Beyond Vienna: The Collapse of Provincial Austria in the First World War

by Kathryn E. Densford

B.A. in History and Theology, May 2010, Concordia University-Chicago
M.A. in History, May 2012, Northern Illinois University

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Hugh Agnew
Professor of History and International Affairs

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Kathryn E. Densford

Dissertation Research Committee:

Hugh Agnew, Professor of History and International Affairs, Dissertation Director

Katrin Schultheiss, Assistant Professor of History, Committee Member

Andrew Zimmerman, Professor of History and International Affairs, Committee Member

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Abstract of Dissertation

Beyond Vienna: The Collapse of Provincial Austria in the First World War

The First World War was a time of political and social unrest and transformation in Central Europe. By war's end, the Habsburg Monarchy ceased to exist, replaced by the so-called nation-states. Recent studies of the First World War have increasingly focused on home front events, and scholars including Belinda Davis and Maureen Healy have analyzed the experience of war in Central Europe's capital cities. However, few scholars have focused on the provincial experience of the First World War. Without including provincial war experiences, historians lack an understanding of the full extent of wartime deprivation and the full scale of social breakdown in the Habsburg Monarchy during the war.

This dissertation examines the social breakdown of provincial Lower Austria and Moravia, focusing on the shared border through the lens of gender. Women, many now heading households owing to mobilization, played a larger public role during the war than they had before 1914 as they increasingly worked outside the home, sought to provide for their families, and protested increasingly difficult living conditions on the home front. Contemporary sources reveal that owing to the lack of adequate provisioning and increasing requisitioning, residents contacted officials to express their frustration and many—often women—took to the streets in protest or took other actions to undermine the Monarchy's wartime provisioning efforts.

I demonstrate that the Habsburg state actively attempted to manage its people, to provide for them, and to combat the feminization of the home front in an effort to maintain social order during wartime. I argue that the cycle of provisioning and

requisitioning coupled with the arrival of outsiders—POWs, wounded soldiers, refugees from the Imperial east and southeast—contributed to a process in which ideas of who was a member of the community and who was not hardened, as residents became more concerned with their own immediate needs rather than those of the state. As a result, the Habsburg Monarchy lost the war at home even before it lost on the fighting front. My research also demonstrates that in some parts of the former Monarchy, fighting continued into the early 1920s as residents of Habsburg Central and Eastern Europe contested new international borders in the wake of the November 1918 Armistice, and the region continued to experience economic shortages. My research expands and challenges our understanding of the First World War in the Habsburg Monarchy. It provides a closer look at the provincial experience of war, which was different than that of the imperial capital owing to requisitioning. The provisioning situation in the provinces contributed to hunger in the capital; therefore, this study demonstrates that the provinces contributed to the capital's collapse. Moreover, by expanding the chronology, this project demonstrates that ultimately the extended effect of wartime deprivation and low morale laid the groundwork for Czechoslovak takeover in the borderlands of Southern Moravia.

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Introduction

The summer of 1914 proved fateful for the Habsburg Monarchy. The assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir apparent to the Habsburg throne and his wife, Sophie Chotek, were, in retrospect, the immediate cause of the First World War. The events in Sarajevo shocked many. News of the pair's deaths immediately reverberated across the Monarchy, including in Retz, Lower Austria, a small community with some 3,000 residents,[1] where then-twelve-year-old Christine Schleifer would later recall a deep sense of foreboding:

> Then came the catastrophic Sunday, June 28, 1914. My grandfather Schleifer was visiting us in Retz. That afternoon we went for a walk and met my father along the way…Papa came toward us nervously, his voice shaking, to tell us that something terrible had happened: The heir to the throne and the Archduchess of Hohenberg had been assassinated in Sarajevo. One suspected then that serious events were coming, but one never would have thought of such a tragic end.[2]

As Schleifer noted, the date, which marked a break in Austria-Hungary's history, also marked a turning point in her life and the beginning of a difficult period.

The Monarchy's residents reacted in various ways to news of the assassination and some did not share Schleifer's sentiments. Indeed, less-patriotically inclined citizens occasionally revealed their competing, nationalist sentiment. On June 29, miner Johann Švejbar raised a black mourning flag above the local school in Scharditz/Šardice, Moravia, a small community southeast of the provincial capital Brünn/Brno, in response

[1] At the time, Retz consisted of Retz Altstadt and Retz Stadt. K.k. Statistischen Zentralkommission, *Allgemeines Verzeichnis der Ortsgemeinden und Ortscahften Österreichs nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1910* (Vienna: Hof- und Staatsdrückerei, 1915), 17.

[2] University of Vienna, Dokumentation lebensgeschichtlicher Aufzeichnungen, Christine Schleifer, I, 37-38. Printed in Christa Hämmerle, *Kindheit im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Böhlau: Vienna, 1993), 144.

to the news of the death of the Archduke and his wife.[3] Sometime during the night, an unknown person or persons removed the flag, replacing it with a Czech national red-white banner. The red-white flag was removed that morning and a black flag was again displayed. Local officials investigated the removal of the black flag but failed to apprehend anyone.[4]

Residents of Retz, Scharditz/Šardice, and elsewhere in these provinces had different responses to the death of the heir apparent and his wife. If Schleifer's account highlights horrified reactions to the events in Sarajevo, the incident in Scharditz/Šardice reveals existing national tensions. While most residents of the Monarchy mourned the Archduke's death, others—among them those who tore down the mourning flag—did not. The little-known events in Scharditz/Šardice reflect national tensions that wartime restrictions on public behavior and censorship often muted. Austria-Hungary—like other belligerents—sought the loyalty of all of its people during the First World War. From those serving on battle fronts, through the women taking employment in previously male-occupied positions, to school-aged children collecting donations for aid funds, the Monarchy would increasingly struggle to rally its diverse peoples to support a common wartime goal.[5]

This dissertation examines the collapse of provincial Lower Austria and Moravia in the First World War, focusing on towns and villages along the shared provincial border

[3] I will employ the place names in the languages that inhabitants used each time I mention a location, thus not privileging one national group over another or assigning a nationality to a location. Therefore, I provide both German and Czech place names for Moravian towns and cities. When there is a standard English place name, such as Vienna, it will be used instead.

[4] MZA, B13, Box 405, no.5833, Schulgebäude in Scharditz-Trauerfahne, K.k. Bezirkshauptmannschaft in Gaya to the k.k. Statthalterei-Praesidium in Brünn, praes. 78, July 2, 1914.

[5] Recent scholarship on the importance of mobilizing entire societies for the war includes Alexander Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).

through the lens of gender. Women, many soon heading households because the men of the family had been mobilized, played a larger public role during the war than they had before 1914 as they increasingly worked outside the home, sought to provide for their families, and protested increasingly difficult living conditions on the home front. Contemporary sources, including official reports, memoirs, and newspaper articles reveal that owing to the lack of adequate provisioning and increasing requisitioning, residents contacted officials to express their frustration and many—often women—took to the streets in protest. As I demonstrate, the Habsburg state actively attempted to manage its people, to provide for them, and to combat the feminization of the home front in an effort to maintain social order in a time of flux. This dissertation argues that the cycle of provisioning and requisitioning coupled with the arrival of outsiders—POWs, wounded soldiers, evacuees from the Imperial East and Southeast—contributed to a process in which ideas of who was a member of the community and who was not hardened, as residents became more concerned with their own immediate needs rather than those of the state. As a result, the Habsburg Monarchy lost the war at home even before it lost on the fighting front. My research also demonstrates that the war continued into the early 1920s as residents of Habsburg Central and Eastern Europe contested new international borders in the wake of the November 1918 Armistice and the region continued to experience food shortages.

I analyze Habsburg home-front experiences, focusing on Lower Austria and Moravia to explore the relationship between residents of these provinces and the state. My examination of home-front experiences outside Vienna, the imperial capital, which was also the provincial capital of Lower Austria, focuses especially on the smaller, often-

under-researched communities located along the Lower Austrian-Moravian border. My study encompasses the region north of Vienna—the Lower Austrian *Weinviertel*, or "wine quarter"—and southern Moravia, the area south of the German-speaking majority *Sprachinseln* (language islands) of Brünn/Brno and Iglau/Jihlava. The wartime experiences of these smaller, often more conservative, communities differed from those of Vienna, the far larger, more anonymous, international imperial capital, owing above all to the effects of requisitioning, and the impact of outsiders, both of which increased tension among the local Czech- and German-speakers, especially in southern Moravia. Their experiences also differed from Brünn/Brno, known as the "Manchester of Moravia" because of its textile production; its population of more than 125,000 had a long tradition of working class activism. As in the larger cities across imperial Austria, women and adolescents participated in—and sometimes led—hunger demonstrations almost from the war's outset. Finally, my research reveals how deeply the war permeated daily life on the home front, of even the Monarchy's smallest communities.

Home Fronts during the First World War

The centenary commemorations have encouraged renewed scholarly interest in the First World War. Histories of the war long focused on diplomatic, economic, and military developments, privileging male experience on the fighting front over other wartime experiences.[6] Over the last few decades, however, historians have begun to expand their focus to include the gender, cultural, and social aspects of the war.[7]

[6] For example, see Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front: 1914-1917* (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1975).

[7] See for example, Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites, eds, *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999);

However, much of the scholarship on wartime in the Monarchy continues to focus on political developments and analyzes wartime experience through the lens of political-national developments, as in the Bohemian Lands.[8] Scholarship has rarely addressed the experience of the war in everyday life in a way that incorporates multiple wartime narratives.

Histories of the First World War in Habsburg Central Europe have largely ignored gender—an understudied yet key subject for understanding the war's impact.[9] In fact, only recently has scholarship on the First World War in Europe begun to address gender and women's history, and even now much of this work remains focused on Western Europe.[10] Nonetheless, this research has shown that gender is an important "category of historical analysis," indeed an essential tool for analyzing wartime experience, because it permits a broader understanding of wartime events and complicates binary categories of analysis.[11] I employ gender analysis in this study to help dispel the myth of the separation of the home front and fighting front into distinct entities. Not all men served in the military, and not all of those who did were heroes. Moreover, not all women and

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Richard Wall and Jay Winter, eds, *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work, and Welfare in Europe, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[8] H. Louis Rees, *The Czechs During World War I: The Path to Independence* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1992); Ivan Šedivý, *Češi, České Země a Velka Válka* (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2001); and Zbyněk Zeman, *The Breakup of the Habsburg Empire, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

[9] On the state of gender history in Eastern Europe, see Maria Bucur, "An Archipelago of Stories: Gender History in Eastern Europe," *American Historical Review* 113, No.5 (December 2008): 1375-89; on gender and war in Eastern Europe, see Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur, "Introduction: Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe" in *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* ed. Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1-20.

[10] Examples include Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), Susan R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Margaret Randolph Higonnet, ed. et al. *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

[11] Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" *American Historical Review* 91, No.5 (December 1986): 1053-75.

children lived safely at home protected by the Monarchy's valiant warriors.[12] I also use gender to understand how the state attempted to maintain control of its people and how residents—men, women, and children—in turn challenged the authority of state.

Belinda Davis and Maureen Healy have published important monographs that focus on the gendered wartime experience in Central Europe's capital cities, Berlin and Vienna, respectively. They examine relationships between civilians and the state and address social conditions, such as extreme food shortages and the absence of male figures. Davis's work addresses the political ramifications of bread riots in wartime Berlin. She analyzes citizen petitions—mostly from women—for state assistance and the subsequent inability of the state to meet these demands.[13] Healy also focuses on how women's criticism of the state revealed the extent to which authorities had failed to meet the needs of its citizens. Her analysis of wartime Vienna demonstrates the extent to which the gendered order of society collapsed before the political demise of the Monarchy.[14] I expand on Healy's observations of society in wartime by showing that gendered social order collapsed not only in Vienna, but also in smaller towns and villages in provincial Austria.

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[12] Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur, "Introduction: Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe" in *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, ed. Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 2, 9-10. See also Christa Hämmerle, Oswald Überegger, and Brigitta Bader Zaar, eds. *Gender and the First World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), and Christa Hämmerle, *Heimat/Front. Geschlechtergeschichte/n des Ersten Weltkriegs in Österreich-Ungarn* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag), 2014.

[13] Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000). For an analysis of the allowances paid to soldiers' families and the complaints sent to authorities about these benefits, see Manuela Hauptmann, "Unterhaltsbeiträge für Soldatenfamilien der Habsburgermonarchie im Ersten Weltkrieg" Diss. University of Vienna, 2015.

[14] Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). See also Healy, "Becoming Austrian: Women, the State, and Citizenship in World War I," *Central European History* 35, no. 1 (2002): 1-35; and Healy, "Exhibiting a War in Progress: Entertainment and Propaganda in Vienna, 1914-1918," *Austrian History Yearbook* 31 (2000): 57-85.

Building on Davis's and Healy's work, I contend that the maintenance of gendered categories was essential to the survival of the Habsburg Monarchy. I use gender analysis to examine the ways in which the state attempted to reinforce existing patriarchal social order to counter the growing instability of wartime society. I analyze the degree to which the state failed to maintain a strong patriarchal structure and how residents in the provinces responded. Citizens—particularly women—understood the Monarchy's wartime role as the chief provider for their welfare and in turn challenged officials for not fulfilling this role.

Home-front scholarship of the First World War has focused on urban wartime experience, while relatively few studies have addressed the impact of the war in provincial Central Europe.[15] In contrast, I address the impact of the war in provincial border regions. This is an important contribution to the historiography because wartime experiences in small towns differed from those in urban areas, owing to the extent of requisitioning measures and the impact of the arrival of large numbers of outsiders. Examination of the effect of the war in the provinces is essential for understanding the destruction of the Monarchy from within. Efforts to address this historiographical imbalance in Habsburg Central Europe include Rudolf Kučera's recent monograph, a case study of daily life focusing on the Czech-speaking working class in the middle-sized and larger long-industrialized towns that dotted the Bohemian landscape.[16] In contrast, many of the towns I analyze in less-densely populated, less-industrialized southern

[15] See also Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, eds., *Capital Cities at War Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany: Freiburg, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[16] Rudolf Kučera, *Rationed Life: Science, Everyday Life, and Working-Class Politics in the Bohemian Lands, 1914-1918* (New York: Berghahn, 2016).

Moravia were smaller and had little history of organized working-class activity. In his study of rural wartime experiences of soldiers and civilians in the neighboring German Empire, Benjamin Ziemann has shown that that the war had profound influence on rural life in southern Bavarian.[17] Likewise, my project examines the extent to which the war influenced provincial Austrian life. I argue that urban and rural experiences should be compared and contrasted because urban-rural conflict grew during the war owing to the requisitioning of food from the provinces to feed the imperial center.[18]

A more nuanced understanding of provincial wartime experiences helps us both to understand how the war transformed provincial Austria and to gain insights into the depth of the urban/rural conflict, because developments in the provinces influenced urban life and vice-versa. In a departure from Healy's and Davis's work, this study adds to our understanding of how Habsburg citizens outside the imperial capital were able to use issues of requisitioning to exert pressure on the state at various points during the war and how provisioning resulted in forms of deprivation different than those experienced in Vienna. Indeed, this dissertation analyzes the influence of *Hamsters*, or food smugglers, in rural regions, an important wartime problem particular to the provinces.

Although my dissertation uses the concepts of "home front" and "fighting front" as points of reference, I also seek to destabilize these terms, drawing on "spaces of war," a concept Maureen Healy has recently employed that recognizes the fronts as fluid and overlapping. Healy's work demonstrates that while the state used the home front/fighting

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[17] Benjamin Ziemann *War Experiences in Rural Germany 1914-1923*, trans. Alex Skinner (Oxford: Berg, 2007).

[18] Other historians who have taken a similar approach include: Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, and Claire Morelon, "A threat to national unity? The urban-rural antagonism in Prague during the First World War in a comparative perspective," in *Frontwechsel; Österreich-Ungarns "Großer Krieg" im Vergleich* ed. Wolfram Dornik Julia Walleczeck-Fritz, and Stefan Wedrac, (Böhlau: Vienna, 2014), 325-42.

front distinction in contesting war, this terminology does not convey the entire wartime experience. In fact, the fronts themselves—especially in the Habsburg east and southeast—regularly shifted during the war. Moreover, soldier transports, POWs, and refugees moved back and forth between the "home front" and the "fighting front."[19] This study highlights the experiences of the people and groups who complicated this home front/fighting front distinction. Thousands of refugees and others passed through or lived in Vienna during the war, but the arrival of refugees, POWs, and internees in the provinces and their subsequent residency in towns and in newly constructed camps changed the social makeup and physical spaces of the provinces more dramatically than in the capital. These outsiders made up a greater percentage of the population in smaller provincial communities than in Vienna.

Finally, while historians of the war have often limited the scope of their studies of the First World War to the years 1914 to 1918, this time span may apply more aptly to experiences on the Western Front than elsewhere. My dissertation follows recent scholarship that questions such periodization. Some Habsburg historians have suggested that the war did not end in 1918 for many of the Monarchy's residents. Healy has demonstrated that in terms of securing food, determining who was part of the community, and ongoing social unrest and violence, the war did not end clearly in 1918.[20] Robert Gerwarth has demonstrated that vanquished belligerents faced various conflicts—revolution, counter revolution, wars of independence, and ethnic clashes—between 1917

[19] Maureen Healy, "Introductory Remarks: Space Chronology, and the Habsburg Home Fronts," *European Review of History* 24, no.2 (2017): 176-78.

[20] Healy, "Introductory Remarks: Space, Chronology, and the Habsburg Home Fronts," *European Review of History* 24, no.2 (2017): 178-80.

and 1923 before the political situation in Europe stabilized in the late 1920s.[21] While the reappearance of ethnic tension plays an important role in southern Moravia, I expand these arguments for ongoing war by examining the uncertainty residents faced over new international borders that were negotiated in the wake of the war. Continued food scarcity and lack of other necessities fueled social unrest along the Lower Austrian-southern Moravian border as nascent German Austria/Austria and Czechoslovakia sought to establish an international boundary and, in the process, claim disputed territory. My research shows that unrest continued along the Lower Austrian-Moravian border well into 1919, even 1920. By examining the events of late 1918 and beyond in southern Moravia, I complicate narratives of Czechoslovak state formation: October 28, the founding date of the First Czechoslovak Republic, was not a significant event for many people in the southern Moravia, who did not know which nascent state their community would belong to.

