. At the moment of writing a diary entry, several possible futures are still possible, and those which are imagined to make sense of the present have not yet materialised and may never occur. With neither a singular potential future nor a single version of the past, it is not surprising, then, if individuals experience the present in multiple and diverse ways. The reality these individuals are facing is as much truth to them as the constructions of the past the historical community has accepted as correct, even if these exclude each other. More than one reality exists, thus more than one experience and in consequence, more than one truth.

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<sup>6</sup> S. G. Magnusson and I. M. Szijarto, *What is microhistory? Theory and Practice* (London/New York, 2013), p. 149; cf. Ranke’s ‘wie es eigentlich gewesen ist’ approach to history.

<sup>7</sup> R. Cottam, ‘Diaries and Journals: General Survey’, in M. Jolly ed., *Encyclopedia of Life Writing. Autobiographical and Biographical Forms* (2 vols, London, 2001), i, pp. 267-269 at p. 268.

<sup>8</sup> S. L. Bunkers, ‘Midwestern Diaries and Journals: What Women Were (Not) Saying in the Late 1800s’, in J. Olney ed., *Studies in Autobiography* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 190-221 at p. 190.

<sup>9</sup> J. Lepore, ‘Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography’, *The Journal of American History* 88/1 (2001), pp. 129-144 at p. 132.

<sup>10</sup> N. Buschmann and H. Carl, *Zugänge zur Erfahrungsgeschichte des Krieges*, in N. Buschmann and H. Carl ed., *Die Erfahrung des Krieges* (Paderborn, 2001), pp. 11-26 at p. 16f.

As often with ego-documents, only a few are available on the researched time. Additionally, most of them are retrospective autobiographies written decades after the events occurred and with a narrative in mind which thwarts the aim of this thesis to get contemporary reactions. After finally finding about forty ego-documents – over three-quarters of which turned out to be retrospective accounts. Ultimately, seven diverse diaries were chosen for this work. Five were accessible in their original form and two as transcripts. However, and unlike other edited journals, these transcripts include references to what was left out and to alterations made by the diarists. They are thus valuable additions to the source basis as well as the two diaries from private collections. One of them has not been available for research before.

The seven diarists, Therese Lindenberg (1892-1980), Erna Lippert (1904-1976), Ludwig Pullirsch (1897-1957), Elsa Lux (1883-1966), Bernhardine Alma (1895-1979), Franz Bauer (1888-1963) and Karl Macher (1870-1937) all lived in the same ‘troubled times’ of October 1930 to May 1934 Austria and kept diaries throughout.<sup>11</sup> As every person is unique, so is every journal. They are simultaneously banal and extraordinary, giving glimpses into daily life, the numerous crises surrounding and affecting them and their thoughts on both variants of fascism.<sup>12</sup> Their experiences are at the heart of this thesis.

The first chapter analyses the end of parliamentary democracy in Austria in 1934 as witnessed by the diarists with a focus on the turning point of February 1934. The second chapter situates the diarists within the political and financial crises of the violent times since 1930. Lastly, the third chapter looks at the profound unsolved questions of identity, linked to religion and political decisions within the framework of the diarists’ perceptions of the past.

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<sup>11</sup> SFN 3-TL; SFN 227-ELi; Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*; SFN 241-ELu; SFN 9-BA; PCK-FB; PCS-KM; Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 23.; SFN 3-TL, 7 July 1934.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. N. Stargardt, ‘The troubled patriot. German *Innerlichkeit* in World War II’, *German History* 28/3, pp. 326–342 at p. 327.

## Chapter 1 – The violent end of democracy

The fundamental basis of a diary is the day and thus the present.<sup>13</sup> Written in the immediacy, reflecting the recently experienced and lived, they do not sum up the later insights but remain closely tied to the experiences.<sup>14</sup> Of the seven diarists, only two wrote daily, but all of them regularly. Elsa Lux was very consistent and organised in her writing, starting every single one of her daily entries with the exact date, followed by the weekday and weather. Karl Macher's entries are very similar, however, in the third diary of 1934 gaps of several days start to appear. These gaps are also common to three other diarists throughout their writing. Lindenberg, Pullirsch and Alma tended to write only every second day or even with occasional longer breaks. These were usually not linked to specific events.

The diaries of Erna Lippert and Franz Bauer are unusual in this regard. Their entries are regular, yet Lippert did not always add a date, and most entries were not written by herself, but compiled from images, letters of friends and statesmen, newspaper articles and sometimes short annotations on locations and dates. She wrote longer descriptive entries for Christmas, Easter and the riots in February 1934.<sup>15</sup> Bauer's entries, on the other hand, are sorted by years containing topics in chronological order. He appears to have made these close to the events and not only at the end of the year. This becomes apparent in 1933 when the donor of the new Church bells is first honoured, and a few topics later her death is mentioned which caused the bells to ring for the first time 'today'.<sup>16</sup> Hence, he did what all diarists do: he became the interpreter of his life by choosing what he wrote down and in which way.<sup>17</sup> All seven diarists have in common their unusual entries written in mid-February 1934, when the Socialist paramilitary *Schutzbund*

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<sup>13</sup> P. Lejeune and C. Bogaert, *Le journal intime. Histoire et anthologie* (Paris, 2006), p. 33; A. Dusini, *Tagebuch. Möglichkeiten einer Gattung* (Munich, 2005), p. 93f.

<sup>14</sup> R.-R. Wuthenow, *Europäische Tagebücher. Eigenart – Formen – Entwicklungen* (Darmstadt, 1990), p. 1f.

<sup>15</sup> For example SFN 227-ELi, 1/131.

<sup>16</sup> PCK-FB, 1/107.

<sup>17</sup> S. zur Nieden, *Alltag im Ausnahmezustand. Frauentagebücher im zerstörten Deutschland 1943 bis 1945* (Berlin, 1993), p. 12.

(Defence Guard) and the police, armed forces and the right-wing paramilitary *Heimwehr*, fought a bloody battle in Vienna and other Austrian industrial areas.

a. *Witnessing the fights in February 1934*

On the eve of the first shots, Karl Macher wrote down quotes from a published speech Major Fey, the leader of the *Heimwehr* and Vice-Chancellor, gave on 11 February 1934. Fey announced that ‘tomorrow we will start to work, and we will do a good job for our fatherland [...]’.<sup>18</sup> Macher did not further comment upon these words, but he gave them significance by writing them down. He might have seen them as a serious declaration.

The next day, on 12 February 1934, riots broke out in Linz after a raid on the Social democratic party’s (SDAP) office in ‘Hotel Schiff’ where SDAP members tried to prevent the police from entering their office.<sup>19</sup> At 11:46 the general strike was announced through cutting-off the electricity. Three diarists noticed with surprise that the lights were switched off and that the tramways were not running.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, most diarists started to write down a very detailed account of the events which was unusual in length and intensity compared to earlier and later entries. Only Therese Lindenberg and Bernhardine Alma did not do so directly. Even Lip-pert, whose handwritten entries had become scarce by 1934, used several pages to write down everything she had experienced and heard of the revolt.<sup>21</sup>

Next to the electricity cut, it was the violence itself that the diarists recorded. Ludwig Pullirsch started his entry on the evening of 12 February 1934 as from a seemingly ordinary Monday evening: ‘sitting in my room, Steyr’, a small city in Upper Austria.<sup>22</sup> The next sentence, however, makes clear that this evening was everything but ordinary: “‘Wums” another hand

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<sup>18</sup> PCS-KM, 11 February 1934; ‘Ansprache des Vizekanzlers’, *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*, 12 February 1934, p. 4; ‘Wir werden morgen an die Arbeit gehen und wir werden ganze Arbeit leisten für unser Vaterland [...]’.

<sup>19</sup> Gulick, *Österreich von Habsburg zu Hitler*, pp. 491f; K. Bauer, *Der Februaaraufstand 1934. Fakten und Mythen* (Vienna, 2019), p. 29

<sup>20</sup> PCS-KM, 12 February 1934; SFN 241-ELu, 12 February 1934; SFN 227-ELi, 4/117.

<sup>21</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 4/117-134.

<sup>22</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 57: ‘sitze in meinem Zimmer, Steyr.’

grenade just exploded! This, my dear diary, is no joke, but bloody serious.<sup>23</sup> Pullirsch was in the middle of the events and wrote down everything he saw. Karl Macher also encountered fights in the streets of his hometown Vienna, thus, eye-witnessed the revolt as well.<sup>24</sup> Both also learned by hearsay about the events further away, such as Linz and other towns.<sup>25</sup> This is another – often the first way – of how the diarists obtained information about their surroundings. Vienna-based Erna Lippert added to her accounts of the riots that the rumours were no longer distinguishable from the truth.<sup>26</sup> Macher, Pullirsch and Bauer were not as careful with hearsay and included them as a reliable source of information on the on-going fights.<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, the radio transmitted wrong information or even remained silent regarding the events. This silence was noted especially by Ludwig Pullirsch, who reacted very strongly to the false information given by the broadcasts since he, himself, had witnessed the events.<sup>28</sup> Although Pullirsch detected this misinformation and propaganda insisting that the government was in control, he nevertheless continued to listen to broadcasts for information and considered it reliable.<sup>29</sup>

Pullirsch also noted both the absence and return of newspapers for the first days of the riots.<sup>30</sup> Censorship of the news not only included their suppression but in 1934 even turned into taking over the most read leftist newspapers *Kleine Blatt* by the government.<sup>31</sup> In the aftermath, on 2 March 1934, Macher compared the journals covering the events. He noticed that they did not report the same events and foremost that the former leftist, now governmental *Kleine Blatt*

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*: „Wums“ hat gerade wieder eine Handgranate gekracht! Dies, mein liebes Tagebuch, ist kein Witz, sondern blutiger Ernst.“

<sup>24</sup> PCS-KM, 12 February 1934.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*; Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 57.

<sup>26</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 4/119: ‚Wahrheit u. Gerüchte sind nicht mehr zu trennen.‘

<sup>27</sup> PCK-FB 1/109: ‚furchtbare Gerüchte waren zu hören‘

<sup>28</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, pp. 59-62

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60: ‚10:15 Alles ist ruhig, heißt es – dabei schießt bei uns sogar die Artillerie. [...] 13:01, nachmittags, sitze beim Radio.‘

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>31</sup> PCS-KM, 18 February 1934.

was silent on essential facts.<sup>32</sup> By contrast, Lippert, a supporter of the Christian Social Party (CSP), also glued articles into her diary without commenting them, but to support her own written accounts on February 1934.<sup>33</sup> Hence, she shows her belief in the truth of these accounts. The present of these contemporaries was thus peppered by misinformation and propaganda, yet they still referred to these sources in the tumults of February 1934 and before linking them to their socio-political framework and rarely questioned them.

*b. Experiencing a historical turning point*

Interestingly the common point of all diarists is their perception of these events as a turning point – for the better or the worse, depending on their political background. All of them wrote more extensive entries than usual, but most of them also described it in detail and thereby highlighted the importance of the uprising. It was clear to all diarists that what they experienced was a point of no return.