Austria-Hungary and its Borders

Scholars have long considered the twentieth-century Habsburg Monarchy a state in decline, racked with national tensions, and the First World War the event that resulted in its inevitable demise.[22] As recent historiography has shown, this was not the case.

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[21] Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, "Paramilitarism in Europe after the Great War: An Introduction" in *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*, ed. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1; and Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016), 15.

[22] Robert A. Kann, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848-1918*, Vol 1, *Empire and Nationalities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), Robert A. Kann, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848-1918*, vol. 2 *Empire Reform* (New York Columbia University Press, 1950); C.A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire, 1790-1918* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1969); A. J. P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918: A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary* (London: H. Hamilton, 1948).

The Monarchy was innovating, even in its final years. Indeed, Pieter M. Judson's recent synthesis, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, has demonstrated the myriad attempts at state building from above and below. Likewise, in his study of the Habsburg bureaucracy, John Deak has argued that Austria was not in decline, but rather a modern European state that actively engaged in state building until July 1914. The Monarchy's collapse in autumn 1918 was not a foregone conclusion.

This study takes as its starting point the idea that the shift in control from the Habsburg bureaucracy to the army and the formation of a warfare state helped destroy the Monarchy from within. On July 26, two days before declaring war on Serbia, the Austrian government had invoked the December Constitution of 1867, which allowed for the suspension of fundamental rights. Minister President Count Karl Stürgkh's indefinite suspension of Parliament earlier in March 1914 enabled the Emperor to rule by decree. With the declaration of a state of emergency, the Monarchy changed from a bureaucracy concerned with state building to one operated for the purposes of waging war. The new system centralized Austria's bureaucracy, giving complete control to the military. In the end, it was the declaration of a state of emergency that fundamentally changed life in the Monarchy, for example, suspending trial by jury. It permitted the War Ministry's creation of the War Surveillance Office, which spied on Austrian residents and foreigners alike.[23] The War Surveillance Office, conceived of prior to 1914, began its work on July 27, one day before the declaration of war on Serbia. The office consisted of individual groups overseeing different aspects of political and military interests, expanding as the

[23] John Deak, *Forging a Multinational State: State Making in Imperial Austria from the Enlightenment to the First World War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 1-5, 264-67; and Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2016), 4-6, 391-393.

war went on. Their tasks included reading correspondence and censoring newspapers, searching out material that could undermine the state.[24] Although the Monarchy's residents also participated in this wartime surveillance, denouncing one another for a variety of economic, moral, and social misdeeds, state-sponsored surveillance also served to undermine citizen faith in the government, resulting in its loss of the war on both the home front and the fighting front. However, my study also shows that the state continued to make attempts at innovation and meeting needs in wartime as it attempted to manage the refugee crisis and food distribution, though it failed on both accounts.

Building on the idea that it was the war itself that ultimately brought about the Monarchy's end, my study concludes with analysis of the complex processes by which an internal provincial border became an international one. I address how new outsiders—Czechoslovak troops and the victorious allies—as well as locals and imperial officials engaged in the process of international border making, which would be finalized with the Treaty of Saint Germain in 1919.[25] Recent scholarship has demonstrated that administrative borders are not fixed, nor were the national identities of those living in these regions stable categories; indeed, not everyone had a national identity. I argue that this was certainly the case in Lower Austria/Southern Moravia. Before the war, people living near the border may not have necessarily considered themselves to be living on the "frontier" or in "border regions." Prior to the war, national activists, often outsiders, began turning the Monarchy's border areas into spaces of conflict, especially in

[24] Tamara Scheer, *Die Ringstraßenfront: Österreich-Ungarn, das Kriegsüberwachungsamt und der Ausnahmezustand während des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Wien: Heeresdruckerei Wien, 2010), 52, 56-57.

[25] For analysis of Lower Austria's twentieth-century borders, see Peter Mähner, "Niederösterreich und seine Grenzen" in *Niederösterreich im 20. Jahrhundert, Band I Politik*, ed. Stefan Eminger and Ernst Langthaler, (Vienna: Böhlau, 2008), 1-39.

Bohemia.[26] Indeed, some residents of the Monarchy may have been non-national or nationally indifferent leading up to the war.[27] Although Judson's monograph is comparative, his and Tara Zahra's publications, as well as Caitlin Murdock's analysis of the Saxon-Bohemian border region, have focused predominantly on Bohemian borderlands.[28] In his study of the Bihar/Bihor region, formerly an internal national borderland in Hungary but today part of Hungary and Romania, Robert Nemes examines the efforts of local actors, and not outside or state officials, in creating the "borderland" in this area.[29] I examine the efforts of local residents and outside officials in border formation, a process that turned this region into an area of national conflict.

Lower Austria and Moravia: The Case for a Case Study

There were many connections between the provinces of Lower Austria and Moravia in summer 1914. Geographically, the Thaya/Dyje, River winds through the area, flowing west to east, eventually merging with the March/Morava River. The region produces the same white wine: Grüner Veltliner/Veltlínské zelené. It was mostly agricultural, although some small factories in the area produced goods for the war effort,

[26] Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[27] Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); King, "The Nationalization of Central and Eastern Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity and Beyond" in *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, ed. Nancy Wingfield and Maria Bucur (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2001), 112-52; Tara Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,: *Slavic* Review, 69, No.1 (Spring 2010): 93-119; and Kidnapped *Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[28] Caitlin E. Murdock, *Changing Places: Society, Culture, and Territory in the Saxon-Bohemian Borderlands, 1870-1946* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).

[29] Robert Nemes, "Mapping the Hungarian Borderlands" in *Shatterzones of Empire: Coexistence and violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* ed. Omer Bartov and Eric Weitz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 210, 223.

including Adolf Löw and Sons in Helenenthal bei Iglau/Helenín and Klein Beranau/Malý Beranov, two of Moravia's many textile factories, and Karl Budischowsky and Sons in Trebitsch/Třebíč, which produced leather goods and boots, including for the Austrian army.[30] Roads and railway lines running through the two provinces linked some of the Monarchy's most important cities. Not only was the region of strategic importance, but the area shared demographic features. Residents took part in common religious practices and spoke the same languages. The area was predominantly German-speaking, although it had a substantial Czech-speaking minority. By examining this mixed language area, this project helps to show the cross-regional development of non-imperial identities, which intensified during the war as local identities became increasingly important. While there was some Czech and German nationalist conflict in both Lower Austria and Moravia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it was limited.

The Lower Austrian-Moravian border is an ideal region for a case study that captures the complexity of the home front experience, one that addresses wartime experience and international border formation, because at the war's outbreak it was the center of what the military designated "the hinterland." Scholars of the Habsburg Monarchy's borderlands have addressed this area less than other border areas, an important omission since this region was critical in feeding the imperial capital in wartime. Additionally, at the end of the war, this region would be one of the flash points of the German-Austrian and Czechoslovak conflict to establish the new border. At the

[30] Wilhelm Winkler, *Die Einkommensverschiebungen in Österreich während des Weltkrieges*, vol.8, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte des Weltkrieges* (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky A.G., 1930) 190, 195.

end of 1918, much of the German-speaking region of southern Moravia that is included in this study would become part of "German South Moravia," whose leaders sought to become part of Lower Austria and of German Austria. Following its occupation by Czechoslovak troops and the Treaty of Saint Germain in 1919, it would be part of Czechoslovakia.

Lower Austria and Moravia had historic commercial links. For centuries, the most important road between the imperial capital and Bohemia went through the Lower Austrian *Weinviertel* and the forests of western Moravia. The "Emperor's Highway" (*Königsweg*), established in the mid-eighteenth century, linked Vienna and Prague, passing through Stockerau, Oberhollabrunn, Znaim/Znojmo, Mährisch Budwitz/Moravské Budějovice, and Iglau/Jihlava, all of which I discuss in my study. The first steam-powered railroad in Austria, the Kaiser Ferdinand Northern Railway, constructed between 1837 and 1856, began in Vienna and ran through Moravia to Galicia. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Northwest Railway made travel between Vienna and Moravia more efficient. By 1913, ten local passenger trains, eight express trains, and thirty-eight freight trains made the daily journey between Vienna and Iglau/Jihlava.[31] During the First World War, these railway lines moved not only soldiers to the front, but also refugees, internees, and other civilians to the interior.

In addition to the railway connections, the provinces shared demographic features. In the last decades of the Habsburg Monarchy, the region along the Lower Austrian-Moravian border was home to a high percentage of German-speakers. From 1880, the Habsburg Monarchy classified its population in census data according to language of

[31] Jiří Kacetl, *140 let Severozápadní dráhy/140 Jahre der Nordwestbahn* (Znojmo, 2013), 1-2, 10, 25.

everyday use, *Umgangssprache*, precluding the ability to claim bilingual identity and emphasizing the importance of language in delineating nationality. In the 1910 census, of the approximately 1.4 million residents of Lower Austria—excluding the residents of Vienna—ninety-eight percent of the population identified German as their language of everyday use. The majority of the two percent who declared another language of everyday use claimed Czech.[32] Many Czech speakers in Lower Austria lived in the western towns of Gmünd and Schrems near the Bohemian border, as well as in the small towns of Stockerau and Mistelbach.[33] Seventy-two percent of Moravia's 2.6 million residents identified as Czech-speaking ("*böhmisch-mährisch-slowakisch*"), with the remaining twenty-eight percent listing German.[34] However, many of Moravia's German-speaking residents lived either along its southern border or in the language islands.[35]

The provinces also shared similar religious demographics. From its founding, the Habsburg dynasty had been Roman Catholic. The Monarchy's public engagement with its people had long gone hand-in-hand with Church celebrations, such as the Emperor's Holy Thursday foot washing. Catholic culture determined many holidays, setting much of the yearly calendar. There were other local festivals, such as the *Sonnwendfeier*, the summer solstice celebration that Germans increasingly imbued with national significance

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32 K.k. Statistischen Zentralkommission, *Der Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1910 im Reichsrate Vertretenen Königreichen und Ländern. 2nd Heft des Ersten Bandes* (Vienna: k.k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1914), Tabellen, 51.

33 Karl Gutkas, *Geschichte Niederösterreichs* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1984), 241. Additionally, many Czech speakers lived in the imperial capital's tenth district, Favoriten, which was home to a Czech primary school, a source of concern for some German-speakers.

34 K.k. Statistischen Zentralkommission, *Der Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1910 im Reichsrate Vertretenen Königreichen und Ländern. 2nd Heft des Ersten Bandes* (Vienna: k.k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1914), Tabellen, 51.

35 Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 80.

in the late nineteenth century.[36] Roman Catholicism shaped the worldview of many in the Monarchy, dictating social morals, including sexual and gender norms, promoting marriage and sexuality within the confines of marriage.[37] As with the majority of Austria-Hungary's residents, most people in Lower Austria (ninety-eight percent) and Moravia (ninety-five percent) identified as Catholic according to the 1910 census.[38]

While Catholicism dominated the religious landscape, both Lower Austria and Moravia were home to vibrant Jewish communities. The structure of these communities differed between the two provinces, however, as most Jewish residents in Lower Austria lived in the imperial capital with fewer than 10,000 living elsewhere in the province. Jewish residents of Moravia tended to live in small communities. Numbering more than 41,000 in 1910, Jewish residents made up less than two percent of the population.[39] Historically, Moravia had been home to several important Jewish communities, the largest of these having been in southern Moravian Nikolsburg/Mikulov, a small, overwhelmingly German-speaking town of over 8,000 residents, over 1,800 of whom belonged to the Jewish Community. The city had been the home of the Chief Rabbinate in Moravia.[40] Moravia's Jewish community had been scattered in fifty-two political Jewish Communities, some of which remained separate municipalities until they were

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[36] Nancy M. Wingfield, "The Germans' Sonnwendfeier: From Folk Festival to Radical Right-Wing Mobilizing Ritual," *Střed. Časopis pro mezioborová studia Střední Evropy 19.a 20. století/Center. Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies of Central Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 7 (2015): 10-14.

[37] Patrick J. Houlihan, *Catholicism and the Great War: Religion and Everyday Life in Germany and Austria-Hungary, 1914-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 20-22, 37, 40.

[38] K.k. Statistischen Zentralkommission, *Der Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1910 im Reichsrate Vertretenen Königreichen und Ländern. 2nd Heft des Ersten Bandes* (Vienna: k.k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1914), Tabellen, 52-55.

[39] K.k. Statistischen Zentralkommission, *Der Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1910 im Reichsrate Vertretenen Königreichen und Ländern. 2nd Heft des Ersten Bandes* (Vienna: k.k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1914), Tabellen, 52-55.

[40] K.k. Statistischen Zentralkommission, *Allgemeines Verzeichnis der Ortsgemeinden und Ortscahften Österreichs nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1910* (Vienna: Hof- und Staatsdrückerei, 1915), 300.

dissolved by the central government of the nascent Czechoslovak Republic between 1919 and 1924. However, after freedom of movement was granted in1848, many of Moravia's Jewish residents moved to nearby Vienna, to escape intensifying Czech and German national conflict and for economic opportunity.[41]

In the last decades before the war, Lower Austrian politics mirrored tensions in Vienna as liberalism lost prominence yet remained an important part of the political landscape.[42] In 1879, Count Eduard Taaffe became minister president, forming an "Iron Ring" (1879-1893) coalition in parliament that included German conservatives, Czechs, Poles, Slovenes, Croats, and Romanians. The liberalism that had earlier dominated Austrian politics was no longer ascendant.[43] In the Lower Austrian Diet (*Landtag*) the liberals still held the majority, but the political situation was changing. [44] New parties emerged, such as the Christian Socialists, who gradually gained prominence, and in 1897, Christian Socialist Karl Lueger took office as mayor of Vienna.[45] Meanwhile, the political landscape outside the capital was changing as the rural land workers united. In 1906 the Farmer's Associations of Lower Austria (*Bauernvereine Niederösterreichs*) joined together in a farmer's union (*Bauernbund*) and became a force in Lower Austrian politics.[46]

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[41] Michael Laurence Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 331, 339. On Vienna's Jewish community, see Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Marsha L Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914, Assimilation and Identity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983); and Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria During World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[42] Lothar Höbelt, *Kornblume und Kaiseradler: Die deutschfreiheitlichen Parteien Altösterreichs 1882-1918* (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1993).

[43] Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 151.

[44] Gutkas, 239.

[45] John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1897* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), x.

[46] Gutkas, 241.

There was national tension among political parties in the provinces in the prewar years. Their competing political agendas warrant attention as their claims influenced provincial politics. The influx of Czech-speakers into Lower Austria during these decades generated concern among some German nationalists and attracted attention in the Lower Austrian Diet. German People's Party deputy Rudolf Kolisko proposed one particularly controversial measure, the *Lex Kolisko*, which would have made German the exclusive language of instruction in provincial public primary and secondary schools (*Volks- and Burgschulen*). This proposal was a direct response to tensions over the opening of Komenský schools—private institutions that employed Czech as the language of instruction. Though the Lower Austrian Diet repeatedly passed the *Lex Kolisko* between 1898 and 1909, it never received imperial approval. However, the disagreement over this proposed measure deepened national antagonisms in Lower Austria.[47]

In the last decades before the war, Moravia emerged as the scene of national conflict among Czech and German speakers, which led to unsuccessful attempts at political compromise. In Brünn/Brno, where the German-speaking population had slowly increased since the first census of 1880 and reached 64.9% in 1910,[48] much of the tension between Czechs and Germans stemmed from Czech nationalists' frustration with what they perceived as the Germans' stranglehold on provincial political power. In autumn 1905, Czechs and Germans clashed over the long-simmering issue of establishing a Czech-language university in Moravia. Their protests resulted in damage to property and

[47] John W. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 220-221; and Gutkas, 241.

[48] For a comparison of Brünn/Brno and other diverse Habsburg cities, see Cathreine Horel, "Multikulturní města habsburské říše v letech 1880–1914" in *Studia Historica Brunensia* 58, no.1 (2011): 25-43.

the death of a *Sokol*—Czech gymnastics association—member. Efforts to cope with the ongoing national tensions resulted in the Moravian Compromise of November 1905, which mandated electoral reform and school reform.[49] The Compromise would not quell Czech-German tensions before the war.

National tension was palpable in Brünn/Brno on the eve of the Archduke's assassination in late June 1914 owing to multiple national gatherings planned in the city. Residents were braced for possible Czech and German national conflict in connection with meetings of the Sokol and the Association of German National Academics as well as a provincial shooting competition the last weekend of the month.[50] The largest of these events was the planned Sokol *Slet* (meeting). The Sokol, which had been in Prague in 1862 by Miroslav Tyrš in the tradition of the European gymnastics movement and the German *Turnverein*, played an important role in mobilizing for the greater Czech national movement. The first Sokol club in Moravia had been founded in Brünn/Brno in 1862. By 1912 Moravia-Silesia was home to 359 Sokol clubs with 33,742 members. The Sokol organization was not limited to the Bohemian lands; it forged Pan-Slavic connections with gymnastic groups across the Monarchy—including Lower Austria—and beyond.[51] Slets provided an opportunity to bring together gymnastics groups from across the Slavic world.[52] Women had participated in the Sokol from its origins, first in ancillary roles, but

[49] Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), Chapter 3.

[50] Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 134.

[51] Claire E. Nolte, *The Sokol in the Czech Lands to 1914: Training for the Nation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 1-4, 69-70, 154, 158, 185.

[52] South Slavs in Laibach/Ljubljana had founded a Sokol in 1863, one year after the founding of the movement in Prague. The Sokol was also active in Lemberg/Lwów/L'viv and Agram/Zagreb. Claire E. Nolte, "All for One! One for All! The Federation of Slavic Sokols and the Failure of Neo-Slavism," in *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*, ed. Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblit (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 126-27.

increasingly participated in the late nineteenth century and would play an important role in the Czech national movement.[53]

The assassination in Sarajevo immediately brought an end to these Sokol festivities. Among the events cancelled was a large ethnographic procession celebrating the "Moravian Year," meant to honor the customs and people of Moravia.[54] The Old Czech Party's *Moravská Orlice* reported that the attendees calmly left, and the banners and decorations were promptly removed and replaced with black flags.[55] In this case, imperial interests still superseded those of national and local concerns; yet, this would change during the war. Much of the nationalist conflict would move to the background for the duration of the war as residents concentrated more on everyday life, and the wartime state also placed limitations on actions and discourse that threatened the cohesion of the Monarchy.

In the month following the assassination of the Archduke and his wife, Austro-Hungarian officials plotted their response. The subsequent July Crisis culminated with the delivery of an ultimatum to Serbia on July 23. Austria-Hungry gave Serbia forty-eight hours to respond to their demands, which included the stipulation that Austria be allowed to participate in the Serbian inquiry about the assassination.[56] Serbia rejected Austria's ultimatum two days later, as officials expected.[57] Thus, on July 28, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, and the Emperor's address "To My Peoples!" explained

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[53] Claire E. Nolte, "'Every Czech a Sokol!' Feminism and Nationalism in the Czech Sokol Movement," *Austrian History Yearbook* 24 (1993): 79-100.

[54] *Moravská Orlice*, June 27, 1914, 4 and *Slet Sokolstva v Brně ve dnech 28. a 29. Června 1914 Moravský Rok: proveden v Pondělí dne 29. Června 1914* (Brno: Odehnal, 1914).

[55] *Moravská Orlice*, June 30, 1914, 2-3.

[56] Manfried Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914-1918* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2014), 105, 110-111.

[57] Rauchensteiner, 114.

the declaration to the public. Translated into the Monarchy's eleven official languages, the address appeared on posters and on the front page of newspapers throughout the Monarchy. General mobilization quickly followed on July 31.[58]

The Habsburg Monarchy faced war on several fronts—initially with Russia in the east and Serbia in the southeast. Italy joined the war in spring 1915, and Romania followed in 1916. Thus, much of Cisleithanian Austria was located in what the Army High Command (*k.u.k.Armeeoberkommando,* abbreviated AOK) designated a conflict zone or an army staging area. However, the area including Lower Austria and southern Moravia was part of what the Habsburg army considered the hinterland because it was not the site of military combat nor was it part of the staging area. The Lower Austrian-Moravian provincial border was centrally located in this hinterland area, which also included Upper Austria and Bohemia.[59]

Project Overview

This dissertation analyzes the experience of everyday life for residents in the provinces, especially of women, children, and others who have often been marginalized in accounts of the war, including refugees and internees. Research in Austrian and Czech state, provincial, and district archives and libraries provide the basis for this project. The voices of provincial residents can be found in reports of regional officials and in letters that residents and refugees—many of them women—wrote as well as collective letters from communities addressed to officials with requests and complaints. These letters

[58] Rauchensteiner, 144-45.

[59] Christoph Führ, *Das k.u.k. Armeeoberkommando und die Innenpolitik in Österreich, 1914-1917* (Graz: Böhlau, 1968), 23.

describe everyday experiences, including deprivation. In the city archives, municipal records, city council reports, and city chronicles reveal local activities to mobilize for the war and struggles to provision provincial towns. Personal accounts also provide examples of wartime experiences. Newspapers detail, among other things, the behavior of those on the home front and home front views of outsiders.

My project is organized thematically and chronologically. The first chapter, "The Changing Social Landscape of the Provinces" explores the shifting social landscape of the home front in Lower Austria and Moravia during the war's early months. In the weeks and months following the departure of many men to the fighting front, countless POWs, refugees, internees, and other soldiers passed through and came to live in the provinces. This forced movement of peoples greatly changed the cultural, gender, and social landscape of some of the Monarchy's smaller towns and cities located deep in the hinterland. These shifts resulted in a gendered restructuring of society as men left for the fighting front, leaving women and children behind.

From the war's outset, imperial and local authorities attempted to reinforce normative ideas of masculinity and the notion of male sacrifice and heroism on the home front. The second chapter analyzes the nail memorials (*Nagelobjekte*), carved wooden statues and other objects that local residents covered in nails. After making a donation to a war aid fund, residents drove nails into these memorials. One of the most prominent forms these memorials took was that of the "Warrior in Iron" (*Wehrmann in Eisen*), a medieval knight, recalling chivalry and sacrifice. Officials and organizations used the memorials to generate both funding and patriotic support for the war effort and to maintain gendered social order. Analysis of these memorials—their form and function—

helps us understand state efforts to unite those on the home front and to gauge attitudes toward the state among residents deep within the hinterland. The form of the medieval knight—commonly used in cultural depictions of men before and during the war—represented male heroism and sacrifice, and yet, the symbolism of the memorials was also ambivalent, as they began "naked" and were then penetrated by nails driven in by officials and the community.

Despite local and imperial efforts to rally support for the war effort among those at home, civilian backing for the war effort deteriorated in parallel with conditions on the home front. Already in April 1915, officials introduced bread cards, and as shortages began mounting, local enthusiasm for the war effort began to fade. As other European women had in times of war and revolution, at least since 1789, Austrian women—sometimes identified as workers, others left at home by husbands who were serving at the front—were already taking to the streets to protest food shortages by late 1915.[60] The third chapter, "Provisioning and Requisitioning in the Provinces," addresses hunger and protests in the provinces along with the related issues of state-mandated requisitioning. This chapter highlights the mounting material and spiritual deprivation residents in rural Lower Austria and Moravia faced and how women led efforts to secure food and undermined the state's provisioning plan. This chapter also discusses how, in the face of deprivation, residents increasingly narrowed their definition of community, which naturally excluded others, especially refugees and internees.

[60] The literature on this topic is extensive. See for example, Barbara Alpern Engel. "Not by Bread Alone: Subsistence Riots in Russia during World War I." *The Journal of Modern History* 69, no.4 (December 1997): 686-721; Dominique Godineau, *The Women of Paris and their French Revolution*, trans. Katharine Streip (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); and Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

The next two chapters address "others," those people who arrived in the provinces in wartime, and I focus specifically on their relationships with residents. The fourth chapter analyzes the wartime refugee crisis in southern Moravia and rural Lower Austria, paying attention to residents' frustration over being tasked with feeding and housing refugees—primarily women and children and often Jewish—in a time of privation. The fifth chapter examines the impact of mostly male outsiders, including POWs, civilian internees, and military men, who passed through and/or resided in the provinces. Local residents became increasingly frustrated with these outsiders, who created extra work for local, district, and imperial officials, and contributed to the gendered breakdown of social order. Neither local officials, nor district or imperial officials could keep up with the needs of refugees. Residents' experiences with some outsiders also hardened community identities, both in terms of who was part of the community and who was not.

The final chapter analyzes ongoing material deprivation in the context of establishing the international border between Lower Austria and southern Moravia, a sometimes-violent undertaking in which the militarized masculinity of the fighting front came home to the provinces. This process occurred after the Armistice and lasted into the 1920s as victorious powers determined the borders of Europe's new nation-states. Scarce goods became part of the battle between Czechs and Germans and supply routes changed as new borders formed, breaking up historic trading patterns. Furthermore, the outsiders, particularly refugees, who had come to the provinces as fellow Habsburg citizens now faced expulsion as part of the creation of new nation-states. They were neither from the region nor were they from the national groups comprising these new states. The provisioning challenges and social conflict with outsiders that arose during

wartime would not be solved easily in the war's immediate aftermath. Indeed, in some cases they worsened owing to the political uncertainty and the border conflict. Together, these chapters trace the socio-economic collapse of the provinces in the First World War. The situation on the home front reflects the breakdown of Habsburg civil society. This is demonstrated in changing gender roles which was an evolving process that would continue to shift after the end of fighting-front conflict. Some men failed to return home from war. This, plus changing laws in newly democratized Austria and Czechoslovakia permitted women to take an increasingly prominent role in family and public life. Yet, in small provincial towns, they sometime had no choice but to assume these roles.

Chapter 1: The Changing Social Landscape of the Provinces in the Early Years of the War

The social landscape in Lower Austria and Moravia underwent a rapid transformation in the months following the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand. Among the most important changes were the mobilization of men to the fighting front and, soon after fighting commenced, the arrival of outsiders, among them sick and wounded soldiers, refugees, POWs, and other internees. The departures of so many young men for military service shifted the gender composition of the home front, leaving many women to take on new roles on the home front.

Mobilization would quickly change the composition of Habsburg society. The Habsburg military would mobilize more than eight million men during the war, roughly one third of the Monarchy's male population. In addition, some 100,000 women served the army. More than one million Habsburg soldiers died and some 1.6 million were captured or went missing in action.[61] Those mobilized in late July 1914 included men aged twenty-one to forty-two.[62] At the same time the army mobilized so many able-bodied men, the Monarchy also expected noncombatants to make sacrifices for the war effort and to protect the home front against enemies, including alleged foreign agents, stressing, for example, the threat female spies posed to state security.

While troops moved from the provinces to the fighting front, many people—among them wounded soldiers, refugees, and POWs—traveled in the opposite direction, fleeing or being transported to the home front. Refugees, particularly women, children,

[61] István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 192.

[62] Manfried Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914-1918*, trans. Alex J. Kay and Anna Güttel-Bellert (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2014), 146.

and the elderly, fled to the Monarchy's interior from Bukovina and Galicia as Russian troops occupied these provinces on Austria-Hungary's Eastern Front after the onset of war. Most of these refugees were poor, often Jewish, and spoke little or no Czech or German. Lower Austria and Moravia were also locations of military internment as prisoners of war—most of them Russian—also began arriving shortly after the outbreak of hostilities. Authorities also interned those citizens of the Monarchy they considered disloyal, including suspect political figures and national groups. With the departure of so many young men to the front and the arrival of many women, children, convalescents, and POWs, the home front became feminine and there were a growing number of outsiders who residents increasingly considered "other." This chapter analyzes the effects of mobilization on the home front population during the war's early years. I demonstrate how the gendered changing of society beginning in late summer 1914 laid the groundwork for discontent on the home front and strain on residents as well as municipal, district, and provincial officials.

Mobilization

Josef Redlich—legal scholar, scion of a prominent German-Jewish industrial family, Liberal member of the Moravian Provincial Diet in 1906, and member of the Austrian parliament from 1907—captured the atmosphere of mobilization in his native Göding/Hodonín in southern Moravia in an August 3, 1914 journal entry. [63] He wrote,

> I drove Sunday to Göding where I attended the farewell to the last two squadrons of Göding's dragoons. A truly depressing sight: To see the 300 young men, young blood, and the magnificent horses that are to go to Jaroslau [Jarosław, on the eastern front in Galicia, today in southeastern Poland] in the first line of battle.

[63] Fredrik Lindström, *Empire and Identity: Biographies of the Austrian State Problem in the Late Habsburg Empire* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008), 19, 189-90.

> To Vienna this morning [traveling from Göding/Hodonín]. In all stations touching scenes, the people are marvelously brave, willing, good Austrians![64]

Redlich's comments reflect several reactions to the mobilization. He observes changes on the home front owing to mobilization, as men—and animals—left for the fighting front. Mobilization was at the same time depressing yet magnificent, emotional, and patriotic.

Scenes like the one that Redlich described in Göding/Hodonín were repeated across Moravia and Lower Austria—indeed across the Monarchy—as the population rallied around the mobilizing troops. City fathers encouraged residents of cities, towns, and villages to gather in patriotic farewell to their local units. There was a great patriotic rally in Znaim/Znojmo, a southern Moravian city of some 18,000 people with a surrounding district of some additional 75,000.[65] On the evening of August 1, the day of general mobilization, a crowd gathered before the offices of district officials (*k.k. Bezirkhauptmannschaft*), an event reported in the German-language daily *Znaimer Tagblatt* the following day. The district commissioner (*Bezirkhautpmann*) and other district officials stood on the balcony watching the city band play a military march below. Members of the crowd, increasing in number along the way, marched through the town before stopping at the mayor's office. Patriotic cheers mingled with curses against the Serbian and Russian foe. Mayor Heinrich Homma and other city officials then joined the crowd as it moved through the streets to the Kopal monument. This obelisk, topped with

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[64] Josef Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs 1908-1919: Das politische Tagebuch Josef Redlichs. I. Band 1908-1914*, ed. Fritz Fellner (Graz: Verlag Hermann Böhlaus Nachf. Ges. M.B.H., 1953), 242.

[65] K.k. Statistischen Zentralkommission, *Der Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1910 im Reichsrate Vertretenen Königreichen und Ländern. 1st Heft des Ersten Bandes* (Vienna: k.k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1912), 43.

a bronze statue of Nike, the goddess of war, had been unveiled in 1853 to honor Karl von Kopal, a k.k. Colonel and Commander of the 10th Feldjägerbataillon, who hailed from nearby Schidrowitz/Ctidružice and died fighting in Vicenz, today in northeastern Italy, during the 1848 Revolutions.[66] Standing at the base of a monument dedicated to a soldier of both local and imperial significance, Homma gave an enthusiastic speech that ended with three cheers for the emperor and Austria and the singing of the imperial anthem. The local parliamentary representative Oskar Teufel also gave a fiery speech in which he discussed Austria's unbreakable friendship with Germany. The crowd then sang "Die Wacht am Rhein," the hymn nationalist German speakers often sang in the Bohemian Lands in their battles with Czech speakers as a sign of solidarity with the larger German nationalist cause.[67] The Znaim/Znojmo rally was at once a local and an imperial, patriotic celebration, and a nationalist, pan-German event. After the rally, the crowd returned to the municipal government offices before dispersing. Smaller gatherings were subsequently held in many of the city's taverns, "in which the enthusiastic veneration and love for our aged emperor often met with boisterous expression."[68]

Znaim/Znojmo was home to several Habsburg and local units, and their mobilization changed the gender composition of the city and surrounding area, as many men left behind wives and children.[69] The logistic of deploying these men meant that

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[66] J. Strack, *Das Kopal-Denkmal in Znaim und das k.k. 10. Feld-Jäger-Bataillon von der Errichtung bis zur fünfzigjährigen Jubelfeier: Ein nach authentischen Urkunden und den Feldacten des k.k. Kriegsarchivs zusammengestelltes Geschichtswerk* (Vienna: kaiserlich-königlichen Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1864), 4.

[67] Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands became Czech* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 45.

[68] *Znaimer Tagblatt*, August 2, 1914, 2.

[69] These included the imperial and royal (*kaiserlich und königlich*, abbreviated k.u.k.) supplemental district command (*Ergänzungsbezirkskommando*) No.99, the land forces supplemental district command (*Landwehr Ergänzungsbezirkskommando*) No. 24, and the territorial district command (*Landsturmbezirkskommando*) No. 24**.**

military authorities made great demands of Znaim/Znojmo's municipal authorities. The city devoted significant resources to mobilization, including the time and attention of municipal authorities and local residents. Following the announcement of mobilization, the mayor's office worked feverishly until August 15 alongside the employees of the municipal office. Municipal council representatives held daily meetings throughout August. The large number of troops passing through the area meant that many enlisted men had to be accommodated in the surrounding villages. At the height of mobilization, the area accommodated 30,000 troops, and 6,000-10,000 troops were stationed in the Znaim/Znojmo district. The implementation of mobilization, the quartering of military personnel, and the procurement of supplies for them was challenging because some local officials had already reported for military service. It occupied the remaining authorities' time and used the community's resources.[70]

Patriotic sentiments similar to those local male leaders had orchestrated in Znaim/Znojmo were exhibited across Lower Austria and southern Moravia. Celebrations in Mistelbach, about forty kilometers northeast of Vienna, exemplify reactions in towns and cities across Lower Austria to mobilization. Thousands of people filled the streets to bid farewell to local recruits. One elderly observer noted that while he had witnessed mobilization in 1859 and 1866, the degree of enthusiasm for those events was not comparable to the enthusiasm of 1914. On the occasion, local recruits arrived with their families. The local veteran's association band played the rousing "Radetzky March" as those assembled paraded through town to the main square and gathered before the district

[70] Státní okresní archiv Znojmo (hereafter SOkA Znojmo), Archiv města Znojma (hereafter AMZ), válečné hospodárství 1914-1921, Box 64, Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Gemeindevertretung der Stadt Znaim während des Krieges, September 7, 1916.

office. Residents paraded through the city with great enthusiasm, with cheers for the emperor and Kaiser Wilhelm. A band also played "Prince Eugene's Song" and the Austrian hymn. Cries of "Down with Serbia!" reportedly rang out in the crowd. Reichsrat member Rudolf Wedra of the German National Party addressed the soldiers with "fiery words." The district captain also addressed the soldiers with an inspiring speech and ended with a cheer for Emperor Francis Joseph. Then, the crowd moved on to the local train station, singing war songs along the way. Mistelbach's mayor also gave a patriotic speech. Addressing those departing, he promised to care for the women and children that the soldiers were leaving behind. The mayor was acknowledging the demographic change that would result in the community owing to mobilization. He suggested that the state, and he as its representative, would take care of local residents left behind by men going to the front. Accounts noted that there was not a dry eye to be found in the crowd. Subsequently at the train station, women and children greeted soldiers on transport trains passing through the area, serving the men refreshments and cigarettes.[71] The reports of the events were overwhelmingly positive and patriotic. Men and women played gendered roles, men—veterans and those in positions of leadership—led the farewell events while women provided ancillary support for transports.