‘And now all freedom is at an end.’<sup>34</sup> This is how Viennese Lindenberg commented on the effects of the riots. She continued by stating: ‘New image of the circumstances – sad – the sorrow, the suffering others feel.’<sup>35</sup> Therese Lindenberg’s style of writing is exceptional, using a highly codified language.<sup>36</sup> Her entries are cryptic, using single words as references to deeper semantic and personal meanings. For her, the change was evident and she saw it as unfavourable, ending the freedom and bringing distress and grief. At the same time, Lindenberg also alluded to a collective experience of pain and despair. This connectedness is present in most of her comments on the riots and surprising since most of her entries are centred on herself. However, in this exceptional moment, she suddenly saw a link to a broader context and other people suffering as well. Through this, she perceived the February riots as a shared experience.

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<sup>32</sup> PCS-KM, 2 March 1934.

<sup>33</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 4/127-134.

<sup>34</sup> SFN 3-TL, 24 February 1934: ‘Und jetzt alle Freiheit zu Ende’

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Neues Bild der Verhältnisse – Traurig – das Leid, die Verzweiflung der anderen fühlen.’

<sup>36</sup> C. Hämmerle and L. Gerhalter ed., *Apokalyptische Jahre. Die Tagebücher der Therese Lindenberg 1938 bis 1946* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna, 2010), p. 44.

This collective aspect is also present in Lux's diary. Her main concern remained her father's health, but as the fighting started, she gave way to the feeling of fright experienced by her entire family: 'an overwhelming shock descended upon us all'.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Macher discussed the 'sad events' within his family. He expressed disbelief of 'our defeat' and sorrow felt for the *Schutzbund* members who sacrificed so much for nothing.<sup>38</sup> Both diarists were in a state of shock about the events or their outcome. Their encompassing use of the third personal pronouns 'us' and 'our' hints at their collective understanding of this reaction, at least in their close surroundings. They saw the riots as a profound and unexpected shift. The unusual length of their entries emphasises this. The entry in Lux's diary is also significantly longer than any other up to that point.

Pullirsch also gave importance to the fights by dedicating over ten pages to them, one of his longest entries as well. His initial disbelief demonstrates that for him too, the insurgency came as a surprise.<sup>39</sup> Pullirsch then proceeded to write down hourly what he eye-witnessed and heard. His comments about honouring the dead make clear that he also saw February 1934 as a turning point. He reflected upon the fact that the Socialist fighters would be forgotten now that the other side had won. If the conflict had ended with their victory, it would have been the *Heimwehr* members fading into oblivion.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, Lippert dedicated seventeen pages to the accounts of the riots. It is by far the longest entry in her diary and unique as most of it is handwritten and not supplemented by cut-out newspaper articles.<sup>41</sup> She also described the events as 'fateful days' which indicate her understanding of them as crucial crossroads deciding on the political future for or against parliamentary democracy.<sup>42</sup> She referred to the victory of the CSP government as a turning point for

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<sup>37</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 12 February 1934: 'Ein namenloser Schreck überfiel uns alle.'

<sup>38</sup> PCS-KM, 17 February 1934.

<sup>39</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 57.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>41</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 4/117-134.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 4/125: 'schicksalsschwere Tage'

the establishment of the new Austrian state. Lippert mentioned that now, Vienna is included in the ‘Christian-fatherland reconstruction of the entire state’ (figure 1.1).<sup>43</sup>

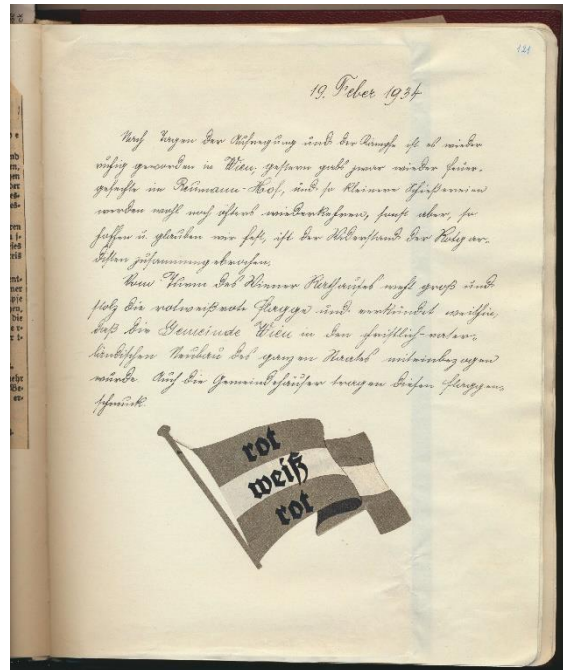


Figure 1.1 – Diary Erna Lippert, 19 February 1934

Farmer and resident of Lower Austria, Franz Bauer, used very similar terms to describe the changes leading to the ‘reconstruction of our dear Austria’.<sup>44</sup> His entry is distinctively longer than the already extensive one on his brother’s sudden death, which was a crucial moment in his personal life. Therefore, he saw these political events as at least equally far-reaching. He even reported about them first before mentioning that on the very same day he was nearly killed by a falling tree.<sup>45</sup> By prioritising the political events over his near-death experience, Franz Bauer stressed the importance of the riots.

### c. *Effects on the diarists and aftermath*

The diarists saw the February fighting as a far-reaching turning point for political matters but also their personal sphere and were therefore also personally affected. Not only by

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 4/121: ‚in den christlich-vaterländischen Neubau des gesamten Staates miteinbezogen‘

<sup>44</sup> PCK-FB, 1/108.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*



material aspects like the electricity-cut, the stalled tramways or closed schools, but on a more personal level as well.

One of the most substantial effects is seen for the two more or less professional writers Bernhardine Alma and Therese Lindenberg. Writing was a central point in their lives. However, on 12 February 1934 both suffered from a significant writer's block. Their way of expressing thoughts and feelings was thus impaired. Alma's entry on 12 February 1934 is highly unusual. She used a pencil instead of her pen, did not start with the usual religious formulas and ended in the middle of the sentence: 'Dear, dear God, help my Austria! – Dollfuß shall be abdicated – and no Habsburg should come, especially which you'<sup>46</sup> The events evidently impacted her. Religion, the vital point in her life, is still present, but suddenly politics become central and so overwhelming that she could not finish her sentence. She restarted on the next day, writing down her opinion as well as summarising the events two days later. A break of five days ensued. In her next entry, she explained that she was not able to write, being too horrified.<sup>47</sup> This makes Alma's distress and the impact of the riots apparent.

Similarly, Lindenberg already explained in 1931 that she cannot write when she is too overwhelmed by events.<sup>48</sup> In February 1934 she shortly noted her immediate sorrows, but then the entries broke off for eleven days. Her first concern on 13 February 1934 was her daughter's well-being: 'I am in grand sorrow – tumults – shootings and the child is not here'.<sup>49</sup> The same day she wrote with relief that her daughter arrived home safely. In the next sentence, she described the weather and named the book she was currently reading. This seems very banal. However, it is exceptional since Lindenberg usually did not include book titles in her diary. After first fearing for her daughter, she immediately searched for a haven away from the crisis

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<sup>46</sup> SFN 9-BA, 12 February 1934: ‚Lieber, lieber Gott, hilf meinem Österreich! – der Dollfuß soll abgedankt werden – u. nur kein Habsburger kommen, besonders den du‘

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 February 1934: ‚Ich konnte die Zeit über nicht schreiben, das Entsetzen war zu groß.‘ ‚Ich fand überhaupt kein Wort mehr.‘

<sup>48</sup> SFN 3-TL, 4 August 1931.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 February 1932: ‚Ich bin in großer Sorge – Aufruhr – Schießerei und das Kind nicht da‘

around her. This illustrates a turn inwards which is further emphasised by later entries as well as the increasing spirituality.<sup>50</sup> The February fights intensified this inwardness. In this Lindenberg was not alone, although her diary makes this inward turn most explicit. Ludwig Pullirsch, for example, made no political references in his diary until July and his entries remained within a very personal sphere. Similarly, Lux focussed on the household and especially the deteriorating health of her father. Politics are moved even more to the background.

Like Lindenberg, most diarists were foremost concerned about the well-being of their close relatives. Lux's entry reflects her worries about brother and sister who were working in town as well as the possible effects on the already ill father.<sup>51</sup> Her family was vital to her, and they lived together (figure 1.2). Macher's family decided to stay together at one of his daughter's places for two nights.<sup>52</sup> Both of these reactions showcase the experience of the fights as an exceptional crisis.



Figure 1.2 – Elsa Lux (middle) surrounded by her family, 1930s

By contrast, Alma's diary contains another remarkable turn, since she became profoundly political. Suddenly her entries focus mostly on politics and its link to religion instead of writing about her health and family. While the fighting was still going on, she offered to sacrifice herself to God in exchange for peace in Vienna, something she also did when both her

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 February 1934: ‚jetzt meine Sendung beginnt‘

<sup>51</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 12 February 1934.

<sup>52</sup> PCS-KM, 13 February 1934.

parents died.<sup>53</sup> In her next confession, however, she got into a fight with her beloved confessor as she confronted him with the hypocrisy and atrocities of the CSP regime. He did not agree with her and defended the CSP's actions as necessary and Christian. This resulted in an argument, and she left without receiving absolution.<sup>54</sup> For a strict Catholic, this is exceptional and it quickly turned into internal conflict and feeling of emptiness. Thus, she returned to receive the absolution but remained firm in her rejection of the CSP. Alma noted that staying faithful to Christianity is the 'most trying sacrifice'.<sup>55</sup> She felt betrayed and lost.<sup>56</sup> This shows the link to her well-being and of politics invading personal lives.

Another interesting aspect of Alma's sudden politicisation is the solution she hoped for. In March 1934 she repeatedly wished for help from Hitler, wanting him to take over in Austria. This can be seen as the continuation of her pan-German ideology, which she had showcased already in wanting to vote for a pan-German party in 1930.<sup>57</sup> Likewise and very quickly, the diarists fixated on the question of blame, seeing one side as responsible. Only Pullirsch wished that these bitter hours should end soon for both parties.<sup>58</sup> He later added that both sides had fought bravely and given their lives for a cause others had made them believe in for the past fifteen years.<sup>59</sup> Then he proceeded to reflect on the cruelty of humanity in general.<sup>60</sup>

Likewise, Lux did not assign guilt in the beginning but noted that 'everyone is under the impression of the revolt.'<sup>61</sup> Two weeks later, however, Lux had adopted the narrative of the CSP that the SDAP had built the new Viennese housing as fortresses and thus assigned the responsibility to the Socialists.<sup>62</sup> This was also the point of view of Lippert and Bauer, who

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<sup>53</sup> SFN 9-BA, 14 February 1934.

<sup>54</sup> SFN 9-BA, 20 February 1934.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*: 'schwerstes Opfer'

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 February 1934.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 November 1930.

<sup>58</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 60.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>61</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 13 February 1934: 'alles steht unter dem Eindruck der Revolte'

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 February 1934.

were both on the government's side. According to Bauer, the SDAP had planned these violent fights all along.<sup>63</sup> Lippert also used the argument of the fortresses and later mourned the deaths of the brave policemen dying for the greater cause.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, the Socialist Macher sees the government as responsible.<sup>65</sup> Lippert and Bauer were both not eye-witnesses and received their information mostly through radio, newspapers and hearsay. Their perspective is, therefore, more distant than Pullirsch's or Macher's and mediated through government-controlled media.