Not all the reports on the festivities in Mistelbach described patriotic enthusiasm. The German nationalist newspaper *Österreichische Land-Zeitung*, reported on anti-Habsburg sentiment among local Czech speakers. A local businessman who had posted signs in Czech sat with other guests at one of the town's inns where they discussed the war. When another customer spoke of Austria's brave army, the Czech-speaking

[71] *Mistelbacher Bote*, August 7, 1914, 4; *Österreichische Land-Zeitung*, August 15, 1914, 9.

businessman asserted that a single Czech regiment could chase away a German regiment, presumably a German-speaking Habsburg regiment, implying their superiority.[72] This article, and others like it, described the disloyalty of the Czech-speaking population in Mistelbach.

The issue of Czech loyalty to the Monarchy was a concern to Austro-Hungarian official in wartime. In Prague, some mobilizing troops displayed badges or carried flags in the national, Slavic colors of red, blue, and white. Moreover, Russian propaganda attempting to persuade Slavs to support their side in pursuit of nationalist goals concerned Habsburg officials, who feared that entire Czech units would desert to the Russians. The April 1915 rumor of the desertion of Prague's 28th Infantry Regiment and other similar incidents caused grave concern among officials.[73] However, the mass desertion of Czech soldiers was a myth.[74] There was no mass desertion; rather, many Austro-Hungarian soldiers were captured at the war's outset owing to shortcomings of the Habsburg military and its flawed plan to mobilize troops. The Habsburg military lacked sufficient funding, training, and weapons to wage war successfully. Initial mobilization plans also failed: The army initially mobilized south to the Serbian front, not accounting for Russia's declaration of war. After the mobilization of Russian troops, the

[72] *Österreichische Land-Zeitung,* August 15, 1914, 9.

[73] H. Louis Rees, *The Czechs During World War I: The Path to Independence* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1992), 12-13, 16-17.

[74] Richard Lein, "The Military Conduct of the Austro-Hungarian Czechs in the First World War," *The Historian* 76, no.3 (Fall 2014): 518-549; Richard Lein, *Pflichterfüllung oder Hochverrat? Die tschechischen Soldaten Österreich-Ungarns im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Lit Verlag, 2011); Martin Zückert, *Zwischen Nationsidee und staatlicher Realität: die tschechoslowakische Armee und ihre Nationalitätenpolitik 1918-1938* (Munich: Collegium Carolinum, 2006).

Habsburg army had to be rerouted to the east, where the standing army suffered significant losses in the war's opening months.[75]

Though there was no mass desertion among Czech-speaking soldiers, Habsburg officials remained suspicious them and Czech-speaking non-combatants, leading provincial officials to take steps to prevent anticipated antipatriotic activities. The Moravian Governing Committee (*Statthalterei-Praesidium*) cautioned district officials, the police director in Mährisch Ostrau/Ostrava, and the mayors of the province's large cities to be on the lookout for antimilitary demonstrations. In some places in Bohemia and Moravia, symbols of mourning or grief accompanied the mustering of troops and in one case, a black flag appeared. Such antimilitary activity in Moravia was to be punished.[76] While many people and communities across the home front mobilized to support the war, not all individuals did so, causing Habsburg officials to fear that the actions of some citizens might undermine its efforts.[77] Thus, from the beginning of the war, authorities feared the enemy within.

Efforts to mobilize provincial home front society were for the most part successful, but it changed the composition of home front society. Men, some of whom were part of local government, went to the front. The actions needed to mobilize troops also exhausted the local male officials who remained. Accounts of mobilization largely describe patriotic celebrations of Habsburg military power. Women in these accounts

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[75] Iris Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), 59-60; and István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 191.

[76] Státní okresní archiv (SOkA) Jihlava, Okresní úřad-okresní národní výbor Jihlava do r. 1949, Box 32, Inv. č. 4590 j.č. 145 1915, Antimiliärische Demonstration mittels Trauerabzeichen.

[77] For a similar argument, see István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 190.

primarily played a secondary role: They primarily appeared to bid farewell to loved ones or to provide care through feeding and cheering on troops in traditional, nurturing roles. However, some cases suggest a lack of support for the Habsburg war effort. The state's fear and suspicion of some residents would continue for the remainder of the war. The authorities soon followed calls to mobilize with more demands: Caring for arriving outsiders.

Convalescing Soldiers

Almost as soon as soldiers left for the fighting front, some wounded soldiers would return home. Beginning in August 1914, the Austrian Red Cross began using the resources of the home front, drawing on residents' labor, to care for convalescing soldiers. Private groups and individuals, with the backing of the Monarchy and local Red Cross organizations, provided aid, caring for sick and injured soldiers. Military transports soon began returning the wounded to the hinterland. Once there, the injured stayed in one of a variety of institutions, including reserve hospitals, convalescent homes, dedicated beds in civil hospitals, private nursing stations, and hospital stations. These men, heroes with "broken" bodies, remade the image of masculinity on the home front. Those who had been dismembered and marred by combat were not necessarily seen as weak; rather, they were the interest of the state and still regarded as heroes, a characteristic not ascribed to home front men—disabled or not[78] Local women provided

[78] On soldiers and disability, see Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) and Bourke, "Love and Limblessness: Male Heterosexuality, Disability, and the Great War" *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, 9, no.1 (February 2016): 3-19.

care for these convalescents, and the nursing profession provided a way for women to be wartime heroes.

People throughout the home front witnessed the arrival of hundreds, thousands, sometimes tens of thousands of injured and sick soldiers, who journeyed across the home front en route to their designated place of convalescence, and many passed through Lower Austria and Moravia, particularly southern Moravia. In some cases, the injured and sick remained in these locations as they were physically unable to endure further travel.[79] The figures in Table 1 suggest that a large number of individuals passed through and resided in the provinces. Locals often greeted and provided assistance to the troops on these transport trains. Those who remained, unable to travel further, required the assistance of residents and local officials who scrambled to provide beds and services for these convalescents.

Table 1. Number of troops passing through and of those, numbers of troops deemed unfit for further travel from summer 1914 through September 1918.

City	Troops Passing Through	Troops Unfit for Travel
Brünn/Brno	301,698	-
Iglau/Jihlava	21,244	2,114
Lundenburg/Břeclav	186,447	747
Olmütz/Olomouc	277,716	1,130
Prerau/Přerov	490	16
St. Pölten	496,071	1,169
Znaim/Znojmo	200,726	4,217

[79] S. Kirchenberger, *Sanitäts-Statischer Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Österreichischen Gesellschaft von roten Kreuze sowie deren Stamm- und Zweigvereine im Kriege 1914-1918* (Vienna: Verlag der österr. Gesellschaft vom Roten Kreuze, 1919), 103.

Source: S. Kirchenberger, *Sanitäts-Statischer Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Österreichischen Gesellschaft von roten Kreuze sowie deren Stamm- und Zweigvereine im Kriege 1914-1918* (Vienna: Verlag der österr. Gesellschaft vom Roten Kreuze, 1919), 103.

Institutions across Lower Austria and Moravia housed injured soldiers as they convalesced. As Table 2 indicates, from August to the end of 1914, the number of institutions and beds devoted to wounded soldiers increased significantly. Institutions in the two provinces accounted for roughly one third of the hinterland institutions caring for the military's wounded and ill. During 1915, the number of institutions and beds filled with sick and injured increased again and reached their peak. These numbers represented a significant number of military convalescents in the two provinces.[80] What the numbers do not show is the time and money provincial residents would devote to supporting this endeavor.

Table 2. Institutions and beds in Lower Austria and Moravia, 1914-1915.

	August 1914		December 1914		September 1, 1915	
	Institutions	Beds	Institutions	Beds	Institutions	Beds
Lower Austria	25	2,160	197	20,039	1,251	24,766
Moravia	21	1,997	50	5,147	75	8,457

Source: S. Kirchenberger, *Sanitäts-Statischer Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Österreichischen Gesellschaft von roten Kreuze sowie deren Stamm- und Zweigvereine im Kriege 1914-1918* (Vienna: Verlag der österr. Gesellschaft vom Roten Kreuze, 1919), 3, 12-14.

Providing for sick and injured soldiers posed significant challenges for home front communities. In Znaim/Znojmo, on the day of the announcement of mobilization, the municipal authorities began a collection for the Red Cross and established a special

[80] S. Kirchenberger, *Sanitäts-Statischer Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Österreichischen Gesellschaft von roten Kreuze sowie deren Stamm- und Zweigvereine im Kriege 1914-1918* (Vienna: Verlag der österr. Gesellschaft vom Roten Kreuze, 1919), 3, 12-14.

committee for arranging aid. The municipality immediately provided 500 crowns for this effort. The municipal council made provisions for the care of gravely injured soldiers in the Kaiser Franz Josef Hospital, setting aside sixty beds for this purpose. The municipal council also established, at its own cost, additional hospital space for 340 sick and wounded soldiers. Initially, these hospitals were run at the expense of municipal authorities, but later fell under the administration of the local branch of the Red Cross. At any one time, the community accommodated anywhere from 200 to 3,000 wounded soldiers.[81]

While men were mobilized for military service, women were encouraged to take up nursing, and like women elsewhere, many women in the provinces took on this role. While this was a traditional form of female labor, women were increasingly needed to fill this role in wartime, and this is one example of the way that women's labor was utilized. In an effort to recruit more women for this task, the *Znaimer Tagblatt and Znaimer Wochenblatt* printed calls for local women to enroll in a nursing course in August 1914.[82] Local women would have seen the examples of aristocratic women taking on the role of nursing in wartime in local newspapers.[83] The September 14, 1914 issue of the *Znaimer Tagblatt* contained an image of Archduchess Isabella of Austria on the cover with the caption stating that she "has sacrificed herself for the Red Cross and has taken up her duties as a nurse."[84] The nursing profession provided a way for women to sacrifice for

[81] SOkA Znojmo, Archiv mesta Znojma (AMZ), válečné hospodárství 1914-1921, Box 64, Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Gemeindevertretung der Stadt Znaim während des Krieges, September 7, 1916.

[82] *Znaimer Tagblatt*, August 2, 1914, 2; and *Znaimer Wochenblatt*, August 1, 1914, 7.

[83] On Habsburg aristocratic women in unconventional nursing roles that challenged gender hierarchy on the Eastern Front, see Iris Rachamimov, "'Female Generals' and 'Siberian Angels': Aristocratic Nurses and the Austro-Hungarian POW Relief," in *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, ed. Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 23-46.

[84] *Znaimer Tagblatt*, September 14, 1914, 1.

the war effort and to serve the state. A June 20, 1915 letter to the *Znaimer Tagblatt* labeled nurses as "heroines of the military hospitals, who, like the heroes of the trenches" had shown "superhuman strength" in their work for the fatherland. The letter made the binary distinction between roles for female nurses and male soldiers. The letter described the physical and emotional labor these women performed, especially the latter as they wrote letters on behalf of injured and dying soldiers.[85] Thus, nursing provided many women with a gender-specific task that enabled them to sacrifice for the war effort and be wartime heroes.

Across the border in Retz, the community offered the Red Cross of Lower Austria a variety of locations for convalescing soldiers as well as the services of community members, including doctors and local women who became nurses. The Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus (*Schwestern vom armen Kinde Jesus*) volunteered their cloister for use as a hospital with fifty beds, and the sisters also agreed to provide care for the injured sent there. The town also offered the Dominican Cloister as a space for thirty convalescents but would need to requisition some of the beds needed for this location. Additionally, local resident Hugo Raymann offered room for twenty beds and a large garden pavilion for the care of convalescents. Officials also offered use of the town hall, which could hold twenty beds and had additional space for personnel and a kitchen. Local physicians, including Edmund Schleifer, the father of Christine Schleifer, and Rudolf Fischer offered to help with the establishment of these hospitals and to train nurses.[86] The community managed to quickly procure the necessary beds, and the mayor

[85] *Znaimer Tagblatt*, June 20, 1915, 6.

[86] Stadtarchiv Retz, Stadtgemeinde Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Z. 1077 Betreff: Spitälereinrichtung, in Retz, August 10, 1914.

reported to district officials on August 28, 1914 that thirty nursing candidates had enrolled in Dr. Schleifer's course. Furthermore, since the doctors volunteered their services, the community only needed to seek reimbursement for the cost of food for convalescents at the price of two crowns per day per person.[87] Thus, in a short time, the community quickly mobilized its available resources for the injured. The women who nursed these men were part of the effort to reorganize the local female labor force.

The community mobilized its available resources, and the first train of injured soldiers arrived in Retz on November 21, 1914 with fifty convalescents. The community greeted the men at the train station before the sick and injured went to the two convalescent homes. During its nine months of operation, the convent cared for 1,348 injured men at great personal sacrifice of the cloister's sisters. The Dominican cloister continued to operate until the end of the war and in total treated 2,743 injured soldiers. Until July 1915, the wounded and ill came from across the Monarchy; after that however, only German-speaking convalescents—mostly from the 4th, 84th, and 99th infantry regiments, which were filled with soldiers from Lower Austria—came to Retz. These soldiers had not been badly wounded, and their mortality rate was low.[88] The newly established convalescent homes thus resulted in the arrival of men to the community throughout the war, and at least initially, many of them hailed from elsewhere in the Monarchy and were not native German speakers, diversifying the demographics of the community, at least for a time.

[87] Stadtarchiv Retz, Stadtgemeinde Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Z. 1077/1 Notspitäler in Retz, August 28, 1914.

[88] Resch, 518-19.

Children also interacted with the convalescents and copied the care they saw adults provide. Christine Schleifer remembered these convalescent homes in the Frauenkloster, where her father worked, and in the Dominican cloister. On Sunday afternoons, she and her friends would visit the wounded soldiers housed in the convent. The children brought the men cigarettes, which the girls laid on the bedside tables. Schleifer long recalled the various people she met at the cloister, including a gypsy who played the violin there for the men. Many women worked in the kitchen of the Dominican cloister, including Schleifer's own mother.[89] Caring for the injured was a Schleifer family affair. Schleifer not only visited the injured, but she, along with her sister and friends, also played "Red Cross nurses." They made themselves nursing caps with the Red Cross symbol and white arm bands. While they played, they practiced bandaging techniques, and learned to bandage correctly.[90] Caring for the wounded soldiers was a task that increasingly engulfed her life; not only did she visit the convalescent homes but caring for the injured and sick also became a theme for play.

In addition to the arrival of sick and wounded soldiers, sometimes the family members of convalescents would visit their relatives. Parents, wives, children, and siblings visiting sick or wounded men paid half-price for tickets for their train travel in Austria.[91] Among those taking advantage of this offer was twenty-five-year-old Maria Balik, from Modlnica Duza in Galicia, who arrived in Retz in December 1914 to visit her convalescing husband, reservist Johann Balik.[92] Maria Balik was only one of many who

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[89] Hämmerle, *Kindheit im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 145.

[90] Hämmerle, *Kindheit im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 146-47.

[91] Stadtarchiv Retz, Stadtgemeinde Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Zur Beachtung! Fahrbegünstigungen für Besucher von verwundeten und kranken Kriegern. K.M. Erlass Abt 5/EB., Nro: 4739 vom Dezember 7, 1914.

[92] Stadtarchiv Retz, Stadtgemeinde Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Zl. 1757 Betreff: BALIK, Maria, Fahrpreisermässigung, December 29, 1914.

visited the injured, and was among the many people moving through the Habsburg home front. Her example is representative of others like it that contributed to the reorganization of the Habsburg Monarchy's social landscape.

The convalescents were one of several groups traveling through and residing on the home front from the war's opening months, adding diversity to the Monarchy's provinces. Communities rallied their available resources to care for these injured and sick heroes, making available significant resources for these purposes. Local women especially took up the call to become nurses, a profession that could allow them to be heroes in their own right and sacrifice for the war effort and the state. Yet, this profession was in keeping with traditional gendered norms of women as caregivers and nurturers. However, not all women ascribed to this normative behavior, and many who lived outside the state's definition would be deemed suspect.

Gendering Espionage

From the war's onset, authorities feared enemies on the home front, and rumors of spies infiltrating the provinces continued throughout the war. Much of the newspaper coverage and state correspondence highlighted the threat as female: Women, both Habsburg and foreign, were considered to pose a threat as spies, especially those who were young, attractive, and alone, because these women stood outside proper society. Local and military officials attempted to police morals during the war, especially sexuality. Prostitution, which was tolerated, was of special wartime concern. The threat of venereal disease (VD) weakening the army made the policing of both registered and the far more numerous clandestine prostitutes of military significance. Vice police

arrested single, young, poor women whom they scapegoated as clandestine prostitutes.[93] There were cases of Habsburg women accused of espionage who were instead simply selling sex. Additionally, unmarried women living with men were themselves doubly suspect of being both immoral and disloyal.[94]

Shortly after the declaration of war, officials cautioned provincial leaders of the potential threat of female wartime espionage. An August 16, 1914 letter from the War Surveillance Office to the Lower Austrian Provincial Government in Vienna contained reports that suggested some local officials treated Russians in the Monarchy much too kindly; however, wartime conditions necessitated that procedures for dealing with Russians should be rigorously followed. Sources indicated that the Russian espionage service employed many women, and officials should give attention to this specific female threat. Suspicious persons needed to be dealt with ruthlessly.[95]

Concerns about espionage were, of course, not new: There had been several high-profile spy cases in the years before the war. The most consequential was the 1913 scandal involving Alfred Redl, an Austrian military officer who headed military intelligence but worked as a double agent for Russia. Part of the Redl controversy revolved around allegations of his homosexuality and that he had been compromised owing to his sexual orientation. At the time Redl's story had circulated widely

[93] Nancy M. Wingfield, "The Enemy Within: Regulation of Prostitution and Controlling Venereal Disease in Cisleithanian Austria during the Great War," *Central European History* 46, no.3 (September 2013): 569-71.

[94] Nancy M. Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 234-35.