None of these three diarists' reflections is surprising, given their political affiliations. What was more surprising was that Alma, who rarely discussed political events, expressed her opinion strongly on this matter. For her, the CSP-government was responsible: 'they [the CSP] always provoked the people, always provoked, pushed the unemployed, hungry people into revolting'.<sup>66</sup> The official protocols of the Council of Ministers indeed support this idea of provocation. Already in 1932, Dollfuß's strategy was to raid SDAP offices for firearms and to deprive them of power.<sup>67</sup> Dollfuß even anticipated a decisive battle for which the government started to prepare in 1932.<sup>68</sup>

Despite the far-reaching personal effects and the understanding of a turning point by all the diarists, they quickly returned to their everyday life and tried to adapt to the changes. Although the absence of political opposition does not mean that the diarists consented, a conformist approach becomes apparent also by those who did not actively express their support as Bauer and Lippert.<sup>69</sup> By recognising the authority of the CSP-government, they accepted their political

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<sup>63</sup> PCK-FB, 1/108.

<sup>64</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 4/118, 4/121; 4/122-134.

<sup>65</sup> PCS-KM, 13 February 1934.

<sup>66</sup> SFN 9-BA, 20 February 1934: 'immerfort Leute gereizt hatte, immer gereizt, die arbeitslosen, hungernden Menschen zur Revolte getrieben'

<sup>67</sup> E. Talos and W. Manuschek, *Zum Konstituierungsprozeß des Austrofaschismus*, in Talos/Neugebauer ed., *Austrofaschismus*, pp. 6-27 at p. 16.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*; Timeline of provocation in Gulick, *Österreich von Habsburg zu Hitler*, pp. 487-502.

<sup>69</sup> L. Passerini, *Fascism in popular memory. The cultural experience of the Turin working class* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 65.

leadership.<sup>70</sup> Even the Socialist Macher quickly returned to his everyday focus and more neutral recording of political events, thus retreating into daily life while in Vienna alone 7.823 Socialists were arrested.<sup>71</sup> This is a similar development to Passerini's findings of people's reactions to Italian fascism. In fear of changing things for the worse and the prevalence of opportunism most people, including the seven diarists analysed here, preferred adapting to the *status quo*, no matter their earlier loyalties.<sup>72</sup> Afraid of not being able to maintain their current lifestyle, being imprisoned or worse, they retreated into the personal space and accepted the new situation, regardless if they were opposing it.<sup>73</sup>

The February fighting had eliminated the third player, the SDAP with its paramilitary organisation *Schutzbund* from the political arena. They were the only declared supporters of a democratic Republic, and with their defeat, the last remnants of the democratic and republican system died too.<sup>74</sup> From now on, the struggle was between Nazism and the Clerical-fascists. These two remaining players for power both wanted to install a dictatorship based on fascist principles.<sup>75</sup> In 1932, Dollfuß had readily contacted the NS to seek cooperation, but the latter refused.<sup>76</sup> For the moment the CSP was in power and officially declared their Austrofascist regime with its new constitution on 1 May 1934.

#### *d. The new State and its clerical-fascist Constitution*

Only three diarists mentioned the establishment of the new state. Noticeably, two of them were the supporters of the regime, Franz Bauer and Erna Lippert. Both celebrated the new

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>71</sup> W. Maderthaner, 'Der 12. Februar 1934', in M. Achenbach und K. Moser, *Österreich in Bild und Ton. Die Filmwochenschau des österreichischen Ständestaates* (Vienna, 2002), pp. 29-44 at p. 38.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>73</sup> Regime-built internment camps, like Wöllersdorf, and martial law against political opponents cf. Talos/Neugebauer, *Austrofascismus*, p. 408.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. K. Haas, 'Der 12. Februar 1934' als historiographisches Problem, in Jedlicka/Neck, *Vom Justizpalastbrand zum Heldenplatz*, pp. 156-167 at p. 168; A. Diamant, 'Austrian Catholics and the First Republic, 1918-1934. A Study in Anti-Democratic Thought', *The Western Political Quarterly* 10/3 (1957), pp. 603-633 at p. 607.

<sup>75</sup> PKS-KM, 26 February 1934: 'Der österreichische Staat wird autoritär, korporativ und christlich sein.'

<sup>76</sup> A. Staudinger, 'Christlichsoziale Partei und Errichtung des 'autoritären Ständestaates' in Österreich', in Jedlicka/Neck, *Vom Justizpalastbrand zum Heldenplatz*, pp. 65-81 at p. 67.

Austria. Lippert dedicated five pages to it with newspaper articles including pictures and triumphant comments on the new corporative and authoritarian constitution.<sup>77</sup> Bauer wrote in similar terms about the ‘festive day of the new Austria.’<sup>78</sup>

Alma’s reaction contrasts this view. Her politicisation is still as present as her memories and experiences of the shootings in February 1934. Consequently, she draws a direct link to the way the CSP took power, its politics and the Church: ‘First shooting down the people with canons, making the survivors miserable, destroying the entire economy - - - and now celebrating festivities - - - and the Church gives its blessing!’<sup>79</sup> With this set of juxtapositions, Alma summarised the four main reasons for her opposition. Some of them are more general aspects like the economy but also the personal level of the far-reaching effects on the people was important to her.

The silence of the other diarists can be explained by the aforementioned turn inwards and possibly also by the authority of the February fights as the experienced turning point. They had adapted to the changes. The new Constitution caused the formal abolition of democracy, but the violent fights eleven weeks earlier had left a more significant mark on their lives. The constitutional declaration of a clerical fascist state was therefore only a formal act finalising the effective change in the power game.

#### *e. Conclusion*

The seven diarists’ accounts all showcase the impact of the fights in February 1934. Although the interpretation and their answers to the guilt question were diverse, their perception was nevertheless similar in many regards. Foremost, they were shocked and even surprised by the events, and all perceived them as a turning point. Their personal life was deeply affected

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<sup>77</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 4/176-181.

<sup>78</sup> PCK-FB, 1/114: ‘Festtag des neuen Österreich’

<sup>79</sup> SFN 9-BA, 1 May 1934: ‘Erst die Menschen mit Kanonen zusammenschießen, brotlos die Überlebenden machen, die ganze Volkswirtschaft zu Grunde richten - - und dann noch Feste feiern! - - Und die Kirche gibt ihren Segen dazu!’

and changed in the four days of the shootings as well as in its aftermath. Simultaneously, their society was fundamentally impacted. Democracy was short lived and over within a few months when the Austrofascist regime took power now only opposed by the other variant of fascism, Nazism.

## Chapter 2 – Troubled times unravelled

Finding solace and comfort in a diary is a common reason for writing, especially in times of crisis. And the early 1930s were indeed a time of multiple crises: political, economic and of identity. Then the number of diaries, as well as entries increases as the need to process experiences, becomes especially vital.<sup>80</sup> Writing turns into an act of survival through extreme situations by keeping track of normality and drowning or addressing uncertainty and fear.<sup>81</sup>

Especially Therese Lindenberg's diary served this purpose.<sup>82</sup> The 40-year-old mother of a teenage girl entrusted to it all her sorrows, longings, hopes and fears. One of them also being her difficult marriage, but especially financial distress. Likewise, the unmarried late-30s Bernhardine Alma used her diary as a means to talk about her religious desires she cannot (yet) share with others (figure 2.1). Her idea of joining a convent remained unspoken for months until she addressed it with her confessor K.<sup>83</sup> It is also Alma's way to keep track of her low income as a freelance writer and expenses as well as her extensive correspondence. Thus, her diary served a practical purpose aside from the religious one.

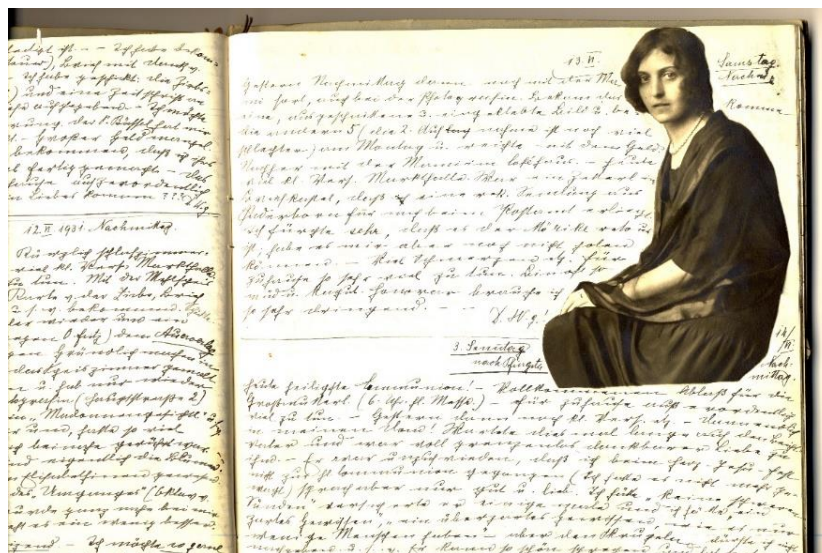


Figure 2.1 – Portrait Bernhardine Alma (1920s), entry 1931

<sup>80</sup> Hämmerle/Gerhalter, *Apokalyptische Jahre*, p. 33, p. 36.

<sup>81</sup> Zur Nieden, *Alltag im Ausnahmezustand*, p. 41.

<sup>82</sup> Hämmerle/Gerhalter, *Apokalyptische Jahre*, p. 47.

<sup>83</sup> SFN 9-BA, 12 November 1930.



This aspect is also present in Karl Macher's texts, who noted his received salary.<sup>84</sup> The teacher Pullirsch also did so, but only when connected to a specific reason like tax cuts. His diary was mostly focussed on the more extraordinary events in his life including searches for old books and manuscripts, his health issues, unique events like his brother's wedding and travels.<sup>85</sup> Lindenberg also used her diary to recount regular travels but only afterwards; while Pullirsch takes the notebooks with him. This can be seen by him indicating where he is sitting when he writes.<sup>86</sup> The fact that Pullirsch addressed his diary also gives hints on why he wrote one. It is his confidante with whom he shares his thoughts and reflections he was not able to discuss with anyone else in his life. It thus also serves as a means of comfort.

By contrast, the secretary Erna Lippert and the farmer Franz Bauer used their diaries to chronicle their lives situated within the political context. Most of their entries refer to events outside their personal sphere. The tense relationship between the individual and the surrounding society is present in these diaries.<sup>87</sup> Both aspects also play an important role in Macher's accounts. But as a married father of five grown-up children and several grandchildren Macher's family is significant in his entries. His emphasis lies in his everyday life, work and family. This focus is also the one of unmarried late-40s Elsa Lux, who not only wrote about herself but also her father, sisters and brother's daily life. In this regard, she kept a household diary but also included reflections on political and personal events. When her father was very ill, she alone cared for him and confided in her diary how close she is to a breakdown and how trapped she feels.<sup>88</sup> Her diary was thus a confidante and comforted her. This aim of comfort in most diaries is closely linked to the fears inflicted by the numerous crises around them. One of the constants in their lives was the violence around them.

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<sup>84</sup> PCS-KM, for example 6 December 1930, 11 December 1930.

<sup>85</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, pp. 12, 13, 24f, 27, 53.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 33, 47.

<sup>87</sup> C. Hämmerle, 'Diaries', in M. Dobson and B. Ziemann ed., *Reading primary sources. The interpretation of texts from nineteenth- and twentieth-century history* (New York, 2008), pp. 141-158 at p. 146.

<sup>88</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 10 May 1933.

a. *The normalisation of violence*

Already years before the riots in February 1934, violence had become a part of daily life. The first major incident was the deaths of two unarmed leftists in Schattendorf – a child and a veteran. The alleged shooters, members of the right-wing paramilitary *Frontkämpfer*, were later acquitted. Seen as an unjust release, protests broke out in July 1927 and ended with about 82 dead civilians and the fire in the Palace of Justice in Vienna.<sup>89</sup> Also the four years described by the diarists include numerous violent incidents. The Historian Botz describes the time since 1928 as a latent civil war which becomes heated in 1934.<sup>90</sup>

Three of the diarists included mentions of violence while Macher's accounts make the normalisation of violence most visible. Lux recorded shootings between the Socialist paramilitary *Schutzbund* and the NS on 16 October 1932.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, she mentioned on 1 May 1933 that the government had blocked the Viennese city centre and 'lets the arms prevail'.<sup>92</sup> Meaning that they showed off their military force on the previous day of Socialist celebrations. Violence is therefore seen as coming from the government, as well as from the political groups often clashing. Ludwig Pullirsch painted a very similar picture. On 4 November 1930, he witnessed the military searching for firearms of the *Schutzbund* and describes it as 'war-like image'.<sup>93</sup> In May 1933 he heard of a confrontation between the *Heimwehr* and the NS in Linz in which the police had to intervene.<sup>94</sup> The third incident Pullirsch mentioned happened on 20 June 1933. Police officers brutally intervened to stop NS members from vandalising property.<sup>95</sup>

Macher also recorded violence by the police. When Nazis and members of the *Schutzbund* clashed in Simmering on 16 October 1932, the police intervened and dissolved the conflict

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<sup>89</sup> *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*, 18 July 1927.

<sup>90</sup> G. Botz, *Krisenzonen einer Demokratie: Gewalt, Streik und Konfliktunterdrückung in Österreich seit 1918* (Frankfurt am Main/New York, 1987), pp. 16-25.

<sup>91</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 17 October 1932.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 May 1933.

<sup>93</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 9.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

by force. Upon entering the SDAP office, they destroyed it. This event led to 3 immediate deaths and 28 injured.<sup>96</sup> Already in the months before Macher recorded several violent fist-fights and shootings between the Nazis and the *Schutzbund*.<sup>97</sup> Even in the Viennese city council, these sides collided on 30 September 1932 when the NS deputies arrived armed and attacked the other deputies during a plenary session.<sup>98</sup> All these references to violence are rarely commented by adjectives or adverbs. They are recorded as coldly as other political events. Macher describes events emotionally only in February 1934, showcasing the exceptionality of the revolt.

Thus, most diarists noticed the physical violence of their time and even included them in their accounts in some instances, although only February 1934 was mentioned by all of them. However, their daily life was mostly affected by the economic crisis and less by the violence surrounding them.

#### *b. Financial situation*

A vital factor in life is one's financial situation. It has a major impact on the possibilities in life, the choices as well as the day's structure. Lux and Lindenberg were unemployed, while Lippert, Bauer, Macher, Alma and Pullirsch had a regular income through work. Lippert was a secretary for a Tyrolian publisher, Bauer a farmer, Macher a construction supervisor and Pullirsch a teacher. Alma was a writer who published under the name of 'Alma Bernharda'.<sup>99</sup> As reported in several newspapers, her religious plays were staged and some of her stories and poems published.<sup>100</sup> Lindenberg too tried to earn money by writing stories for newspapers. But

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<sup>96</sup> PCS-KM, 16 October 1932.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 August 1932, 12 September 1932, 27 September 1932.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 September 1932.

<sup>99</sup> I. Korotin ed., *biografiA. Lexikon österreichischer Frauen A-H* (Vienna, 2016), p.87.

<sup>100</sup> For example: 'Die Wiener religiösen Freilichtspiele', (*Neuigkeits Welt Blatt*, 10 October 1931, p. 7; 'Wiener religiöse Freilichtspiele', *Reichspost*, 7 November 1931, p. 8; 'Wiener religiöse Freilichtspiele', *Reichspost*, 29 October 1932, p. 6; *Neues Wiener Journal*, 30 September 1933, p. 12.

she was not very successful and better known as a trained singer.<sup>101</sup> Her diary shows how scarce the job opportunities were and money remained a constant issue. Struggling to secure bookings, Lindenberg was financially dependent on her older husband who received a good pension. The family could afford to go on vacation twice a year to small villages in Austria. However, Lindenberg's entries are shaped by her despair at her financial difficulties. Only once did she mention money positively. On 2 September 1931, she celebrated being out of debt for a year, but already on 19 September 1931 she noted: 'Debtless – gone – worse than ever!'<sup>102</sup> Shortly afterwards, she had to let go of the household help and moved into a smaller apartment in 1933.<sup>103</sup> The first mention of having to scale down expenses on the living costs appeared on 6 February 1931 and remained constant even after the family moved two years later. Over the years, Lindenberg's distress only increased. On 4 April 1934 she wrote: 'Very deep in material distress – entirely down.'<sup>104</sup>

Lindenberg's financial struggles are tied to the macro-economic level. The times Lindenberg lives in are indeed rattled by economic uncertainty and crisis. As Elsa Lux noted in 1932, Austria's government had to borrow money from the League of Nations in Lausanne to help Austria's economy out of depression.<sup>105</sup> After the good economic year of 1928, when the economy rose above the level of the last pre-war year of 1913, the financial crisis hit in 1929.<sup>106</sup> This led to a downward spiral of deficits and unemployment, intensified by a second, even worse crash when in May 1931 the biggest bank, the *Creditanstalt*, collapsed. In the aftermath,

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<sup>101</sup> '20 Jahre Reichsverein der Hausbesorger', *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*, 30 July 1931, p. 4; 'Antonie Marschak – eine Sechzigerin!' *Die Hausangestellte*, 1 May 1933, p. 8; 'Antonie Marschak – Sechzig Jahre alt', *Die Unzufriedene* 14 May 1933 p. 7.

<sup>102</sup> SFN 3-TL, 19 September 1931: 'Schuldenfreiheit - weg – ärger denn je!'

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 February 1932; 6 July 1933.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 April 1934: 'Ganz tief in materieller Bedrängnis – ganz unten.'

<sup>105</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 2 July 1932.

<sup>106</sup> E. März, 'Die große Depression in Österreich 1930-1933', *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* 16/3 (1990), pp. 409-437 at p. 409.

the Austrian state was in dire need of money and thus negotiated with Western European states in Lausanne.<sup>107</sup>

To cope with the budget deficit, the government also raised new taxes.<sup>108</sup> These affected especially the middle-class diarists with regular incomes. Ludwig Pullirsch – being in his early thirties – listed the exact amounts cut from his salary and expressed his annoyance: ‘Plainly ridiculous!’ and a few sentences later ‘Now I have had enough of this!’<sup>109</sup> He then proceeded to connect these with the general political situation by calling his present a ‘tense time.’<sup>110</sup> Lux was also affected by the rise in taxes, especially by the one for housing. She saw its increase as a financial problem for her household on two occasions in 1932 and 1933, leading to further economies.<sup>111</sup> Lux saw the general economic situation as, at best, worrying even though she and her family were not threatened to live on the breadline by it. But economies were necessary. When her sister M. planned a trip to Venice, tensions erupted, with the entire family opposing the plan: all of them wanted to save money in the face of the rising food prices.<sup>112</sup> Indeed the middle-class and workers were facing a rollback of their financial capacities since the late-1920s with salaries dropping by around 70% between 1927 and 1934.<sup>113</sup> The depression eroded the gap between these two social classes while widening it towards the richest percentile, helped by the CSP-government cutting down on the taxation of property.<sup>114</sup>

Macher was substantially affected by the crisis: he lost his job in 1933. The construction industry in which he worked suffered a 58% decrease.<sup>115</sup> Comparing the three periods of his life as kept in his diaries, the difference in the financial possibilities affects his life thoroughly,

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<sup>107</sup> L. O. Meysels, *Der Austrofaschismus. Das Ende der ersten Republik und ihr letzter Kanzler* (Vienna/Munich, 1992), p. 41.

<sup>108</sup> März, ‚Depression‘, p. 418.

<sup>109</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 23: ‚Direkt lächerlich!‘, ‚Jetzt hab‘ ich genug davon!‘

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*: ‚angespannte Zeit‘

<sup>111</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 6 February 1932, 31 May 1933

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 August 1932.

<sup>113</sup> G. Senft, *Im Vorfeld der Katastrophe. Die Wirtschaftspolitik des Ständestaates. Österreich 1934-1938* (Vienna, 2002), pp. 20, 43, 45.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 415.

<sup>115</sup> März, ‚Depression‘, p. 419.

but in the first crisis years, he could afford to go to the cinema about every second day, went to the circus and generally enjoyed his life without worrying about his finances. In 1934 however, he could no longer afford to go to the barber for his shave and had to apply for an official certificate of poverty.<sup>116</sup> By 1933, about 700,000 other people were unemployed, which was over a quarter of the working-age population.<sup>117</sup> Already in 1930 Macher noted that his children and their spouses were struggling to find work.<sup>118</sup>



Figure 2.2 – Erna Lippert, 1930s

Lippert is the only one of the seven diarists who did not allude to financial problems or even her personal (pecuniary) situation. It did not play a big role since the only reference found is the quantity of Christmas presents in 1930, which was ‘not too big’ and pictures show her with expensive clothes and jewellery (figure 2.2).<sup>119</sup> Similarly, Bauer did not give much information about his financial situation. When hospitalised in 1932 he had to pay 200 Schillings (about 720 Euros), a rather large sum, which he commented by saying the most important is being healthy again.<sup>120</sup> He was most worried about his harvest, thus income, which was

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<sup>116</sup> PCS-KM, 22 February 1934, 14 January 1934.

<sup>117</sup> Talos/Manuschek, *Konstituierungsprozeß*, in Talos/Neugebauer ed., *Austrofaschismus*, pp. 6-27 at p. 16.

<sup>118</sup> PKS-KM, 19 November 1930, 28 November 1930.

<sup>119</sup> SFN 227-Eli, 1/131.

<sup>120</sup> PCK-FB, 1/97; ‘Currency Converter - Austrian National Bank’ [<https://www.oenb.at/docroot/inflationscockpit/waehrungsrechner.html>] (accessed on 26 June 2019).

destroyed in large parts in 1931: ‘It looked desolate and was exasperating’.<sup>121</sup> Being a farmer did, on the other hand, safeguard him from the general financial crisis’ adverse effects.