[95] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 691, 384, Band I.

throughout the Monarchy in the press.[96] This incident was part of a general trend in the years before the war as investigations of espionage increased.[97]

The war's outbreak precipitated feelings of fear and suspicion on the home front. A sense of "war psychosis" set in, as every stranger became a potential enemy or spy. Officials took steps to guard against sabotage on the home front. A guard protected public buildings as well as important sites such as railways, that necessitated additional surveillance. Foreign cars were to be inspected to search for spies or foreign currency.[98] Newspapers cautioned residents of the threat dangerous people posed.[99]

Austrian officials considered the possibility of female Serbian espionage a threat to the home front, and the police headquarters (Polizei-Direktion) in Vienna warned the k.k. Lower Austrian Governing Committee (*Statthaltereipräsidium*) in Vienna on December 4, 1914. The military's general staff had received a confidential report from a reliable source that Serbian women were using Romanian passports to travel into the Monarchy for espionage purposes. Additional correspondence from the Military Command in Vienna dated December 23, 1914 further described the threat of women in the service of the enemy. Officials considered it necessary to inform the army and the public of the threat posed by foreign enemies. Particularly suspicious, it noted, were those "traveling alone, seemingly entirely harmless female persons." It further described that these spies were "often young, beautiful, and elegantly clothed persons" who would

[96] John R. Schindler, "Redl—Spy of the Century?" in *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence*, 18, no.3 (2005): 485-486, 488-89, 496.

[97] Hannes Leidinger "The Case of Alfred Redl and the Situation of Austro-Hungarian Military Intelligence on the Eve of World War I" in *1914: Austria-Hungary, the Origins, and the First Years of World War I*, ed. Günter Bischof and Ferdinand Karlhofer, (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 1914), 35-52.

[98] Resch, 518.

[99] *Mistelbacher Bote*, August 7, 1914, 4.

then ascertain information about the movement of trains, and in the process, would ascertain the origins and destinations of troops. The subsequent correspondence from the Lower Austrian Governing Committee to district officials in Lower Austrian on December 27 warned of the danger posed by female persons working as spies. The abbreviated note included the language about "traveling alone, seemingly entirely harmless female persons" on trains and stressed the importance of briefing the population on the threat.[100]

The state often perceived those who were female and foreign to pose a threat of espionage on the home front, but Habsburg women could also threaten home front security. Female residents could also be considered other. Women who defied normative gender behavior and displayed suspect morals were not to be trusted in the eyes of authorities. The relationships that some women would have with POWs would confirm—for authorities—the female undermining of society. But the arrival of thousands of displaced Habsburg residents—many of them women—would also contribute to authorities' fears of disloyalty.

Refugees: Reorganizing the Monarchy

While many men left for the fighting front, thousands of civilians caught in the war zones made their way to the regions behind the front. These refugees—many of them women, children, and elderly men—ether fled their homes willingly or were evacuated by the state. In the Habsburg Monarchy, refugees—whom the state classified as Jews, Ruthenes, Poles, Slovenes, Italians, Germans, Romanians, and Croats—

[100] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 705, P6976 IV 1916.

constituted one of the major wartime challenges for imperial and local authorities as well as for residents who were confronted with the arrival of fellow Habsburg citizens with whom they shared little in common.[101] Like those historian Peter Gatrell describes in his analysis of wartime Russia, refugees in the Habsburg Monarchy also had an "unsettling effect" on society.[102] As the refuges were "other" in comparison to the local population and most of them were poor, their presence disrupted home front life for residents.

Historians have analyzed the Eastern European Jewish refugee experience in Vienna and the aid work undertaken on their behalf. These refugees were not, however, the only refugee group moving within the home front, and scholars have only begun to analyze in detail the full depths of the Monarchy's refugee crisis.[103] Scholarship on the

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[101] In her overview of the refugee crisis in Austria-Hungary, Julie Thorpe has demonstrated that the Habsburg state's use of national categories fueled nationalist sentiment. See Thorpe, "Displacing Empire: Refugee Welfare, National Activism and State Legitimacy in Austria-Hungary in the First World War" in *Refugees and the End of Empire: Imperial Collapse and Forced Migration in the 20th Century,* ed. Panikos Panayi and Pippa Virdee (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 102.

[102] Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia During World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 3, 13.

[103] On the crisis in Vienna and the social tension refugees caused as well as the subsequent increase in antisemitism, see Beatrix Hoffmann-Holter, *"Abreisendmachung": Jüdische Kriegsflüchtlinge in Wien 1914 bis 1923* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1995), 14, 19; and David Rechter, "Galicia in Vienna: Jewish Refugees in the First World War," *Austrian History Yearbook* 28 (1997): 113, 120, 125-27. For a recent overview of the refugees in Cisleithania, see Martina Hermann "'Cities of barracks': Refugees in the Austrian part of the Habsburg Empire during the First World War" in Peter Gatrell and Liubov Zhvanko (eds.), *Europe on the Move: Refugees in the era of the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 108-28. On the differing experiences of Jewish refugees in the Hungarian half of the Empire in comparison to those in Cisleithania, see Rebekah Klein-Pejšová, "Between refugees and the state: Hungarian Jewry and the wartime Jewish refugee crisis in Austria-Hungary" in Peter Gatrell and Liubov Zhvanko (eds.) *Europe on the Move: Refugees in the era of the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 156-76. For an account of aid efforts in Prague, see Jiri Kudela, "Die Emigration galizischer und oesteuropäischer Juden nach Böhmen und Prag zwischen 1914-1916/17," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 12 (1989): 119-34. On gender and aid work as well as Jewish identity, see Rozenblit, "For Fatherland and Jewish People: Jewish Women in Austria During the First World War," in *Authority, Identity, and the Social History of the Great War*, ed. Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee, (Providence: Berghahn, 1995), 200, 207; and Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing A National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (New York: Oxford, 2001), 60-63. While some scholars have addressed the refugees in the Bohemian Lands, little scholarship has thus far examined the experience of refugees in Moravia, especially those in refugee camps. See Michal Frankl, "Exhibiting Refugeedom. Orient in Bohemia? Jewish Refugees During the First World War." *Judaica Bohemia* 50, no.1 (2015): 117-29.

refugee crisis has provided insight into the experience of the war on the Habsburg home front, illuminating social tensions. Historian Robert Nemes's analysis of the response of one Hungarian town, Nagyvárad/Oradea [today in Romania], to the arrival of Jewish refugees has demonstrated that wartime interactions between residents and refugees reinforced ideas of who was "local" and who was not. In the process, social tensions increased during the war.[104] This study makes a similar assertion about refugees in Lower Austria and Moravia.[105]

In summer 1914, as the Russian army advanced into Bukovina and Galicia in the Habsburg East, forcing the Habsburg army to retreat west of the San River by early September 1914, thousands of civilians—many of them Jewish—fled to the Monarchy's interior, escaping the Russians.[106] Some walked great distances, while those who could boarded overcrowded trains to the hinterland. The Habsburg army also evacuated thousands of "suspicious" civilians to the interior.[107] Whether these refugees left their homes voluntarily or not, they posed a threat to the stability of the home front**.** The Interior Ministry acknowledged in 1915 after the arrival of still more refugees in the provinces, this time from the Monarchy's southern provinces after the opening of an additional front with Italy, "This incoming flood to the hinterland created a new social and ethnic problem, on whose solution depended more than the individual fate of the

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[104] Robert Nemes, "Refugees and Antisemitism in Hungary During the First World War" in *Sites of European Antisemitism in the Age of Mass Politics 1880-1918*, ed. Robert Nemes and Daniel Unowsky (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2014), 237-38.

[105] For more on the breakdown of social relations between refugees and residents in Moravia, see Kathryn E. Densford, "Fellow Citizens, Unwanted Foreigners: The Refugee Crisis in Wartime Moravia." In *World War I in Central and Eastern Europe: Politics, Conflict and Military Experience*. Edited by Judith Devlin, et al. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018).

[106] Alexander Victor Prusin, *Nationalizing a Borderland: War Ethnicity, and Anti-Jewish Violence in East Galicia, 1914-1920* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 24, 25.

[107] Walter Mentzel, "Kriegsflüchtlinge in Cisleithanien im Ersten Weltkrieg," (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1997), 1,

particular refugees."[108] In the state's assessment, these refugees had the potential to disrupt local society, exacerbating tensions among different national groups, something that only increased as the war went on.

Table 3. Interior Ministry Categorization of the Refugees, October 1, 1915.

	German	Polish	Ruthenian	Romanian	Jewish	Italian	Croatian	Slovene	Other
Lower Austria (excluding Vienna)	637	2,770	11,217	32	4,404	16,778	-	1,799	472
Moravia	188	9,158	1,471	11	18, 429	20, 125	16	6,458	8

Source: K.k. MdI, *Staatliche Flüchtlingsfürsorge*, 30, 44.

The state classified wartime refugees (Table 3) and resettled them away from the fighting front in the Monarchy's interior, with many refugees going to Lower Austria and Moravia. Most refugees, according to the Interior Ministry records from October 1, 1915, had fled to Vienna, where a reported 137,000 lived, of whom 82,2000 "lacked means" (*Unbemittelt*) The rest were "with means" (*Bemittelt*).[109] The state's economic distinction affected the treatment of these refugees: It transferred those who were without means to camps while those capable of providing for themselves could travel with some freedom.[110] The state classified the overwhelming majority of those living in the imperial capital as Jewish—some 77,090—while 41,100 were Poles and 17,810 Ruthenes.[111] In analyzing these numbers, it should also be noted that the figures only include refugees

[108] K.k. Ministerium des Innern (MdI), *Staatliche Flüchtlingsfürsorge im Kriege 1914/15* (Vienna: k.k. Hof- u. Staatsdruckerei, 1915), 3-4. On the refugee situation in Italy, see Matteo Ermacora, "Assistance and Surveillance: War Refugees in Italy, 1914-1918," *Contemporary European History* 16, vol.4 (2007), 445-59.

[109] K.k. MdI, *Staatliche Flüchtlingsfürsorge*, 29.

[110] Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 408-409.

[111] K.k. MdI, *Staatliche Flüchtlingsfürsorge*, 29.

who registered with the authorities; contemporaries acknowledged that the number of refugees was higher than what the state reported.[112]

Excluding Vienna, Lower Austria housed thousands of additional refugees throughout the war. On September 1, 1915, the province was home to 59,863 refugees. The number declined to 49,109 a month later. Of these, the Interior Ministry identified 41,725 as without means. The state classified the majority of the refugees as Ruthenes though thousands of Italians, Jews, Poles, and Slovenes also lived there. The majority of refugees in Lower Austria (36,992) lived in camps, including Bruck an der Leitha, Mitterndorf, and Pottendorf south and southeast of Vienna. Gmünd, on Lower Austria's northern border with Bohemia, was the largest of these camps, housing 21,309 refugees. The remaining 12,117 refugees living outside these camps resided in a total of 315 communities across the province, including several in the northern region of the province (Table 4).[113] This significant number of refugees who resided in private residences outside the camps came in contact with locals. The high number of those without means provides some indication of the need for assistance these refugees would require not only from the state but also from the local population.

Table 4. Refugee communities in northern Lower Austrian districts.

Northern Lower Austrian Districts	**Number of Refugee Communities in the District**
Gänserndorf	24
Horn	54
Mistelbach	36
Oberhollabrunn	18

[112] Mentzel, "Kriegsflüchtlinge in Cisleithanien im Ersten Weltkrieg," (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1997), 4.

[113] K.k MdI, *Staatliche Flüchtlingsfürsorge*, 30-31.

Waidhofen an der Thaya	1

Source: K.k. MdI *Staatliche Flüchtlingsfürsorge*, 30.

At the same time, 57,501 refugees had made their way to Moravia, or were sent there, which, after the imperial capital and neighboring Bohemia, was home to the largest number of refugees in the Monarchy. Italians and Jews constituted the largest refugee groups in Moravia during the war's early years. These displaced populations increased provincial diversity. The Interior Ministry identified a minority of these refugees, 13,087, as "having means" and the remaining 44,414 as "lacking means."[114] As in Lower Austria, the large number of those without means provides some indication of the financial assistance these refugees needed. In contrast to Lower Austria (excluding Vienna) where most of the refugees lived in camps, only 7,293 of Moravia's refugees lived in the camps while the remaining 50,208 were scattered throughout the province in private housing. Those outside the camps lived in 1,275 communities across the province (Table 5).[115]

Table 5. Refugee communities in southern Moravian districts.

Southern Moravian Districts	**Number of Refugee Communities in the District**
Brünn/Brno (city)	1
Brünn/Brno (surrounding area)	62
Gaya/Kyjov	27
Göding/Hodonín	4

[114] K.k. MdI, *Staatliche Flüchtlingsfürsorge*, 44, 46. The Monarchy's Jews who could afford to do so had long visited western Bohemia's spa towns. These refugees, however, were not on holiday, and many of them were not wealthy. This marked somewhat of a break in the previous pattern; however, some of these refugees—particularly women—managed to blend into the local landscape. See Mirjam Triendl-Zadoff, *Nächstes Jahr in Marienbad: Gegenwelten jüdischen Kulturen der Moderne* (Göttigen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 14-16, 122.

[115] K.k. MdI, *Staatliche Flüchtlingsfürsorge*, 44-46.

Iglau/Jihlava (city and surrounding area)	54
Mährisch Budwitz/ Moravské Budějovice	46
Mährisch Kromau/Moravský Krumlov	27
Nikolsburg/Mikulov	34
Prerau/Přerov	34
Trebitsch/Třebíč	3
Ungarisch Brod/Uherský Brod	29
Ungarisch Hradisch/ Uherské Hradiště	90
Znaim/Znojmo (surrounding area)	53

Source: K.k. MdI *Staatliche Flüchtlingsfürsorge,* 44.

The government began building camps in the early months of the war, using them to house refugees but also for surveillance and control of this population.[116] It constructed several camps in southern Moravia, including one at Nikolsburg/Mikulov meant to house 6,000 Galician-Jewish refugees. The Nikolsburg/Mikulov camp consisted of fourteen barracks, each forty-two meters long and sixteen meters wide. The camp also included an administration building, two hospital buildings, and a temple. The imperial government constructed additional camps, including one for 6,000 refugees near Pohrlitz/Pohořelice and one to house 7,000 in Gaya/Kyjov.[117] By the beginning of October 1915, the Nikolsburg/Mikulov camp was home to 3,484 Jewish refugees, while camps in Gaya/Kyjov and Pohrlitz/Pohořelice housed 2,364 and 1,445, refugees, respectively. State officials aimed to transport refugees of different groups to separate camps. Moravian camps for the most part housed Jewish refugees from Galicia.

[116] Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 409-410; Mentzel, "Kriegsflüchtlinge in Cisleithanien im Ersten Weltkrieg" (Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1997), 298.

[117] *Znaimer Wochenblatt*, November 18, 1914, 7.

However, the distribution of certain groups to specific camps shifted over time with the arrival of additional refugees.[118]

In addition to housing, providing for the refugees' other basic needs posed a challenge, and imperial authorities, together with local organizations and individuals, responded. The Interior Ministry, in cooperation with Viennese Mayor Richard Weiskirchner, formed the city's Central Office for the Aid of War Refugees (*Zentralstelle der Fürsorge für Kriegsflüchtlinge*), whose goal was to aid refugees from Galicia and Bukovina. Additional committees were established for the aid of those from the south. These aid committees carried out work for the state and actively sought private donations to supplement state aid. In addition to the refugee committees, the local population, especially in Moravia and in Bohemia, aided a large number of Jewish refugees. At the local level, the Jewish Community (*Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*) helped to organize independent aid.[119] Local organizations' efforts to aid refugees encompassed providing financial support as well as food, clothing, medical care, religious services, and assistance in finding employment. Historian Marsha L. Rozenblit has demonstrated that humanitarianism, Austrian patriotism, and solidarity with fellow Jews motivated aid work undertaken on behalf of the Jewish refugees.[120] Both the state and private organizations understood these refugees to be Austrian citizens in need of assistance and attempted to provide aid.

Provincial Jewish communities played an important role in assisting fellow Jewish refugees in their midst and advocated for aid on their behalf. For example, in

[118] K.k. MdI, *Staatliche Flüchtlingsfürsorge*, 10-11, 44.
[119] K.k. MdI, *Staatliche Fluchtlingsfürsorge*, 6-7.
[120] Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity*, 65-73.

Triesch/Třešť, southwest of Iglau/Jihlava, the local Jewish Community helped seven Galician Jewish families, a total of twenty-eight persons, beginning in late October 1914. Some of these families lived in the local community building (*Gemeindehaus*) while others lived in a private home. In December, the local Jewish Community petitioned district officials in Iglau/Jihlava for assistance in caring for these refugees. However, provincial officials in Brünn/Brno denied the request, which had been forwarded to them, asserting that state assistance for refugees would only be provided for refugees who lived in camps. If the refugees could no longer care for themselves and local Jewish Community was unable to provide for them, they could be transferred to the camps, where assistance was available.[121]

While organizations advocated for those in their midst, refugees themselves petitioned for state support. One petitioner, Selig Grossmann, age sixty-eight, in Triesch/Třešť wrote to the Interior Ministry in Vienna on October 12, 1915 requesting assistance. Grossmann, along with his wife, Hentsche, and his daughter Rosa, fled their home in Skole, Galicia on September 1, 1914. For a long time, his family lived in Nikolsburg/Milulov before moving to Triesch/Třešť. His son, Wolf Grossmann, then serving in the k.k. Landwehr-Infanterieregiment No. 33, supported the family. Therefore, the elder Grossmann requested 87.5 Hellers per person given that they were completely destitute and given the expenses for the apartment and the materials needed for heating. He stressed that he suffered from asthma and therefore needed his own apartment. Though he stressed his own physical limitations, the inclusion of his son's military service may have been a means to stress his family's loyalty to the Monarchy in effort to

[121] SOkA Jihlava, Okresní úřad-okresní národní výbor Jihlava do r. 1949, Box 32, Inv.č. 4539 j.č. 1049 1914. Flüchtlinge mosaischen Glauben in Triesch.

procure aid. The Interior Ministry denied Grossmann's request on October 23, asserting that per the Ministry's regulations, state support for refugees could only be given in this case in the Nikolsburg/Mikulov refugee camp. Grossmann responded, providing district officials in Iglau/Jihlava a short statement, again asserting that he was ill and therefore needed his own apartment, since due to his illness, he was unable to live in the refugee camp. Furthermore, he complained that "other Polish refugees received assistance, although they are healthy" and thus he again sought support.[122] Grossmann's family was Jewish, and his statement about "other Polish refugees" receiving assistance suggest tensions among refugees, in this case, likely between Jewish and other groups. This series of exchanges highlights the significant support that refugees in the hinterland needed, the efforts of the local community to help them, and the barriers refugees faced in procuring aid.

As Grossman's case suggests, the initial influx of refugees quickly overwhelmed the local population in the provinces. The flood of refugees was serious enough that on December 15, 1914 district officials in Mistelbach wrote to the Lower Austrian Governing Committee explaining the seriousness of the refugee situation there. Due to the evacuation of Krakow at beginning of November, refugees poured into the area with new arrivals coming to the district on an almost daily basis without notice. These refugees from Bukovina and Galicia filled accommodations supplied by the local community. These residences were too crowded, causing a sanitation risk. Earlier waves of refugees already occupied any private accommodations that could be used to house newly-arriving refugees. The policing of the refugees, he reported, was impossible, and

[122] SOkA Jihlava, Okresní úřad-okresní národní výbor Jihlava do r. 1949, Box 34, Inv. č.4787 j.č 2190 1915. Flüchtling aus Galizien, dzt. in Iglau; Geldunterstützung.

thus "public interest is seriously at risk." Though the local towns hosting refugees had done so in "patriotic willingness," they complained.[123] While certainly the overcrowding in apartments posed a sanitation risk for the refugees living there, the spirit of the local population was at risk too. While the letter from district officials stressed local patriotism and willingness to help, the community had been pushed to its limit.

Calls to aid refugees could be found in newspapers in both Moravia and Lower Austria. Already in September 1914 newspapers included petitions to the general population; on September 23, the *Znaimer Wochenblatt* noted the daily influx of refugees in nearby Nikolsburg/Mikulov. The article encouraged locals to donate bedding and clothing to these refugees. The article also noted the contributions of Prince Hugo von Dietrichstein and District Captain Paul Kretschmer to aid these refugees. Public pleas often mentioned the exemplary actions of Habsburg officials in contributing to aid efforts, providing an example for the rest of the population. On October 14, 1914, a report in the German-liberal *Tagesbote aus Mähren und Schlesien* from Brünn/Brno noted that more than 1,500 Galician-Jewish refugees had arrived in Gaya/Kyjov. While the article praised the efforts of the local Jewish population to aid these refugees, the barracks intended for them would not be ready for inhabitants for the next five weeks, leaving these refugees in miserable living conditions. Local officials in Gaya/Kyjov thus requested donations, especially shoes and clothing for children.[124] The refugees overwhelmed the city, necessitating the broader appeal for aid from other areas of the province. This example also highlights how authorities in the early days of the war were unprepared for the human flood from the east.

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[123] NÖLA, Präs P, Karton 698, Präs 334 XIIa.
[124] *Tagesbote aus Mähren und Schlesien* (*TMS*), October 12, 1914, 4.

Though state officials constructed camps, these barracks did not meet the refugees' basic needs. On December 2, 1914, the *Znaimer Wochenblatt* noted that following a visit to the Nikolsburg/Mikulov camp, local officials sent a memorandum to Interior Minister Baron Karl von Heinold, stating that the conditions in the camp warranted the "humanitarian, sanitary, and social consideration of the minister."[125] The hastily constructed camps failed to provide a satisfactory solution to the problem and had quickly become a site in need of further aid from the Interior Ministry.

In the months after they arrived, refugees sought to have needs beyond those of food, clothing, and shelter met in their new place of residence, and across the hinterland, the state established schools for the refugees. On January 6, 1915, a group of Galician refugees pressed for the opening of a Polish secondary school in Brünn/Brno.[126] On January 19, *Tagesbote aus Mähren und Schlesien* announced that Polish-language classes would begin on January 25, following mass at the Church of St. James. Students would then proceed to their classrooms at Huttergasse 24, located to the northeast of the city center.[127] The establishment of schools provides some indication that these refugees attempted to maintain a sense of normalcy and that the state continued to provide for the education of its citizens. By October 1915, there were seventy-two refugee schools in Moravia.[128] This included other schools for Polish refugees, such as in Znaim/Znojmo where local Galician refugees worked with the municipal council to establish Polish-language courses for school children. As there was no room available for the instruction in either state or other public buildings, an apartment needed to be rented and other

[125] *Znaimer Wochenblatt*, December 2, 1914, 9.
[126] *TMS*, Evening Ed., January 8, 1915, 5.
[127] *TMS*, Evening Ed., January 19, 1915, 6.
[128] K.k. MdI, *Staatliche Flüchtlingsfürsorge*, 45.

things, such as tables and benches needed to be purchased. The municipal council however, was unable to supply the funds needed and thus requested assistance of the state.[129] While local officials attempted to meet the needs of refugees living in their community, they were unable to keep up with the vast needs of these refugees.

For the war's duration, refugees would continually contribute to the social remaking of the provinces. Moravia and Lower Austria provided a wartime home not only for refugees from Galicia and Bukovina, but also for refugees from the Monarchy's southern provinces with the opening of an additional front after Italy joined the Entente in spring 1915. Provincial authorities understood that this additional wave of refugees would need support from the state just as had been given to the earlier wave of refugees from the north. Those from the south would also need to be received as loyal fellow citizens in the hinterland, and authorities needed to work to facilitate good relationships among these groups.[130] By November of that year, approximately 2,000 refugees from south Tyrol had arrived and were housed near Brünn/Brno. Local newspapers carried appeals for clothing and money on their behalf, especially for children.[131] These refugees also moved to Olmütz/Olomouc, necessitating aid from the local population there are well.[132] Thus, the arrival of additional refugees in 1915 added another wave of demands on hinterland residents, who were already struggling to provide for the refugees who had arrived in 1914.

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[129] SOkA Znojmo, AMZ, válečné hospodárství 1914-1921, Box 15, Zl. 271 Gemeinderat Znaim, January 17, 1915.

[130] SOkA Znojmo, AMZ, válečné hospodárství 1914-1921, Box 15, Zl. 36.014, K.k. Stattahlterei-Präsidium für Mähren, June 15, 1915.

[131] *TMS*, evening ed., November 6, 1915, 5.

[132] *Deutsches Nordmährenblatt*, September 13, 1915, 4. See also October 8, 1915, 5, and October 21, 1915, 4.

Additional Others: POWs, Internees, and Internment in the Provinces

POWs and internees also contributed to the regendering and remaking of home front society. During the First World War, there was mass captivity and internment on the Eastern Front, where approximately six million of the estimated total eight and half million POWs were captured.[133] State and military officials in all combatant countries were ill-prepared for the influx of POWs.[134] As Iris Rachamimov has demonstrated in her work on POWs and internment, the experience of capture was emasculating and disempowering as soldiers lost their status as warriors. Some even experienced capture as a "metaphoric castration" as their weapons were taken away.[135] Thus, the POWs were one group facing a regendering in wartime and also contributed to the regendering of the home front. While they may have lost their warrior status, they did replace some of the Austrian men who had left for the front.

During the war, the state established approximately fifty POW camps in the hinterland. Each camp was designed for only a few thousand prisoners, but at times these camps housed several thousand more than intended. Additional stations for POWs functioned as reception centers for those recently taken prisoner. The number of camps, as well as POWs, in the hinterland shifted during the war. Estimates indicate that between 1.86 and 2.3 million POWs lived in the Habsburg Monarchy during the war.

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[133] Iris Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (London, Bloomsbury, 2014), 3-4; see also Alon (Iris) Rachamimov, "'Female Generals' and Siberian Angels': Aristocratic Nurses and the Austro-Hungarian POW Relief," in *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, ed. Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 23-46.

[134] Heather Jones, "A Missing Paradigm? Military Captivity and the Prisoner of War, 1914-18" in *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration in Europe during the First World War*, ed. Matthew Stibbe (London: Routledge, 2009), 20-21.

[135] Iris Rachamimov, "The Disruptive Comforts of Drag: (Trans)Gender Performances among Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914-1920," *American Historical Review* 111, No. 2 (April 2006): 363-64.

The overwhelming majority of these POWs were Russian. During 1915, many of the POWs worked either in military production or for private employers, helping to fill the need for labor. Provincial labor offices supervised the POWs work efforts.[136] Given that these POWs lived in the hinterland—away from the front—many residents of the provinces came into direct contact with them.

The presence of POWs, especially escaped prisoners or rumors of escaped POWs, caused fear among the local population. The *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift* reported on Sunday, August 14, 1915 that in Muschau/Mušov several local hunters left early in the morning. While in the forest next to the Reichstrasse, the route connecting Vienna with Brünn/Brno, they saw three men dressed in uniforms who attempted to escape when they noticed the hunters, who pursued and successfully captured the three men. These Russian prisoners from the camp in Reichenberg/Liberec in northern Bohemia worked in Krems but had escaped. Following this incident, rumors circulated of more "Russians" in the forest. Some local men went on the "hunt" and captured two men. One fled, escaping by swimming across the Thaya/Dyje, while the other was arrested. The latter spoke Hungarian and gave contradictory answers when interrogated. Apparently, he was a deserter. The gendarmerie took those captured to Brünn/Brno, but apparently not until after causing fear and concern among the local population.[137]

Not only POWs were interned on the home front, however. Early in the war, imperial officials began interning several categories of individuals. The War Surveillance Office wrote to the Lower Austrian Governor in Vienna on August 27,

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[136] Verena Moritz, "The Treatment of Prisoners of War in Austria-Hungary 1914/1915" in *1914: Austrian-Hungary, the Origins, and the First Year of World War I*, ed. Günter Bischof and Ferdinand Karlhofer (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2014), 237-239.

[137] *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift*, August 14, 1915, 4.

1914, distinguishing among four categories of individuals, both foreigners and Habsburg citizens, to be interned during the war. The first category consisted of prisoners of war, those members of enemy states on active military duty as well as some deserters. Montenegrins fit for military service always were to be considered as active military personnel and thus treated as prisoners of war. The second category contained those who were fit for military service and members of states in conflict with Austria. The third category consisted of suspicious Habsburg citizens (*Inländer*) who presented a threat to the state but were not of a specific danger and thus could not be admitted through a court of law. The category also included suspicious foreigners who fit this description but did not fit in category two. The final category contained those who were wives and children of the aforementioned persons in categories two and three. Already, many of those in categories two, three, and four, had been placed in concentration camps in Bohemia, Tyrol, Styria, Upper Austria, and Lower Austria, including Schloss Karlstein near Waidhofen an der Thaya, home to 166 internees. However, even in the early months of the war, the state faced challenges in accommodating internees.[138]

Moreover, War Surveillance Office officials explained, the logistics of wartime incarceration on the home front provided a challenge. The Ministry of War and the Interior Ministry were to coordinate internee transfers. Care was to be taken in transporting them so that foreigners and other suspicious people would not be placed in locations that would be militarily undesirable and could undermine the Habsburg military's efforts. These internees were to work as soon as they were physically capable. The report deemed physical labor appropriate; however, this labor was also necessary

[138] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 691, 384, Band I.

given the wartime shortage of available workers. These internees were to be housed in communities; yet, the letter noted that poorer communities would likely be unwelcoming. The observation anticipated the social issues that followed the arrival and subsequent stay of these internees in the provinces.[139]

Other combatant states, including Britain, France, Germany, and Russia, interned suspect civilians from enemy states; however, Austria-Hungary and Russia also interned their own people. Austria-Hungary specifically targeted groups of Serbs, Ruthenians, and, from 1915, Italians. Some Galician Jewish residents were also interned on the grounds of being "Russophile." Internees included men, women, and children and came from various backgrounds, through many included prominent members of society, such as priests, teachers, and local political leaders. Particularly in the case of the Italian-speaking population, the state interned many who were not known to be a specific threat because officials feared possible irredentism. As with the classification of wartime refugees, the experience of captivity depended in part on financial means: Those who were destitute were typically sent to internment camps while those with money were confined—under police supervision—in specific towns including several in the Lower Austrian district of Waidhofen an der Thaya.[140]

Some of the internees themselves suggested that they were not deserving of their treatment and that they were confined solely based on their nationality. Ivo Hochmüller, interned in Göllersdorf, Lower Austria wrote on April 30, 1916 that he believed he was being detained not because he had committed any crime, but because "…my mother is

[139] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 691, 384, Band I.

[140] Matthew Stibbe, "The Internment of Political Suspects in Austria-Hungary during World War: A Violent Legacy?" in *Gender and Modernity in Central Europe*, ed. Agatha Schwartz (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010), 204-09.

Slovenian." However, less than a month later, he wrote that he was interned because someone, whose identity he did not know, had denounced him. He wrote, "Of course, nowadays such vagabonds have the best opportunity to give free rein to their hyper-national antagonism; it is merely enough to point yes with his finger on the unwelcome person..."[141] Hochmüller's internment likely placed him in the state's third category of internees—those who were suspicious Habsburg citizens. As he explained, his internment may have resulted from a denunciation brought on by nationalist hostilities; and his case illustrates how some—his denouncer—may have attempted to use the circumstances of war for their own ends.[142]

The behavior—or alleged behavior—of some of those interned seemed to confirm officials' suspicions that these prisoners posed a threat to the state. As in the case of Hochmüller, denunciation was the means for gathering charges against individuals. In Weyerburg, in the district of Oberhollabrunn, Lower Austria at the internment station for politically dangerous persons, some of the internees reported on the suspicious behavior of fellow internees. On April 26, 1915, 26-year-old Samuel Barasch swore in a statement to officials that on April 19 at ten in the morning fellow internee Theophil Jaworowskyj stated, "God shall help Russia, shall defeat our enemy..." Jaworowsky made the statement in Ruthene, but Barash stated that he knew the language and thus understood the statement. The internees Ignaz Kerber, Jakob Silber, and Julian Olas also heard this statement from Jaworowskyj.[143] This was not an isolated incident of alleged Russophile behavior at the Weyerburg internment camp. A report dated May 3, 1915,

[141] ÖStA, KA, GZNB, Box 3746, Res. No. 4267.

[142] On denunciation as a means for civilians to get the attention of authorities and hold them accountable, see Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 398-99.

[143] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 693, Präs. 2350.

dictated orally from Confidant B, reported additional disloyalty in the camp. Confidant B stated he had spent eight days there. On the whole, he described the environment as Russophile, and observed that almost all of those interned spoke Russian among themselves. Confidant B reported that the Jews told him that news of the fall of Przemysl brought the interned clergy much joy, and the internees congratulated each other on this occasion. Two of the internees could confirm this, Confidant B stated. He further explained that the Greek-Catholic priest Theophil Jaworowskyj, the lawyer Vladimir Nawrockyj, and the clerk seemed to lead the pro-Russian movement in the camp. Confidant B related that upon hearing that cholera had broken out in Hainburg, Lower Austria, (located along the Danube River just west of Pressburg/Pozsony/Bratislava) Jaworowskyj had stated, "This is very good, hopefully a general epidemic will break out in Austria!" The clerk, while on a walk with Confidant B had commented, "Look, Russia is so great and Germany and Austria so small. Alone, it would be even smaller if the Poles and Ukrainians would not join in the fight. Still, they know why they fight; the Poles want a Greater Poland, the Ukrainians an independent Ukraine, but we Ruthenes want a powerful Greater Russia!" Nawrockyj once asserted, "The Austrians have planned the advance of Bukovina to distract the Russians from Przemysl, but the Russians were not so stupid to fall into it!" [144] While the identity and motives of Confidant B are unclear, this report provides some insight into the life and political sentiments in the internment camp. The opinions expressed clearly ran contrary to official imperial propaganda promoting unity of all the Monarchy's peoples on the home front.

[144] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 693, Präs 2350.

Due to the proximity of those who were confined and the local population, the latter observed treasonous behavior among the former. Those who were confined, rather than interned, lived in villages, many of which were in Lower Austria, including Drosendorf, Kautzen, and Raabs. Many resided in private residences rather than in barracks but had curfews and other restrictions.[145] A letter from the district officials in Waidhofen an der Thaya to the War Surveillance Office in Vienna on August 28, 1915 detailed one local event that turned violent with the alleged misbehavior of local internees. On the evening of Saturday August 21, Drosendorf held a celebration to honor the Emperor's 85th birthday on August 18. A torchlight procession made its way through the community. About nine that evening, two confined Serbian doctors, Krstic and Milanovic, whose windows faced the town's main square, arranged the luminaries and the window decorations in a "provocative manner." At the end of the torchlight procession, townspeople went into the home of the two Serbs seeking vengeance. The gendarmerie and guard intervened in the matter and arrested the two Serbs. However, the report stated that despite the best efforts of the guards, the two Serbian internees were beaten during their transfer. A physician treated the two and stated they had suffered only minor abrasions. The district commissioner related that the confined Serbs brought complaints against the guards; however, he asserted that the physical blows to the two men's bodies came from the crowd.

The district commissioner went on to explain that this incident of internee misbehavior in the town was not an isolated incident. The recently confined Serbs as

[145] Matthew Stibbe "Civilian Internment and Civilian Internees in Europe, 1914-20" in *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration in Europe during the First World War*, ed. Matthew Stibbe (London: Routledge, 2009), 58.

well as Russians and Italians often caroused in their apartments, but the district commissioner sent away the ringleaders of this activity, sending the two aforementioned Serbs to the workers' station in Illmau, about forty kilometers to the north east of Drosendorf, for the duration of the war. Furthermore, he noted that twenty-four others—mostly Serbs as well as some Russians and Italians—were interned in Illmau for an indefinite time, and an Englishman was interned in Markl, also in the district of Waidhofen an der Thaya, about forty kilometers south west of Drosendorf. In a further effort to manage the internees, officials changed the curfew of the confinement station from ten o'clock to nine. These measures, he reported, collectively restored peace in Drosendorf.[146] This incident illuminates not only the behavior of the internees, who could be provocative, but also that of the local population and of state officials. An evening intended to mark the Emperor's birthday ended in disorder. Who perpetrated the acts against the internees remains unclear, as state officials blamed the local population while the Serbians blamed their guards. However, the tensions that erupted necessitated the removal of these internees from the immediate vicinity to restore order.