The teacher Pullirsch too does not seem to have had to make any cutbacks despite the raised taxes. He could afford to buy old books worth 850 Schillings (about 3.060 Euros today), equal to about two months’ of his salary and he repeatedly travelled in Austria, but also to Krk in present-day Croatia, Venice and Rome.<sup>122</sup> Likewise, Lux was able to buy an expensive fur coat in 1931, and the family had help for maintaining the household.<sup>123</sup> Self-employed Alma, on the contrary, struggled to get money for her writings like Lindenberg. She thus rented out rooms in her apartment and kept a close eye on her expenses and income within her diary.<sup>124</sup> At the same time, she linked this to her religion by praying for better incomes and more regular remunerations.<sup>125</sup>

### *c. Anticipating the future*

These financial difficulties had an immense impact on the diarists’ perceptions of the future. Alma and Lindenberg were strongly affected by financial shortcomings, and both had a negative perspective on the future, which worsened over time. Therese Lindenberg tried to use her diary to remind her of the good things in life, like her husband and her daughter (figure 2.3). But most of these entries sound like desperate attempts to convince herself of something she does not believe.<sup>126</sup> She lived in a constant personal crisis in a time of crises. Most of her sorrows were linked to financial matters. The situation peaked into full despair in May 1934: ‘I will not speak of money anymore, because it is nearly hopeless to get out of my sorrows [...] I now capitulate – finally, entirely. I lay to rest all my dreams of experiencing beauty, of power,

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 1/89.

<sup>122</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 24, 22, 30, 50.

<sup>123</sup> SFN 241-ELu, for 245S, 14 November 1931, 10 September 1931.

<sup>124</sup> SFN 9-BA, 8 March 1934.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, for example 9 November 1930, 21 March 1931.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, for example 30 May 1931, 7 September 1933.

of fame. – <sup>127</sup> This quote is one of many. It is also one that illustrates her financial distress and the connection to giving up her wishes for a better future.



Figure 2.3 – Therese Lindenberg and her daughter, c. 1930

Likewise, Bernhardine Alma was constantly on edge. Her negativity draws from religious sacrifice ideas, and regular pleads to God to take her home, meaning to Him.<sup>128</sup> This longing and disappointment is also present in her writing. The published story ‘Weekendzauber’ is one of longing for love and happiness fulfilled by writing a substantial novel and marrying a rich man.<sup>129</sup> The story in the newspaper ends well, but Alma herself saw life and its outlook more pessimistically as illustrated by her published poems.<sup>130</sup> This also becomes apparent on 24 May 1934: ‘A lot is desolate and hopeless for me. [...] A lot weighs down again. The death of Mami, the terrible political circumstances.’<sup>131</sup> This expresses the link of Alma’s negative perspective of the future regarding both personal and political conditions, similar to most of the other diarists.

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<sup>127</sup> SFN 3-TL, 4 May 1934: ‚Ich sage nichts mehr vom Geld, denn es ist fast aussichtslos aus meinen Sorgen herauszukommen [...] Ich ergebe mich nun – endlich, ganz. Ich vergrabe alle Träume vom Schönheitserleben, von Macht, von Ruhm. –‘

<sup>128</sup> SFN 9-BA, 18 December 1930; 16 April 1931; 25 March 1933.

<sup>129</sup> Alma Bernharda, ‚Weekendzauber‘, *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*, 12 October 1930, pp. 11-13.

<sup>130</sup> Alma Bernharda, ‚Sehnsucht‘, *Reichspost*, 7 May 1933, p. 19; Alma Bernharda, ‚Stimme der Nacht‘, *Reichspost*, 2 April 1933 p. 18.

<sup>131</sup> SFN 9-BA, 24 May 1934: ‚Derzeit ist für mich alles so trost- u. aussichtslos.‘ ‚Vieles drückt wieder. Der Tod der Mami, die furchtbaren politischen Verhältnisse.‘



Elsa Lux's future perspective was more optimistic, however, also peppered with doubts linked to her personal as well as political present. Foremost, she was afraid to lose her father, whose health was slowly deteriorating until his death in 1934.<sup>132</sup> But also the political and economic situation triggered doubts. In 1930 Lux still hoped for a better future.<sup>133</sup> However, in 1931, questions arose about what the future would bring.<sup>134</sup> Then in March 1932, she wrote: 'Our future looks abysmal'.<sup>135</sup> Again in 1933, she commented that it 'also looks sad for beloved Austria'.<sup>136</sup> All of these comments were made in connection with political or economic events, clearly illustrating Lux's perspective of the future changing into a negative one in relation to these.

By contrast, the two supporters of the Austrofascist regime, Lippert and Bauer, had a positive outlook unshaped by their financial background. Both took a very positive view, seeing a time of promise lying ahead. Bauer wished for a change shaped by the CSP and the *Heimwehr*, of which he was a member. In 1930 he stated that the parliamentary party system would lead 'our Austria to the abyss'.<sup>137</sup> Three years later, Bauer commented on the great assembly of the *Heimwehr* in Schönbrunn on 1 May 1933 to celebrate the liberation from the Ottomans in the seventeenth century: 'It harboured the signs of a new time'.<sup>138</sup> However, Bauer also had his doubts about the future. He questioned if the financial crisis would increase and hoped that the new church bells would not have to be taken down due to war.<sup>139</sup>

Doubts of a positive future also shape the diaries of Pullirsch and Macher. Although Ludwig Pullirsch tried to remain positive in his stories, he also commented on the political and

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<sup>132</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 13 mentions until mid-1933, then daily.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 December 1930.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 November 1931, 2 November 1931.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 March 1932: 'Unsere Zukunft ist miserabel'

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 March 1933.

<sup>137</sup> PCK-FB, 1/88: 'Die Parteiwirtschaft bring unser liebes Österreich noch in den Abgrund.'

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 1/100: 'Aber es nahm schön die Anzeichen einer anderen Zeit'

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 1/90, 1/106.

financial crises in 1931 which he believed to mean result in ‘bad times.’<sup>140</sup> As the optimist he was, he nevertheless added his hope that it ‘won’t be too bad.’<sup>141</sup> Linked to personal reasons, he also noted that maybe sometimes it was better not to know what the future holds as one might not wake up the next day.<sup>142</sup> However, Pullirsch’s overall perspective on his future was brighter than the one he anticipated for his country.

Similarly, Macher refrained from looking into the future and was very much centred in the present. He only twice gave a glimpse of what he expected. One time he and his children talked about the future of his grandchildren. They were worried about their chances of finding work and that they might have to emigrate. One of Macher’s daughters was close to tears in this discussion about the future.<sup>143</sup> Here again, financial aspects play a crucial role in the negative outlook. The other time is linked directly to political troubles, which lead Karl Macher to write that on reaching home he felt ‘*weltschmerz*.’<sup>144</sup> The semantic depth of this word implies existential angst of vast proportions. The diarists’ perspectives on the future are thus as much linked to political crises as they are to financial questions.

#### *d. Political affiliation*

The political affiliations of the seven diarists are very diverse and reflect the spectrum of early 1930s Austrian politics. Bauer and Macher are both politically active and very typical representatives of their political sides: Franz Bauer is a conservative, member of the *Heimwehr*, Christian farmer, living in a small town in Lower Austria; Karl Macher is a worker in so-called Red Vienna. One of the female diarists, Erna Lippert, is also a member of several conservative organisations and joins the *Vaterländische Front* [VF] (Fatherland Front) in May 1933.<sup>145</sup> Chancellor Dollfuß created this party in 1933 at the same time as he prohibited the Socialist

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<sup>140</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 23.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>143</sup> PKS-KM, 24 September 1932.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 September 1930.

<sup>145</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 8/69

paramilitary *Schutzbund* soon followed by the prohibition of the SDAP in March 1934.<sup>146</sup> The VF was the only legal political party in the times of Austrofascism between 1934 to 1938.

In 1932 about 650,000 people, a tenth of the Austrian population, were members of the SDAP.<sup>147</sup> The paramilitary *Heimwehr*, connected to the CSP, counted about 150,000 members at its peak in 1930.<sup>148</sup> Both sides presented conflicting views of the future, had no basis of shared values, and both contested the other sides' main pillars of constitutional organisation.<sup>149</sup> As Friedrich Heer summarised, the religious-political battle of red Socialists against black Conservatives led to distinct cultures, which did not communicate with each other.<sup>150</sup> Next to these two political 'Lager', the pan-German idea was present not only as a 'Lager' with competing political parties including the NS but also as a common denominator for all sides.<sup>151</sup>

However, these pillars were not as clear-cut for two diarists. Bernhardine Alma was a pan-German, supporting the *Schoberblock* and after February 1934 wishing for the NS to take over. Yet, she was also closely connected to the conservative 'Lager' through her confessor.<sup>152</sup> Therese Lindenberg, on the other hand, declared rupture with the socialist ideals in 1933.<sup>153</sup> Her given reason was to reject the notion of class struggle, which was also a key element of the CSP's plan to create a corporatist state. Lindenberg's rejection implies her hitherto existing connectedness to this political side and the change of it when her surrounding political space was more and more invaded by the CSP, especially with March 1933.

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<sup>146</sup> Talos/Manoschek, *Konstitierungsprozeß*, pp. 6-27 at p. 18.

<sup>147</sup> G. Sandner, *Sozialdemokratie in Österreich. Von den Anfängen der Arbeiterbewegung zur modernen Sozialdemokratie* (Vienna, 2012), p. 29.

<sup>148</sup> P. H. Merkl, *Comparing Fascist Movements*, in S. U. Larsen, B. Hagtvet and J. P. Myklebust ed., *Who were the fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism* (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø, 1980), p. 756.

<sup>149</sup> G. Steiner, 'Wahre Demokratie? Transformation und Demokratieverständnis in der österreichischen Zwischenkriegszeit', *Demokratie und Geschichte* 7/8 (2003/04), pp. 125-154 at p. 128.

<sup>150</sup> F. Heer, *Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität*, 2nd edn (Vienna, 2001), p.354.

<sup>151</sup> 3-Lager-theory cf. A. Wandruszka, *Österreichs politische Struktur. Die Entwicklung der Parteien und politischen Bewegungen*, in H. Benedikt ed., *Geschichte der Republik Österreich* (Munich, 1954), pp. 480-485; pan-Germanism as link instead of a distinct Lager cf. J. Thorpe, 'Pan-German Identity and the Press in Austria, 1933-1938' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Adelaide, 2006), p. 5.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. V. Helfert, 'Lieber Gott lasse mich sterben – u. schenke dafür Wien Frieden u. Segen.' Politische Dimensionen im Tagebuch Bernhardine Almas (1934)', in Gerhalter/Hämmerle ed., *Krieg - Politik - Schreiben*, pp. 33-54.

<sup>153</sup> SFN 3-TL, 3 March 1933.

e. *The elimination of parliament*

On the warm spring day of 15 March 1933, 210 police officers surrounded the Austrian parliament. They had been commanded by the CSP-government of Chancellor Dollfuß to prevent members of parliament from entering the building and even removed those from the assembly hall, who had arrived earlier.<sup>154</sup> This occurred eleven days after parliament had not been able to end its session due to the resignation of all three of its presidents. However, the third president tried to call in the deputies to resume and then close the session on 15 March 1933.<sup>155</sup> Being hindered from doing so parliament was not able to resume the session and thus constitutionally paralysed.