The distinctions among categories of internees were not always clear to local residents, who were disturbed by the presence of these others in their communities. The district commissioner in Zwettl wrote to the Lower Austrian Governing Committee on November 21, 1914 to bring their attention to an article in the *Waldviertler Bote*, an insert in the *Kremser Zeitung*, which described the inappropriate behavior of Russians living in the area. The article, titled "Russian Impertinence," described the alleged behavior of prisoners in Zwettel, stating that every Monday at the market one could find a Russian

[146] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 694, Präs 5230 IXa, 1915.

among the Austrian farmwomen, handling and smelling the food, haggling with the women, and then buying nothing. The article suggested that no one could blame the farmwomen for their frustrations because they could not find customers for products that had been examined in this way. Certainly, the article asserted, everyone would find it reasonable for the farmwomen to rebel considering the behavior of the Russians. In contrast to what the newspaper had reported, the men in question were Jews of Russian nationality and were not interned, but confined, meaning that they lived under restrictions and were subject to curfew. However, the district commissioner took action to remedy these complaints, and prohibited the confined from future weekly visits to Zwettl's market. The district commissioner concluded by suggesting that the newspaper article may reflect the local population's attitude towards the so-called "Jewish element."[147] The district commissioner may have been correct in his assessment of the local population's antisemitic leanings. Notably, these sentiments manifested themselves in circumstances involving the local food supply, a subject that would arise repeatedly during wartime.

Conclusion

The first year of the war was a time of fundamental transformation of Lower Austria and Moravia. Starting with mobilization, the First World War reconfigured provincial society. Residents of even the smallest communities quickly found themselves living in a changing social environment, as many men left for military service while still others—including injured soldiers, refugees, internees, prisoners of war—arrived. As the

[147] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 691, P.384 1914, Band II, and *Waldviertler Bote* (insert in *Kremser Zeitung*), November 21, 1914, 4.

war went on, these groups continued to circulate through the home front. In the last years of the war, they would be joined by additional outsiders, people living in the Monarchy's urban centers who traveled to the provinces. They included food hoarders—so-called *Hamsters*—who made their way to the provinces as well as convalescing malnourished children who were sent to the country to recover their strength.

The changes in the war's opening months represented not only a social reshuffling of the Monarchy's population, but also a gendered restructuring of home front society. The convalescing soldiers who passed through and resided in the provinces represented a broken, reshaped masculinity, although they had sacrificed on behalf of the state and were still heroes. Additionally, many of the refugees were women and children and of the male refugees who arrived, many were elderly or sick. Meanwhile, the prisoners of war, whose very capture had emasculated them, represented a less-than virile masculinity. The home front, though still home to many men—including state officials and doctors—underwent a regendering, something that would shape home front actions and discourses of both the state and home front residents as the war continued. Women on the home front took on additional roles in wartimes, such as those who became nurses.

In keeping with the goal of mobilizing all of society for total war, residents across Lower Austria and Moravia rallied to assist with the war effort, even if their support was not unanimous. Some of the examples in this chapter analyzing interactions between residents and new arrivals highlight how quickly the relations between the two could deteriorate. These newcomers required assistance, and local communities and the imperial government attempted to meet their needs—including food, clothing, and housing—but were unable to keep up with volume of demand outsiders placed on them.

The examples of interactions between some members of the local population with outsiders also highlight gradations of "othering" across the home front. Some of the local population identified Jewish outsiders as doubly other, and this group faced backlash from the local community from the war's opening months. The state as well as local officials would need to work harder to promote unity and patriotism among those on the home front.

Chapter 2: The *Wehrmann in Eisen* and Other *Nagelobjekte* as Barometers of Habsburg Social Order

During the First World War, cities and towns unveiled nail memorials—many recalling the medieval past—across Austria-Hungary. Local male authorities and male-led organizations often erected them in prominent public spaces, creating images of war across the home front that symbolized masculine warrior heroism. The nail memorials soon became the focal points for ceremonies, mostly run by local and imperial male figures, that aimed to encourage popular support of the war effort. Already in early 1915, local and imperial leaders recognized the need to emphasize wartime sacrifice, given the stresses people on both fronts faced. The way in which the memorials and the events held at them connected people at home with the fighting front reflected traditional gender relations: Many took the form of a medieval male warrior who protected home front women and children. As Allen Frantzen has argued, the First World War deployed medieval concepts of chivalry and sacrifice as the bedrock of understanding male wartime actions.[148] The imagery of the knight was used in a variety of wartime contexts, including in war loan propaganda posters.[149] Erected in the first half of the war, the statues helped construct and maintain a particular interpretation of the war and wartime heroism on the Habsburg home front.

[148] Allen Frantzen, *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[149] Numerous examples from Austria-Hungary and Germany can be found online in the Imperial War Museum's collection (https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections) and through the Library of Congress (https://www.loc.gov/collections/world-war-i-posters/).

Figure 1. Postcard of Vienna's Wehrmann in Eisen. (From the author's collection.)

Most earlier studies of these nail memorials have analyzed this phenomenon at the local level, focusing on Vienna's Wehrmann, though some scholars have looked at these memorials broadly in both Austria and Germany.[150] I interpret these nail objects

[150] For examination of nail memorials in the context of other war monuments, see Stefan Riesenfellner, "Todeszeichen. Zeitgeschichtliche Denkmalkultur am Beispiel von Kriegerdenkmälern in Graz und der Steiermark von 1867-1934" in *Todeszeichen: Zeitgeschichtliche Denkmalkultur in Graz und in der Steiermark vom Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart*, ed.Stefan Riesenfellner and Heidemarie Uhl (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), 1-75; and Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Stefan Eminger's recent study focuses on nailed statues in Lower Austria. See Eminger, "'Der eisernen Zeit ein eisernes Denkmal! ' Kriegsnagelungen in Niederösterreich," in *Fern der Front, Mitten im Krieg: Niederösterreich 1914-1918*, ed. Achim Doppler, Stefan Eminger, and Elisabeth Loinig (Weitra: Verlag Bibliothek der Provinz, 2014), 106-123. For a gendered approach focusing on Vienna's Wehrmann, see Irene Nierhaus, "Die nationalisierte Heimat: Wehrmann und städtische Öffentlichkeit," in *Kein Land in Sicht: Heimat—weiblich?* ed. Gisela Ecker (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1997), 65, 68-71. On Vienna's Wehrmann, see also Gunda Achleitner, ed., *Der Wehrmann in Eisen: Nägel für den guten Zweck/Nails for a Good Cause.* (Vienna: Verlag Bibliothek der Provinz, 2014). On nail memorials in Austria and Germany, see Michael Diers, "Nagelmänner: Propaganda mit ephemeren Denkmälern im Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Mo(nu)mente: Formen und Funktionen ephemerer Denkmäler*, ed. Michael Diers (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993). Hans-Christian Pust provides an overview of the practice in Austria and Hungary, but also mentions world-wide examples, see "Kriegsnagelungen in Österreich-Ungarn, dem Deutschen Reich und darüber hinaus," in *Erster Weltkrieg: Globaler Konflikt-lokale Folgen. Neue Perspektiven*, ed. Stefan Karner and Philipp Lesiak (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2014), 211-24.

and their various forms and functions through the lens of gender, looking at the masculine, militaristic forms these statues often took and at male participation in the events involving them. This chapter demonstrates that the nail memorials served an important function in the Monarchy's wartime project by using representation of traditional patriarchal social and performing normative masculine behavior in order to promote widespread patriotism and unity among Habsburg citizens. I analyze the memorials' various forms and their functions, including rallying wartime patriotism, raising funds for the war, encouraging loyalty to the emperor, and memorializing the dead. Habsburg and local authorities sought to maintain traditional gendered social order during wartime—thus attempting to counter the shifting social landscape of the home front and its feminization—through the symbol of the male warrior and of the weapons of war as well as by promoting notions of chivalry and sacrifice.

The practice of nailing wooden objects long predated the Wehrmänner and Wehrschilder. Journeymen passing through Vienna drove nails into the "Stock im Eisen," a tree trunk that had been covered in nails, at least since the beginning of the sixteenth century.[151] The first of the wartime nail memorials to be unveiled was Vienna's Wehrmann, a medieval knight. The Widows and Orphans Aid Fund intended for Vienna's Wehrmann to serve as a model for other cities and towns, which subsequently unveiled their own memorials. Indeed, in a letter to the city council in Znaim/Znojmo, encouraging their participation in the effort, the organization expressed the hope that "every Viennese, every Austrian should take part in this creation of a 'war memorial.'"

[151] The Stock im Eisen still stands today on Stock-im-Eisen Platz in the center of the city near St. Stephen's Cathedral *Neue Freie Presse*, March 3, 1915, 11; and Richard Groner, *Wien, wie es war: ein Auskunftsbuch über Alt-Wiener Baulichkeite, Hausschilder, Plätze und Straßen, sowie über allerlei sonst wissenswertes aus der Vergangenheit der Stadt* (Vienna: Verlag der Waldheim-Eberle, 1922), 479.

In addition, the organization offered to assist municipalities wanting to construct their own memorial if these communities dedicated it to the children of fallen soldiers. The memorials would be used in part to generate funds for widows and orphans, and the towns could keep donations made for the families of fallen local heroes.[152]

Hundreds of towns across Austria-Hungary, including many in Lower Austria and Moravia, unveiled their own nail objects (*Nageobjekte)*, beginning in early 1915. From Feldkirch in the Monarchy's western-most province of Vorarlberg to the Galician capital Lemberg/Lwów/Lviv in the Habsburg east, and from the small northern Bohemian town of Grottau/Hrádek nad Nisou to Avtovac, Bosnia-Herzegovina, on the Monarchy's southern border, soldiers and citizens sponsored Wehrmänner and Wehrschilder.[153] Nail memorials were also constructed in the Hungarian half of the Monarchy. Since these memorials were in part connected to the emperor and to the Monarchy as a whole, this was a significant development because imperial celebrations were not observed in Transylvania to the same extent that they were in Cisleithania.[154] Budapest, the Hungarian capital, was home to a Wehrmann styled after a medieval knight from the era of Matthias Corvinus.[155] In Nagyszeben/Hermannstadt/Sibiu in the southeast, there was a Wehrmann, shown in the postcard below (Figure 2). Pozsony/Pressburg/Bratislava displayed a Honvéd (Hungarian soldier) in Iron (captioned in picture postcards as "A

[152] SOkA Znojmo, AMZ, Valečne hospodářství, Box 64, Witwen- und Waisenhilfsfond der gesamten bewaffneten Macht, March 1, 1915.

[153] Wien Rathaus Bibliothek (WiR), Tagblattsarchiv (TBA), 1650, 1651.

[154] Daniel L. Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005), 7.

[155] Karl Hildebrand, *Die Donaumonarchie im Krieg; Studien und Eindrücke in Österreich-Ungarn Juni-Juli 1915* (Vienna: W. Braumüller, 1916), 155.

pozsonyi ‘vashonvéd’”—the Pozsony Iron Honvéd).[156] These nail memorials appealed to a wide audience.

Figure 2. Postcard of the Nagyszeben/Hermannstadt/Sibiu Wehrmann. (From the author’s collection.)

These objects dotted the Austro-Hungarian landscape during the First World War, joining the home front and the fighting front. [157] While the nail statues were primarily concentrated in the Monarchy’s interior, they also appeared close to the front, sometimes even on the front. The Austrian 2nd company of the 75th infantry regiment displayed an oblong Wehrschild with the outline of an Iron Cross in the trenches on the eastern front near Gebrow, Galicia.[158]

[156] WiR, TBA, 1651.

[157] Kathryn E. Densford, “The Wehrmann in Eisen: nailed statues as barometers of Habsburg social order during the First World War,” *European Review of History*, 24, No.2, (2017): 305-324.

[158] Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB), Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung, WK1/ALB056/15486, “Wehrschild der 2. Kompanie des Infanterieregimentes 75 im Schützengraben, südl.

These nail memorials in Austria-Hungary were part of a larger phenomenon of unveiling nail memorials across Central and Eastern Europe and even beyond. Historian Jay Winter mentions the "iron nail" memorials in the German-speaking areas of Europe, but he does not analyze them in detail.[159] As some newspapers in the Habsburg Monarchy reported, Berlin unveiled an "Iron Hindenburg" on September 4, 1915. This monumental statue—ten meters high—had room for two million nails.[160] The phenomenon of nail statues was not limited to Central Europe; Austria-Hungary's and Germany's ally, the Ottoman Empire, was also home to a nail memorial: Constantinople's "Iron Cannon," unveiled in 1916.[161]

The rhetoric officials employed at the unveiling ceremonies for these memorials and the language used in newspapers and commemorative brochures to discuss the nail statues reinforced notions of wartime sacrifice expected of all citizens while emphasizing the bravery of the Monarchy's soldiers. Some newspapers, such as the *Tagesbote aus Mähren und Schlesien*, reminded citizens about nailing ceremonies at the memorials and encouraged them to participate as part of their wartime duty. Newspaper articles often listed the number of nails hammered into local memorials, and some, such as the *Eggenburger Zeitung* and the *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift*, provided a list of the names of those who had made monetary donations, making public their patriotic efforts. This practice exemplified efforts to mobilize the entire population, from the imperial capital to the Monarchy's smaller, provincial towns, in support of the war effort, and in some cases

GEBROW, zu Gundsten des Witwen und Waisenfonds, 2. Juni 1916," http://data/onb/ac/at/baa15541988 (accessed March 5, 2016).

[159] Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 78-85.

[160] *Das Interessante Blatt*, September 16, 1915, 14; *Wiener Zeitung*, September 5, 1915, 12.

[161] See *TMS*, April 15, 1916, evening ed., 4; *Stajerc*, April 16, 1916, 3.

may have pressured individuals to also have their names in print—a public, tangible sign of their contribution and loyalty.

This examination of the statues in Lower Austria and Moravia provides a window into the gendered patriotism these statues embodied. The image of the Wehrmann and of similar memorials entered into the daily lives of the Monarchy's residents, owing to their locations in public spaces, but they were also visible in newspapers and constituted objects of wartime material culture. Newspapers announced the unveiling of memorials across the Monarchy, with their coverage sometimes including images. This made the practice of nailing and of the individual memorials known to a wide audience. Furthermore, Wehrmann memorabilia, including photographs, postcards, and miniature reproductions circulated through the Monarchy. These objects reinforced the image of the ideal male as a heroic warrior. The funds raised with the nailing of these memorials also aimed to strengthen the patriarchal social order as the intended beneficiaries of these funds were often widows and orphans. The statues served as surrogate breadwinners for those without male providers; however, the funds raised were only for widows and their dependents, not for single women. In this sense, the statues' stated aim was to financially benefit those women in normative female roles of wife and mother. The memorials functioned as a means to uphold male-dominated society at a time when many men were serving on the fighting front and offered a daily reminder of male wartime sacrifice.

Form Follows Function

The Wehrschild was the most ubiquitous form the nail objects took, making the weapons of war—though not of modern warfare—visible to people at home. Both the

shields and the Wehrmänner recalled the medieval past. Though Vienna's Widows and Orphans Aid Fund—which gave clear instructions for executing the design of these memorials—initiated this fundraising and memorializing effort, the finished products reflected local initiative. The Widows and Orphans Aid Fund originally intended for each town to have two shields, modeled on a shared design which placed the city's coat of arms, unnailed, in the center of the shield. Community members would then cover the rest of the shield in nails.[162] The Widows and Orphans Aid Fund noted that the size of the city determined dimensions of these shields. This flexibility likely helped make this nailing practice available to a wide audience. The Fund also had larger intentions for the shields than merely erecting them in towns across the Monarchy and raising funds: Once the shields had been covered in nails, the Fund wanted to organize a celebration in Vienna—possibly in conjunction with the return of troops at the end of the war. Each city was to send one of its shields to the Imperial capital for the festivities, and the shields would encircle Vienna's Wehrmann in Eisen, creating a permanent memorial.[163] This goal reveals the effort to maintain imperial political order, in which the monarchy's cities encircled the capital with support. It also reflects the privileging of male heroism.

Though most shields modeled historic weapons of war, in a few cases the memorials replicated the weapons of modern warfare. Mödling, south of Vienna, displayed a 30.5-centimeter Mortar in Iron.[164] Elsewhere, including the industrial towns of Ternitz in Lower Austria, southwest of Vienna, and Witkowitz/Vítkovice part of the

[162] For an example, see the shield displayed in Poysdorf, Lower Austria, south of Nikolsburg/Mikulov. The shield is pictured in Vienna's *Das interessante Blatt. Das interessante Blatt*, December 16, 1915, 14.

[163] SOkA Znojmo, AMZ, Valečne hospodářství, Box 64, Witwen- und Waisenhilfsfond der gesamten bewaffneten Macht, March 16, 1915.

[164] *Das interessante Blatt*, September 30, 1915, 12.

huge industrial complex on the Moravian-Silesian border, locals unveiled memorials in the form of military shells. The memorial in Witkowitz/Vítkovice was a large, elaborate, four-posted shelter (with smaller shells standing on bases next to each post) with the phallic weapon, sitting atop a base that raised the memorial above eye level. Figures standing around the memorial in contemporaneous images provide a sense of its monumental size.[165] This nail memorial, celebrating the city's industrial strength, inserted the weapons of modern warfare—and of the masculine sphere of the fighting front—into the home front.