Karl Macher anticipated this event on 4 October 1932. It was on this day that Dollfuß first used emergency decrees to govern. Macher compared this change of politics to the German Chancellor Papen whom Dollfuß tried to imitate to become a dictator. His goal would be to eliminate parliament.<sup>156</sup> According to a telegram to Papen, Dollfuß sought indeed to use emergency decrees in the image of Germany.<sup>157</sup> Already in the Lausanne negotiations of 1932, Dollfuß agreed with the commissar of the League of Nations that solving the financial crisis would only be possible by getting rid of parliament.<sup>158</sup>

Elsa Lux encountered the events directly while running errands. She noticed military personnel and weaponry in the city centre (figure 2.4). However, Lux did not include any information about the parliamentary crisis beforehand nor the actual purpose of the armed forces she encountered. What she witnessed was likely the police closing off the parliament to hinder the deputies from entering and reopening the session. However, as she was closely connected to the political field by reading newspapers regularly, Lux could and probably did know about

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<sup>154</sup> ‚210 Kriminalbeamte besetzen den Nationalrat‘, *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*, 16 March 1933, pp. 5-7.

<sup>155</sup> Parlamentsdirektion ed., *Staats- und Verfassungskrise 1933* (Vienna, 2014), p. 11.

<sup>156</sup> PCS-KM, 4 October 1932.

<sup>157</sup> Staudinger, ‚CSP und Errichtung‘, in Jedlicka/Neck, *Vom Justizpalastbrand zum Heldenplatz*, pp. 65-81 at p. 68.

<sup>158</sup> Maderthaner, ‚Der 12. Februar 1934‘, in Achenbach/Moser, *Österreich in Bild und Ton*, pp. 29-44 at, p. 30.

the events leading up to this moment. All newspapers, including the one with the widest readership called *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*, were reporting on the constitutional paralysis on 4 March 1933 and speculating on how the government would react.<sup>159</sup> However, Lux added a general comment by stating that it looks sad for Austria.<sup>160</sup> She thus realised that the ongoing events were important and added to her negative perspective on the future.

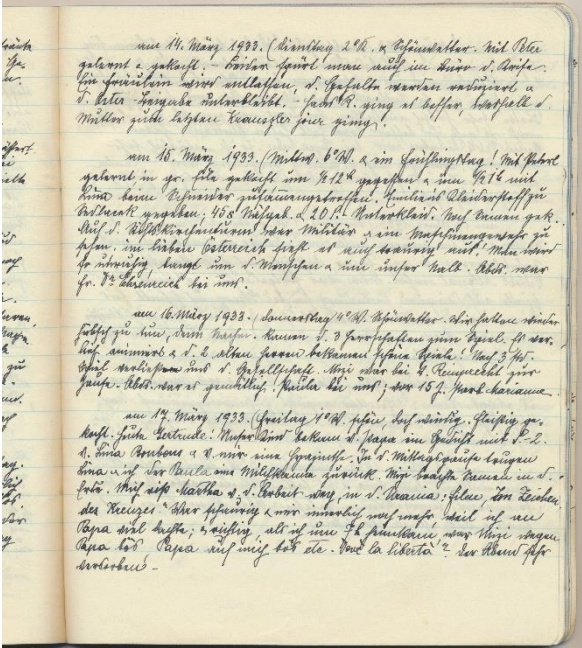


Figure 2.4 – Diary Elsa Lux, 15 March 1933

Lippert’s diary provides us with the context by glueing in only this article of the government with no further references or notes. She, thus, saw the incident as essential and relied on the narrative presented by the Dollfuß government.<sup>161</sup> They framed it as the fault of parliament and urged the population to remain calm in facing the ‘self-paralysed parliament.’<sup>162</sup> This is also how Bauer viewed the events. His entry starts with the self-paralysis which the ‘excellent Chancellor Dr Dollfuß used to build a new Austrian state through dictatorial means based on

<sup>159</sup> ‚Der Proteststreik der Eisenbahner und das Parlament‘, *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*, 5 March 1933, p. 4.  
<sup>160</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 15 March 1933  
<sup>161</sup> SFN 227-ELi 3/97.  
<sup>162</sup> ‚Einschränkung der politischen Rechte‘, *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*, 9 March 1933, p. 6.

bourgeois, Christian ideology.’<sup>163</sup> Bauer’s summary also shows his support for the changes and the wish for a dictatorial state.

*f. Conclusion*

As much as every diarist is unique, they nevertheless encountered similar obstacles and distress in the troubled times they lived in. Personal, economic and political circumstances from their individual to the national level shaped their present. Yet, they also outlined their perspective on the future as much as that one influenced the present in return. Those who saw a better future on the horizon brought by the CSP-*Heimwehr* government were less pessimistic. Doubts, however, were common across diarists. Increasing fears and uncertainty were experienced by six of the diarists and are closely linked to governmental actions. At the same time, their past also influenced their present, especially their national identity and religion, but also fears of the future. The three timely dimensions are intimately connected just as the diarists are tied into the contexts surrounding them.

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<sup>163</sup> PCK-FB, 1/99: ‚schaltete sich das Parlament von selbst aus. Dies benützte der hervorragende Bundeskanzler Dr. Dollfuß, um auf diktatorischen Wegen einen neuen Staat Österreich auf bürgerlicher, christlicher Weltanschauung aufzubauen.‘

### Chapter 3 – The identity crisis in the background

Although diaries are based on the day, they also balance between past and future.<sup>164</sup> Within this continuum of past-present-future, the present is shaped by the past and the anticipated future. Everyday life is not as immediate as it seems since it is formed and situated within a person's narrative and memories.<sup>165</sup> Before writing impressions down the diarists filter them through their personal lenses. These three time levels are meshed and overlap in complex ways within diaries even within one entry.<sup>166</sup> To fully understand the diarists' present, it is necessary to analyse the intimately linked perspectives on the past and present times of crises. Their anchors are in the diarist's own identity as shaped by circumstances and societal surroundings. One key element of personal as well as national identity and the most distinguishing ideological factor between the two fascist ideologies was religion.

#### *a. Religious identity*

Bernhardine Alma was the most religious of the seven diarists. Her entries reflect how much religious practices anchored her everyday life. Her confessor K. was a central figure, influencing her thoughts and mood. It was in him and the diary that she confided. When wanting to join a cloister, she abandoned the idea after discussing it with him.<sup>167</sup> On 20 February 1934, she wrote that she praised him like God's angel.<sup>168</sup> As religion is Alma's haven, she confessed or went to Church nearly daily.

In 1934 about 90,5% of the Austrian population was Catholic, the rest Protestant or Jewish.<sup>169</sup> It is, therefore, no surprise that most diarists were Catholic even if they did not

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<sup>164</sup> F. A. Nussbaum, 'Toward Conceptualizing Diary', in T. L. Broughton ed., *Autobiography. Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* (London/New York, 2007), iv, p. 9; cf. G. Rosenthal, 'The Narrated Life Story: On the Interrelation Between Experience, Memory and Narration', in University of Huddersfield ed., *Narrative, Memory & Knowledge: Representations, Aesthetics, Contexts* (Huddersfield, 2006), pp. 1-16.

<sup>165</sup> Hämmerle, 'Diaries', p. 146.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155; L. Gerhalter and C. Hämmerle, *Krieg – Politik – Schreiben. Tagebücher von Frauen 1918-1950* (Vienna, 2015), p. 20.

<sup>167</sup> SFN 9-BA, 3 January 1931.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 February 1934.

<sup>169</sup> E. Hanisch, 'Der Politische Katholizismus als ideologischer Träger des „Austrofaschismus“', in Tálos/Neugebauer ed., *Austrofaschismus*, p. 71.

express their religion with the same intensity. For Lindenberg, the 1930s became a time of increasing religiosity which she realised herself with surprise in 1933: ‘I have become very pious. I pray, I go to Church. I plead when I have sorrows.’<sup>170</sup> It is not only Catholicism but also another spiritual entity guarding her, which appears first in her entry on 23 November 1930.<sup>171</sup> She started mentioning a spiritual voice from the universe in 1931.<sup>172</sup> At the same time, her praying and Christian religiosity intensified from 1933.<sup>173</sup> Yet, this is an exceptional case, and as shown by the quote above very much linked to her personal and financial situation filled with sorrows.

Elsa Lux rarely actively mentioned religion, but it shows through in the language and little events. She ‘thanks heaven’ for her father’s health slightly improving on 3 November 1932.<sup>174</sup> Furthermore, the family had close relations to the parish priest, who visited them seven times in the few months they spent in Lower Austria. Franz Bauer was also close to the priest, and the Church was one of his little town’s central points.<sup>175</sup> Most connections with religion are upon the death of a relative or town member, thus the local identity.<sup>176</sup>

By contrast, the other diarist living outside Vienna, Pullirsch, was not very religious. The two times he mentioned the Church are not linked to religious introspection. When attending the mass in Krk, he commented on the women’s beautiful traditional dresses.<sup>177</sup> The second one concerned his brother’s fight with the abbot for whom he worked. This does not only show the existing link of the family to the Church, but Ludwig Pullirsch’s angry reaction makes it clear that this link was not very strong. He called the abbot a ‘Jesuitical back-stabber.’<sup>178</sup> The

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<sup>170</sup> SFN 3-TL, 3 March 1933: ‚Ich bin sehr fromm geworden. Ich bete, ich gehe zur Kirche. Ich flehe, wenn ich Sorgen habe.‘

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 November 1930.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 April 1931.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 entries.

<sup>174</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 3 November 1932.

<sup>175</sup> PCK-FB, 1/87, 1/90.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 1/86-88, 1/95.

<sup>177</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 48.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14. ‚jesuitische Hinterfotzigkeit‘



only diarist actively opposing religion was the Socialist Karl Macher. The government's plan to make Austria Christian resulted in an extreme reaction: 'Fie!!'<sup>179</sup> This is the only entry in which Macher used two exclamations marks and such an archaic expression. The revulsion is obvious as well as the immanent link between belief and politics.

This connection is also visible in Bernhardine Alma's diary. After the civil war in February 1934, she was at first content with the silence of the Cardinal and the Pope. However, when the Pope then declared his support for the Austrofascist regime, she prayed for a new Pope who would not be hypocritical and maintained the Christian values which the CSP had violated.<sup>180</sup> It is indeed on the papal *Quadragesimo Anno* of 1931 that the CSP founded its political legitimation for a Christian corporative dictatorship with Catholicism as one of the major ideological pillars considered able to unite Austrians.<sup>181</sup>

In Erna Lippert's diary, this connection is also noteworthy. Her second diary was dedicated to 'God for the nation and the Fatherland.'<sup>182</sup> This links her religiosity to questions of national identity. Likewise, most of her entries centred around religious aspects including prayers, postcards and especially speeches of the Pope and the Austrian Cardinal Innitzer laboriously transcribed by hand.<sup>183</sup> The latter was also present at official political events of the Austrofascist regime like at the 'German Catholic Convention' in September 1933 used as a display of power by the regime and the Church.<sup>184</sup> This is also how Bauer perceived it when he eyewitnessed the procession.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> PCS-KM, 14 March 1934: 'Pfui!!'

<sup>180</sup> SFN 9-BA, 11 April 1934.

<sup>181</sup> A. Staudinger, 'Katholischer Antisemitismus in der ersten Republik', in G. Botz, I. Oxaal, M. Pollack and N. Scholz ed. *Eine zerstörte Kultur. Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus in Wien seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*, 2nd edn (Vienna, 2002), pp. 261-280 at p. 274; Hanisch, 'Der politische Katholizismus', in Tálos/Neugebauer ed., *Austrofaschismus*, pp. 68-87 at p. 72.

<sup>182</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 2/1: 'Mit Gott für Volk und Vaterland'

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, pope 1/138, Innitzer 4/100-102.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 4/64f.

<sup>185</sup> PCK-FB, 1/103.

b. *Elections*

This link between religion and politics is further present in Alma's diary concerning the last national elections in November 1930. Just before, she asked her confessor whom to vote for. She wanted to vote for the pan-German *Schoberblock*. Anticipating the confessor's political point of view, she noted on 7 September 1930: 'I would much prefer to vote for Schober than for the Christian-Social and disgusting Heimwehr. Maybe father confessor allows it.'<sup>186</sup> Here the close dependency of Alma on her confessor in political matters becomes apparent. He demands her to vote for the CSP which she finally did out of obedience.<sup>187</sup> At the same time, Alma wished Schober all the best and hoped for a good result for him.<sup>188</sup> Likewise, the priest in Franz Bauer's town got actively involved in the regional elections in 1932, accusing the election commission of concealing the CSP ballots.<sup>189</sup> Both examples showcase how much of an influence priests had on people and politics in the early 1930s.

Contemporaries did not know that the elections on 9 November 1930 would be the last ones in Austria until the reestablishment of a democratic state in 1945. Although democracy is said to have been weak in the interwar years, it mattered enough for five out of the seven diarists to mention these elections and reflect on the results or even write down for whom they voted. The turnout increased slightly in comparison to April 1927, rising to 90,5%.<sup>190</sup> This high turnout shows that the political interest of the population must have been as high as the diarists.

Lux, Lippert, Bauer, Alma and Macher all recorded that they voted. Lux does not give information about the party she voted for, but by using the first sentence of her daily entry to mention that she and her entire family went to the ballots shows that she accorded it

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<sup>186</sup> SFN 9-BA, 7 November 1930: 'Ich möchte viel lieber den Schober wählen als die christl. soz. Ekel=Heimwehr. Vielleicht erlaubt's der Beichtvater.'

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 November 1930.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> PCK-FB, 1/97.

<sup>190</sup> H. Dachs, *Handbuch des politischen Systems Österreichs. Erste Republik 1918-1933* (Vienna 1995), p. 150.

importance.<sup>191</sup> Unlike Alma, Lippert voted for the CSP out of conviction. She was enthusiastic about the outcome since the political anti-Marxist block won.<sup>192</sup> Similarly, Bauer used his vote to support the *Heimwehr*, to which he belonged, but since they did not win more seats, he remained dissatisfied.<sup>193</sup> The connection Alma made between the *Heimwehr* and the CSP is also apparent by Lippert's joy about the anti-Marxists block's victory. It also shows how important the aforementioned opposition to the SDAP was already in 1930 for her as a supporter of the CSP. The *Heimwehr* and CSP ended up forming a coalition. They held the majority by only one seat. The strongest party was the SDAP with 41%, followed by the CSP at nearly 36%. The German-national groups received about 16% in total of which nearly 13% for the *Schoberblock* and only 3% to the Austrian NS.<sup>194</sup>

About one and a half years later, regional elections were held in the spring of 1932. Not only did not all diarists include the elections but those who did also shifted in their reactions to a more analytical account. Lux's entry on 24 April 1932 mentions the 'big voting day' and that everyone in her family 'voted national social. to some extent.'<sup>195</sup> This can refer to two parties: the German-nationals or, most likely by the formulation, the NS. The latter gained 12% in their first attempt to enter the regional parliament in Lower Austria where Lux's family voted.<sup>196</sup>

On the other hand, the CSP and the *Heimwehr* lost their electorate mostly to the NS, in Lower Austria as well as in Vienna.<sup>197</sup> Lippert registered these losses of the CSP in her diary, which she had voted for again.<sup>198</sup> Similarly, Bauer was focussed on the NS results and only wrote parenthetically that the CSP lost some percent.<sup>199</sup> The difference between the 1930 and

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<sup>191</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 9 November 1930.

<sup>192</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 1/124.

<sup>193</sup> PCK-FB, 1/88.

<sup>194</sup> Dachs, *Handbuch*, p. 150.

<sup>195</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 24 April 1932 'gingen alle in Raten national sozial. wählen'

<sup>196</sup> D. Hänisch, *Die österreichischen NSDAP-Wähler. Eine empirische Analyse ihrer politischen Herkunft und ihres Sozialprofils* (Vienna, 1998), p. 238.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>198</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 2/85.

<sup>199</sup> PCK-FB, 1/97.

1932 elections is apparent, both in the results and the diarist's perceptions. The shift that took place in only two years was one within the right-wing parties, mainly from the CSP to the NS. This is inherently linked to the similarities in ideology, divided mostly by the question of Christianity. The CSP's following actions can be seen as an attempt to secure their power based on a clear ideology anchored in the past.

*c. The past and Austrian identity*

From an anthropological point of view, the individual histories told in diaries are situated within long term processes, which are as much part of the narrative as the individual histories.<sup>200</sup> Remembering plays a significant role in looking at the past and their identities, also for the analysed diarists. Only Macher did not refer to past events or deceased persons. Not once did he write down a memory of any kind or used the past tense in his diary. His focus was on present-day events. This, however, does not mean that his perspective was not shaped by the past. It merely is not noteworthy enough to be remembered and included in his diary. It also does not fit into Macher's aim of chronicling his life and important political events. They speak for themselves and are not analysed nor distorted by his interpretations. Similarly, the entries of Bauer rarely refer to past events. Yet, he remembered his brother's death a year later and thus honoured him.<sup>201</sup> His conscious mentioning of the past increased further in 1934 when he reminisced about his deceased relatives, like his father's death in 1909, and on central individuals of town life, like the school teacher.<sup>202</sup>

Lux and Alma also often remembered their deceased relatives. For Lux, it is mostly her mother's death recalled by the deteriorating health of her father, while Alma lost her father in 1931 and her mother in 1932.<sup>203</sup> Both are mostly remembered in dreams: 'dreaming again

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<sup>200</sup> R. Koselleck, *Zeitschichten. Studien zur Historik* (Frankfurt am Main, 2003), p. 66.

<sup>201</sup> PCK-FB, 1/105.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 1/117.

<sup>203</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 2 December 1930, 2 November 1931, 17 November 1931, 16 January 1932, 22 August 1932, 8 mentions in 1933.

regularly every night of him [father] – that he is alive.’<sup>204</sup> Lux included her past very often beyond the close family circle. Deceased aunts, uncles, friends and anniversaries appear regularly. Thus, her diary was also a way to memorialise all these people. On 12 September 1933, she wrote down that she should not think of past times as that would ruin the present moment.<sup>205</sup> Lux was, therefore, very much aware of the past’s connections to her present and that it can and does shape it.

For Lindenberg, memories also played a similarly significant role. She retreated into them, hoping for a better future by remembering the good days without further explaining when those were.<sup>206</sup> Most references were linked to family members. She recorded when she first met her husband, the birth of her daughter and the death of her father.<sup>207</sup> Thus mostly very personal events which shaped her individual identity. Not all her references are comprehensible since she did not always include explanations. When she wrote on 11 March 1934 ‘Today 8 years ago!’ it remains unclear what exactly she is referring to.<sup>208</sup> However, it must have been something important to her, worth being recorded in her diary.



Figure 3.1 – Ludwig Pullirsch 1919 (left), 1931 (right) (both pictures next to each other in the diary)

It is the recalling of personal experiences in World War I, which are the most referenced in Ludwig Pullirsch’s diary (figure 3.1). Whenever he travelled, especially to locations where

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<sup>204</sup> SFN 9-BA, 28 March 1931: ‚träume nun regelmäßig wieder jede Nacht von ihm – daß er lebt‘; 18 April 1931, 1 May 1934, 4 May 1934.

<sup>205</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 12 September 1933.

<sup>206</sup> Gerhalter/Hämmerle, *Apokalyptische Jahre*, p. 47

<sup>207</sup> SFN 3-TL, 2 September 1931, 30 October 1931, 24 May 1933.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 March 1934: ‘Heute vor 8 Jahren!’, 6 February 1932, 12 May 1932.

he was stationed, Pullirsch wrote down how he felt and what he did the last time he was there.<sup>209</sup>

The Great War was a point of reference for Franz Bauer as well, and he also remembered political and religious key figures of the near past, like Cardinal Piffl and the CSP politician Seipel.<sup>210</sup>

Lippert recollected the same two figures as great men of the past.<sup>211</sup> But she dedicated the most space to Karl Habsburg, the last Habsburg emperor. His day of death, birth and other significant events are recorded in her journal, devoting several pages to him at all these anniversaries.<sup>212</sup> Furthermore, it becomes clear that she admired him as much as Seipel or Dollfuß thus drawing a connection between these politicians. When remembering emperor Karl, Lippert started her entry by stating ‘Austria! Formerly filled with sun and light, you often-tested country of German loyalty.’<sup>213</sup> All of this makes the link evident between past and present as well as between individual and collective identities.

As Lippert’s diary illustrates, the Habsburg past remained present in a very personal sense for some Austrians. This is even more fascinating since Austria’s existence had been foremost bound to the possessions of the Habsburgs and mostly defined its identity through the monarchy.<sup>214</sup> When the First World War ended in 1918, this union was lost, and the borders redrawn. One of the newly created states was the Republic of Austria, now lacking a common identity and sense of belonging. For Pullirsch, it was especially South Tyrol that led him to recall the past days. He had fought in the Dolomites in the First World War to protect this Habsburg territory and still mourned its loss from Austria.<sup>215</sup> He unconsciously equals Austria to the Habsburgs and thus used the same identity and image of the past as his political

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<sup>209</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, pp.16, 26, 41.

<sup>210</sup> PCK-FB, 1/97.

<sup>211</sup> SFN 227-ELi, Piffl: 2/80-84, 3/112; Seipel: 2/122-127, 2/136, 3/40-41, 3/150-154.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 2/54-68.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 2/54: ‘Österreich! Einst voll der Sonne und des Lichts, du oft erprobtes Land der deutschen Treue.’

<sup>214</sup> F. Mathis, *1.000 Years of Austria and Austrian Identity. Founding Myths*, in A. Pelinka and G. Bischof ed., *Austrian Historical Memory and National Identity* (New Brunswick, 1997), p. 21.

<sup>215</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 45.

surroundings. Likewise, Lippert saw Tyrol as crucial and recurrently remembered losing South Tyrol to Italy.<sup>216</sup> Consequently, she also illustrates a sense of it belonging to the Austrian state. In addition, Pullirsch also craved one united country when he wrote of the ‘fellow countrymen’ regardless of their political point of view.<sup>217</sup>

Furthermore, Lippert illustrated how the CSP and the *Heimwehr* played on this Habsburg grandeur and celebrated the liberation from the Ottomans in 1683 – one of the major military successes in the seventeenth century.<sup>218</sup> Conservative stakeholders started to embrace the idea of an Austrian nation, mostly using it as a powerful defence against Nazism.<sup>219</sup> The NS was slowly but surely winning their voters.<sup>220</sup> The words of CSP-leader Dollfuß in his ‘Trabrennplatz’ speech on 11 September 1933 best summarise the programme of the new regime: ‘We want a social, Christian German Austria with a corporatist foundation and under strong authoritarian leadership.’<sup>221</sup> But as Susanne Fröhlich-Steffen shows, the Christian socialists also planned to create a better German state.<sup>222</sup>

Indeed, the Austro-fascist regime pivoted between the two poles of pan-German movements and an independent Austria based on the past Habsburg grandeur. They tried to tie them together by the idea of being a distinct German state as well as a part of the German nation.<sup>223</sup> The historical legitimisation added depth to the sense of belonging and the ‘imagined community’ of a group which was much needed by the regime facing financial and political crises as well as different values in the population due to political affiliation.<sup>224</sup> The past, especially as

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<sup>216</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 1/134, 2/33, 2/38.

<sup>217</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 62. ‘eigene Landsleute’

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 1/33, 1/100.

<sup>219</sup> S. Fröhlich-Steffen, *Die österreichische Identität im Wandel* (Vienna, 2003), p. 45.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. Hänisch, *NSDAP-Wähler*.

<sup>221</sup> ‘Wir wollen den sozialen, christlichen deutschen Staat Österreich auf ständischer Grundlage unter starker autoritärer Führung.’ Cited in E. Weber, *Dollfuß an Österreich. Eines Mannes Wort und Ziel* (Vienna, 1935), p. 30f.

<sup>222</sup> Fröhlich-Steffen, *Österreichische Identität im Wandel*, p. 45.

<sup>223</sup> Cf. Thorpe, ‘Pan-German Identity’, p. 5.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983).

memories, started to play an essential role in the present day identity.<sup>225</sup> However, it is also connected to the future as illustrated by Lippert's following entry: 'It was an uplifting sight, reminding of Austria's great past and laying the cornerstones for a better future.'<sup>226</sup> This better future seemed reached for her by the turning point of February 1934 which, in her eyes, led to the finalisation of establishing the Austrofascist regime.

#### d. Conclusion

The identity crisis linked to the question of religion and nationality lay at the background of daily life. It had a significant impact on the diarists' perceptions of their times. The past shaped them while the present troubled them. Politics reached far into the seemingly personal questions of religion and identity. Nevertheless, these three aspects had a reciprocal influence on voting decisions and the diarists' hopes and fears linked to their personal lives in times of crises.

#### e. Epilogue – The Anschluss in March 1938

To contextualise the experiences of the diarists and given the added value of an inter-textual interpretation, this epilogue looks at the reactions of four diarists to the *Anschluss* in March 1938. This moment in Austrian history is seen as pivotal in retrospect. However, the people living it had experienced comparing turning points already in their lives. One of them was the fights of February 1934. Looking at the same people's experiences of the *Anschluss* might give us a better understanding of the impact of both events and the feeling of continuity.

Lindenberg was mostly concerned about the safety of her family members – in February 1934 as well as during the *Anschluss*. The latter is linked to the fact that her husband was Jewish

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<sup>225</sup> P. Sarasin, *Die Wirklichkeit der Fiktion. Zum Konzept der imagined communities*, in U. Jureit ed., *Politische Kollektive – Die Konstruktion nationaler, rassischer und ethnischer Gemeinsamkeiten* (Münster, 2001), p. 29; J. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis – Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich, 2007), p. 133.

<sup>226</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 3/11: 'Es war ein erhebender Anblick, erinnernd an Österreichs große Vergangenheit und grundsteinlegend für eine bessere Zukunft.'



and the Nazi take-over immediately threatened him.<sup>227</sup> For Lux, the most crucial impact was her brother losing his job after the *Anschluss*.<sup>228</sup> This was due to his tasks being incompatible with the abolition of an independent Austrian state. She was not shocked, however, whereas she had been in February 1934. Lux expressed that 12 March 1938 is ‘a black day’ for her family.<sup>229</sup> But in the next sentence, she noted that she and her sister were making ‘Hitler flags’ and referred to the general public’s reactions as one of agitation and jubilation.<sup>230</sup> This reflects the population’s spectrum of responses from negative to positive. About 250,000 Austrians welcomed Hitler at the Heldenplatz – a central square in Vienna – on 12 March as the ‘liberator.’ Newspapers reported the incredible acclamations of the ‘German-Austrians’ and praised the final union of all Germans.<sup>231</sup>

Contrary to 1934, the entries of most diarists are significantly shorter. Lindenberg wrote on 14 March 1938 that ‘Austria has ended –.’<sup>232</sup> The fact stated by this short sentence seemed to have been overwhelming for Therese Lindenberg – just as in February 1934. Similarly, and unlike 1934, Pullirsch did not give detailed hourly accounts, nor did he write an entry on the day of the events. Only six days after 12 March he listed the events briefly and wrote that ‘we are now part of Germany.’<sup>233</sup> Pullirsch is mostly surprised by how much happened in a week but not that it happened.<sup>234</sup>

The reactions of the two active supporters of Austrofascism, Franz Bauer and Erna Lippert, were striking. Lippert was afraid about Austria’s future and stated that with the last note of the national anthem hope also faded away but not the loyalty to Austria.<sup>235</sup> Her entry

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<sup>227</sup> SFN 3-TL, 19 March 1938.

<sup>228</sup> SFN 241-ELu, 13 March 1938.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 March 1938: ‘Für uns ein Schwarzer Tag. [...]’

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, ‘Furchtbare Aufregung. Großer Jubel.’

<sup>231</sup> *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*, 13 March 1938.

<sup>232</sup> SFN 3-TL, 14 March 1938: ‘Österreich zu Ende -’

<sup>233</sup> Pullirsch, *Hineingeboren III*, p. 123.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> SFN 227-ELi, 8/67: ‘Nocheinmal erklang im Radio die österr. Bundeshymne du mit ihr verklang unser Hoffen, nicht aber unsere Treue zur Heimat Österreich!’

showcases the continuous support for Austrian independence. However, beyond that aspect, she does not seem to have issues with the change in political ideology. Bauer too recorded the events. His support for the new ideology is made explicit by the title of the entry under which he listed the events and reactions to the *Anschluss* in his hometown. In the original version, he wrote of ‘a historical event.’<sup>236</sup> However, in a later revision which could be from 1941 or 1951 judging from the pen used, he added the comment ‘at least for those who believed in the 1000-year Reich.’<sup>237</sup> This addition makes his own beliefs in March 1938 clear, he supported the Nazi idea when writing the entry. A page later, this belief is made apparent: ‘we now incorporate ourselves as German men into the German fatherland. Heil Hitler: Hitler we acclaim you.’<sup>238</sup> On 13 March 1938, Adolf Hitler already declared the incorporation of his home country (Heimat) into the German Reich, while addressing the Austrian population as ‘Germans’ in his speeches.<sup>239</sup> Austria is seen as finally embracing its nationality and thus the identity of being part of the German ‘Volksgemeinschaft.’<sup>240</sup>

Just a few days earlier Bauer had actively opposed the ‘Illegals’ claiming that these Nazis betrayed the fatherland. This change from an active supporter of the Austrofascist system to welcoming the *Anschluss* showcases how closely tied these two were for the population. The step from the clerical variant of fascism to Nazism, in the end, was a small one for Bauer. The division between Nazism and Austrofascism blurred in the 1930s.<sup>241</sup> The idea of belonging to the German nation present in both fascisms had at last been the decisive factor for the unflustered ideological transition from the one to the other.

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<sup>236</sup> PCK-FB 2/52.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 2/53: ‘fügen uns ein als deutsche Männer im deutschen Vaterland. Heil Hitler: Hitler wir rufen dir zu.’

<sup>239</sup> ‘Die Proklamation des Führers und Reichskanzlers’, *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung*, 13 March 1938, p. 2.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> Lewis, ‘Conservatives and Fascists’, in Blinkhorn ed., *Fascists and Conservatives*, pp. 98-117 at p. 98.

## Conclusion

From the seven diarists' recordings, it was possible to gain valuable insights on life as 'it actually was' in early 1930s Austria. The three chapters have elucidated the question of how ordinary members of society experienced their times, were affected by the crises and witnessed the slow slide towards fascism as well as their reactions to it. All diarists were tied to their circumstances and knew about the impact the crises had on them. Their experiences and reflections illustrate the many interconnected layers of crises affecting their lives: from violence, political and economic crises to questions of identity and religion. Together with their view on the past, these shaped the present as well as the perspective on the future. The years from 1930 to 1934 were indeed a period of uncertainty for them, and their diaries served them as confidantes and gave them comfort. The long-lasting impacts of questions of identity and the inherently divided society contributed to this sense of uncertainty and also to the understanding of a change being imminent. However, most diarists saw the effective changes as negatively affecting their future. Only those two who supported the *CSP-Heimwehr* regime were positive in their outlook, yet all had doubts.

Overall, the entries show that the existing historiography's reliance on structures only painted an incomplete picture of the interwar years. By losing sight of the ordinary contemporaries, historians made assumptions about society as a whole but did not let the individuals of which it consisted speak in their own right. However, their experiences also change the external narrative as it is presented in the historiography. Foremost, the neglect of February 1934 as a turning point should be revised. For all diarists, this was an essential point of no return in their lives, which they also experienced as such. Their accounts illustrate a banal yet inherently interesting reaction to the far-reaching political change: they retreated into personal affairs and adjusted quickly to the new circumstances even if those opposed their values. Especially the

diarists who were not supporting the regime were demoralised and tried to avoid the far-reaching grip of politics on their lives.

They acknowledge the changes already before but only when the two big political sides clashed in February 1934 did they realise that this was a point of no return. The struggle had turned into one between two variants of fascism after the principal opponent's, the Socialists' defeat in 1934. Taking a step from one variant of fascism to another in 1938 seems not to be as big of a step as from a democratic system to fascism which already took place in 1934. The implementation of Austrofascism was a slow slide with several timely distinct and violent moments. The *Anschluss* in 1938, on the other hand, was carried out in a few days and acclaimed by the Austrian population. The evidence found in the diaries does not support the thesis of the Austrian government as a bulwark against fascism. On the contrary, Austrofascism seems to have been a very effective preparing step for the subsequent acceptance of Nazism in Austria. The abolition of democracy in 1934 should, therefore, be understood as the necessary precursor to the relatively smooth transition from one variant of fascism, Austrofascism, to the other, Nazism for most parts of the population.

It was also the unanswered question of identity that created a possibility for continuity. As part of the German nation, Austrians understood themselves as being close to Germany. This deeper lying question of belonging was triggered by the end of the First World War and remained undecided in the interwar years. Its long-term impact and the legacy of Habsburg grandeur should be included in the narrative in order to understand the continuities and the sense of uncertainty in the 1930s. The latter was also caused by the Austrian society's split into 'Lager'. However, it was not as strictly divided as thus far understood. The diarists showed that there were transitions and connections. They also had more in common in their daily difficulties than what separated them on a political level. All struggled with the financial crisis as the gap to the richest widened and the distinction between workers and the middle-class got blurred,

and their incomes decreased significantly. The financial aspects shaped not only their possibilities in daily life but also their outlook on the future and with it the general feeling of demoralisation, discontent and impression of not having the possibility for a better future for themselves or their children. Hence, the early 1930s were indeed fascinating, which merit further analysis as the troubled times they were.

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