Some memorials took unique, iconographically significant imperial, religious, or local forms. In Olmütz/Olomouc, a middle-sized city in central Moravia, the community unveiled an imperial symbol, a double-headed Eagle in Iron, directly linking their fundraising efforts to the Monarchy.[166] Lower Austria's Sitzendorf an der Schmida unveiled a Cross in Iron, the base of which was to be nailed in the manner of Vienna's Wehrmann. The local priest who opened the unveiling ceremony expressed his joy that the cross symbol had been chosen and that that church consecrated it.[167] This memorial and its unveiling ceremony reflected the prominence of Roman Catholicism in Lower Austrian society. Znaim/Znojmo also unveiled a cross-shaped memorial, but this was not necessarily a Roman Catholic symbol. This memorial took the shaped of the Iron Cross, best known as a Prussian then German military decoration, and was designed for the city's Kopalplatz, the home of the Kopal memorial.[168]

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[165] On the memorial in Ternitz, see *Österreichische Land-Zeitung*, September 9, 1916, 3; on the memorial in Witkowitz/ Vítkovice, see *Österreichische Illustrierte Zeitung*, November 28, 1915, 16.

[166] *TMS*, January 19, 1916, Morning Edition, 5. It was not alone in unveiling an imperial eagle as Czernowitz/Chernivtsi, the capital of Bukovina, did so also on June 4, 1916. See *Wiener Bilder*, June 18, 1916, 11; *Wiener Zeitung* June 5, 1916, 8.

[167] *Eggenburger Zeitung*, September 17, 1915, 6.

[168] *Znaimer Tagblatt*, January 27, 1915, 4, and June 13, 1915, 2.

Occasionally the nail objects took even more unique forms, sometimes copying older symbols. Newspapers in Znaim/Znojmo and Vienna reported on the unveiling of the Lower Austrian town of Melk's "War Gate" (*Kriegstor*) at the town hall. Like the Wehrschild memorial, it was covered with copper flakes and nails.[169] The *Znaimer Tagblatt* also reported on the celebration of Oberhollabrunn's "Stock im Eisen."[170] These more unique memorials provide some indication of the diversity within this practice even though erecting these statues was orchestrated initially from above.

These nail statues commonly took the form of the Wehrmann, a warrior modeled on the image of a medieval knight. The specific use of the figure of the knight was not limited to Austria and was part of what Jay Winter and others have asserted as the persistence of the romantic motif of the knight and the notion of chivalry during the war. Winter has argued that the use of many romantic motifs continued in the interwar period owing to the universal experience of bereavement in Europe. Classical images of war provided a means for the bereaved to come to terms with their loss.[171] In this case, the Widows and Orphans Fund asserted the ideal knight as "in the true sense of the words, 'wrapped in iron'" and that he would have an "iron gaze."[172] Many times the statues had chiseled, hyper-masculine features, as did the Wehrmann in Brünn/Brno, where native

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[169] *Znaimer Tagblatt*, September 1, 1915, 3; *Reichspost*, August 27, 1915, 17.

[170] *Znaimer Tagblatt*, August 26, 1915, 2. This memorial, placed on the main square, had originally been designed for the town hall. A sketch, "Fantasy to a Stock im Eisen at the Town Hall of the Municipality" from April 30, 1915 shows the original plan. However, this permanent home was never erected. See Stadtarchiv Hollabrunn, Stadtvorstehung Oberhollabrunn, Zahl. 423/1, May 3, 1915 "Phantasier zu einem Stock im Eisen an der Rathausecke der Stadtgemeinde," and Werner Lamm, *Hollabrunn: Ein Markt wird Stadt—1908 bis 1958* (Erfurt: Sutton Verlag, 2009), 52.

[171] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 5. See also Allen J. Frantzen, *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) 1-2, 9.

[172] SOkA Znojmo, AMZ, Valečne hospodářství, Box 64, Witwen- und Waisenhilfsfond der gesamten bewaffneten Macht, March 1, 1915.

Karl Wollek designed the city's statue. As the *Tagesbote* noted, the Wehrmann's hands, while folded with a sword, were placed in what could be understood as a religious gesture, suggesting connections to both heaven and earth. His face showed determination, and his entire figure was to convey a sense of strength.[173] He was a warrior fit for combat, one willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for the Monarchy. As historian George L. Mosse has argued, the First World War created a new type of man, one that the war had hardened and depicted as more muscular and with a stronger face.[174] These statues, which began appearing across the Monarchy relatively early in the war, sometimes took this this muscular hardness.

However, these Wehrmänner statues also reflected prewar artistic trends. The form of one the nail memorial, the "Iron Flower Devil" ("eiserne Blumenteufel") in Innsbruck, Tyrol was based on the Austrian artist Albin Egger-Lienz's design. The War Press Bureau employed Egger-Lienz as one of its many war artists and writers tasked with creating wartime propaganda.[175] Before the war, Egger-Lienz's paintings conveyed strong masculine images—especially when compared with the work of his contemporaries—and some of his previous work, such as *Danse Macabre (Totentan*z), was reproduced for wartime aid efforts.[176]

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[173] *TMS*, May 31, 1915, Evening Edition, 4.

[174] George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 115-117.

[175] *Wiener Bilder*, April 9, 1916, 6, 11. On the War Press Bureau, see Rauchensteiner, 225.

[176] Andreas Kohlfürst, "The Reception of Egger-Lienz Among German Nationalists," in *Totentanz: Egger-Lienz und der Krieg*, ed. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Helena Pereña, and Stephan Koja (Lienz: Schloss Bruck, museum der Stadt Lienz, 2014), 124-126, and Helena Pereña, "The *Danse Macabre* 1908-1923: Success and Transformation of a Motif," in *Totentanz: Egger Lienz und der Krieg*, ed. Agnes Husslein Arco, Helena Pereña, and Stephan Koja (Lienz: Schloss Bruck, Museum der Stadt Lienz, 2014), 148.

The Wehrmänner embodied ideals of masculinity at a time when war itself challenged gender norms and reshaped men's bodies. Historian Joanna Bourke has analyzed the conceptions of the male body in the First World War and has noted the reshaping of both the physical body and the values ascribed to it. She has also analyzed the state's and the public's interest in male bodies, given their interests in male bodies as injured heroes or as fully fit, battle-ready warriors.[177] Habsburg imperial and local officials understood the importance of the warrior male image in wartime and sought to promote this in part through the Wehrmänner. The nail memorials, placed prominently throughout the Monarchy, modeled the ideal warrior while the funds collected at them supported those fallen warriors left behind. The memorials attempted to maintain the traditional male body in spaces where many men had left for the fighting front. They showed warriors, physically whole and unmarred by war. Yet, these statues were subject to their own type of violence, with repeated hammering and penetration, thousands of times, in order to clothe them in full, battle-ready armor.

In some cities, these nail memorials resembled contemporary warrior figures, replicating local fighters. In Wieselburg, Lower Austria, municipal authorities and POW camp officials joined together to unveil a Wehrmann resembling a Landsturm (territorial defense) Man in Iron. Both the local *Eggenburger Zeitung* and Vienna's *Neuigkeits Welt Blatt* contained images of the statue. The soldier stood against a building, atop a pedestal of rocks and held a leveled gun. This Landsturm Man in Iron looked down on the town, as if ready to protect them at a moment's notice. As the *Eggenburger Zeitung* explained, the decision was made to depict a contemporary figure since "Just as these men perform

[177] Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Rekation Books, 1996), 30; also, chapters 4-5.

so magnificently in the current world war, they deserve to be immortalized in every way."[178] The people of Wieselburg chose to honor current heroes and their sacrifice on the fighting front. This statue, unlike the medieval knights, brought the image of a contemporary warrior into the midst of the home front.

The placement of the nail memorials in prominent public spaces made this masculine image visible to a large audience at a time when many men had been mobilized. Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann proudly stood on Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Platz (today Náměstí Svobody) in the city center, where he towered over passersby, not on the much smaller area initially suggested in the *Tagesbote* for the memorial's display. Three important streets intersected with the significantly larger Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Platz, and four tramlines passed directly in front of the statue, providing visibility to a wide audience.[179] Additionally, other prominent places, such as train stations, were popular choices for display. In wartime, train stations gained importance as the site where people gathered to say farewell to soldiers, where refugees and internees passed into the hinterland, and where wounded soldiers made their return home. The train station in Prerau/Přerov, Moravia housed the local Wehrmann and its accompanying elaborate display (Figure 3). The Wehrmann stood atop a cannon, waving a banner with the double eagle. The base of the statue was inscribed with the Latin "*Viribus Unitus*," or "united forces," Emperor Francis Joseph's personal motto, adopted when he took the throne. From the Monarchy's large cities to its smaller towns, such as Prerau/Přerov and Korneuburg, Lower Austria, these statues inserted the presence of a male warrior in the

[178] *Eggenburger Zeitung*, March 31, 1916, insert "Aus Welt und Heimat," 99; *Neuigkeits Welt Blatt*, January 22, 1916, 8.

[179] ÖNB, WK1/KS/I/2/13/3 Por, *Der Brünner-Wehrmann mit Wehrschild*, Brünn, 1915, 5.

center of the "home front." As shown in the picture postcard from Korneuburg (Figure 4), the Wehrmann occupied a central space in the town and became part of the local landscape during the war.

Figure 3. Postcard of Prerau/ Přerov's Wehrmann. (From the author's collection.)

Figure 4. Secession-influenced postcard of Korneuburg's Wehrmann in Eisen in front of the city's neo-gothic town hall. (From the author's collection.)

While these statues frequently stood in public spaces, less public spaces became locations for erecting these memorials as well. Factories provided one site for establishing these nail objects and their associated aid funds. In Helenenthal/Helenín,

near Iglau/Jihlava, the Adolf Löw & Sons factory, part of Moravia's textile industry and involved in producing goods for the war effort, unveiled a Wehrmann on July 4, 1915; the factory's owner, Carl Löw, led the celebration.[180] The following July, workers at the leather goods and shoe factory Budischowsky and Sons celebrated the unveiling of a Wehrschild in the factory's courtyard.[181] Some of these memorials were erected in more private locations. In Trebitsch/Třebíč, Moravia, a local villa belonging to factory owner Hans Budischowsky and his wife Rosa (Poloniyi) was the site of a celebratory unveiling of a Wehrmann for the widows and orphans fund.[182] South of Trebitsch/ Třebíč in Retz, Lower Austria, the local innkeeper Leopold Harzhauser, placed a Wehrschild in his inn.[183] These more private unveilings brought the militarized symbols of the Wehrmann and the Wehrschild into a more intimate setting. While these examples may be a minority, they still reflect the prevalence of these masculine forms across the landscape of the provinces.

The Wehrmann as an Object of Consumption

In addition to the physical memorials themselves, miniatures, photographs, and postcards brought the image of these objects—and thus of a warrior and of weapons—

[180] SOkA Jihlava, Okresní úřad-okresní národní výbor Jihlava do r. 1949, Karton 33, Inv. Č. 4697 j.č. 1353 1915; and Wilhelm Winkler, *Die Einkommensverschiebungen in Österreich während des Weltkrieges*, vol.8, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte des Weltkrieges* (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky A.G., 1930) 195.

[181] *Mährischer Grenzbote*, July 23, 1916, 5; and Wilhelm Winkler, *Die Einkommensverschiebungen in Österreich während des Weltkrieges*, vol.8, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte des Weltkrieges* (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky A.G., 1930), 190.

[182] *Mährischer Grenzbote*, October 10, 1915, 8. An article in *Prager Tagblatt* notes the participation of Rosa Budischowsky in a ceremony for German Women and Girls at that city's Wehrmann, which was located in the garden of the Deutsches Haus, prior to the unveiling of the Wehrmann in the villa. See *Prager Tagblatt* July 5, 1915, 3.

[183] *Eggenburger Zeitung*, September 8, 1916, 5.

into more personal spaces and exchanges in everyday life. Mosse has examined wartime memorabilia in other contexts, noting its "trivializing role." In his analysis, which largely draws on picture postcards, he writes, "The memory of the war was also appropriated through the process of trivialization, cutting war down to size so that it would become commonplace instead of awesome and frightening."[184] Various reproductions of the nail memorials in the form of commemorative objects cut down to size both the war and the idealized male warrior, making the image commonplace on the home front. The reproductions may have contributed to the prevalence of this image of the warrior in the hinterland, reinforcing the important notion of the heroic male in wartime and reminding those at home of the strength and potential sacrifice of men at the front. These objects, like the nail statues themselves, were intended for all residents of the Monarchy. The bilingual postcard shown above from Prerau/Přerov illustrates at least an attempt to make these images legible to all residents of a particular town, not just to the "German" community.

The Monarchy's citizens could purchase a variety of commemorative Wehrmann memorabilia with the funds raised going to aid efforts. The War Aid Bureau published the *Catalog of Official Commemorative War Objects*, which contained a replica of Vienna's Wehrmann in miniature. The catalog listed the availability of six variations of the statues in three sizes of ten, sixteen and a half, or twenty-two centimeters in either cast metal or bronze. They ranged in price from three to forty crowns, making this statue affordable to various levels of society.[185] An October 1915 letter in the *Tagesbote*

[184] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) 126.

[185] Archiv města Brna (AMB), A 1/26, 503 M-4/ii/1, Verzeichnis der offiziellen Kriegserinnerungsgegenstände, 12.

claimed that goods containing the image of Vienna's Wehrmann had been selling well in Brünn/Brno, providing some indication of the popularity of these objects beyond Vienna. The letter writer went on to suggest that similar goods containing the image of Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann should be produced, since surely there were manufacturers in Brünn/Brno capable of producing them. This would be used to generate more funds specifically for Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann.[186] Similarly, the *Catalog of Official Objects for Sale* also contained miniature Wehrmann statues as well as commemorative Wehrmann jewelry. The catalog listed items available for purchase such as brooches and pendants in various sizes and finishes, available for one to three crowns, and tie pins for two crowns.[187] Yet, in light of the deprivation that many faced in wartime and the struggle to procure everyday necessities, these objects were likely intended for the middle and upper classes. Wehrmann memorabilia, however, was not confined to towns with Wehrmann statues, as the *Znaimer Tagblatt* informed readers of the availability of the Wehrmann jewelry.[188]

The commodification of the nail memorials helped connect different parts of the Monarchy around this male image of chivalry. In Linz, Upper Austria local branch of the War Welfare Agency (*k.u.k. Kriegsfürsorgeamt*) aimed to create a war museum included gathering photographs, postcards, and miniatures of the Wehrmann and Wehrschild memorials from across the Monarchy, evidenced in correspondence with their counterparts in Brünn/Brno, requesting items related to their Wehrmann. Brünn/Brno's branch of the War Welfare Agency fulfilled this request with three photographs and

[186] *TMS*, October 23, 1915, Morning Edition, 5.

[187] ÖStA, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (AVA), Ministerium des Innern, Präsidium A, Box 2214, Protocol 4256 M.I. 1916, *Verzeichnis der offiziellen Verkaufsgegenstände*, 6, 9.

[188] *Znaimer Tagblatt*, July 8, 1915, 6.

stated that a replica of the Wehrmann would be available in a few weeks for purchase for the price of thirty crowns.[189] This provides some indication of the degree to which these objects served as part of a network across provincial lines and of the use of material culture to promote patriotism and the war effort.

Across Europe, postcards were a popular means of connecting those on the home front with those on the fighting front. Postcards had been a staple of Austro-Hungarian correspondence since their introduction in 1869, and privately-produced picture postcards, legalized in 1885, became a popular mode of communication. During the war, approximately 900,000 postcards traveled from the fighting front to the home front each day. During the war, Austria and its German ally produced tens of thousands of picture postcards related to the war. War relief organizations produced them to collect money for relief funds, but also as an instructive tool to mobilize the public.[190] Some of these included the image of the Wehrmann or the Wehrschild. A newspaper article announcing the availability of postcards picturing the Nikolsburg/Mikulov Wehrschild stressed that this too would help raise money for war widows. It also noted that there could be great interest in these postcards, which depicted an image of home, among those away from home fighting for the Monarchy. It was hoped that the postcards would be used in correspondence exchanged with those at the front.[191] Ideally, the image of the Wehrschild would connect the Monarchy's citizens. Overall, the memorials' various forms served as a means to maintain an idealized warrior-male presence on the home

[189] AMB, A 1/26, 503 M-4/ii/1, Vermittlungsstelle in Oberösterreich für das k.u.k. Kriegsfürsorgeamt in Linz an das Kriegsfürsorgeamt in Brünn, July 13, 1916; and Zl. 1752/praes. 1916 reply to the Vermittlungsstelle in Oberösterreich für das k.u.k. Kriegsfürsorgeamt., July 29, 1916.

[190] Joachim Bürgschwentner, "War Relief, Patriotism and Art: The State-Run Production of Picture Postcards in Austria 1914-1918," *Austrian Studies*, 21 (2013): 101-04.

[191] *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift*, September 16, 1916, 2.

front during a time in which the landscape of the home front had undergone significant changes leading to its feminization.

The Function of Nail Memorials

The nail objects served several purposes: First, their unveiling ceremonies and the subsequent events held at these memorials brought people together in great patriotic fanfare. Secondly, the funds collected from the purchase of the nails hammered into them benefitted aid organizations. Furthermore, the unveiling ceremonies and subsequent commemorations held at the memorials frequently took place in association with celebrations of Emperor Francis Joseph, strengthening ties to the Monarchy's chief patriarchal figure. Finally, as memorials to the dead, they served as a means to remember the ultimate sacrifice of some on the fighting front. All of these functions served to uphold traditional, male-dominated society and the notion of wartime sacrifice, reminding those at home of the chivalric male who could potentially make the ultimate sacrifice on the fighting front while also suggesting that those not fighting engage in a form of personal financial sacrifice to support the war effort.

Unveiling the Nail Memorials

The unveiling of the memorials, which took place with much pomp and circumstance in order to rally the population in wartime patriotism, highlights the important role the home front played in contesting the First World War. Healy's study of Vienna begins with a discussion of the city's Wehrmann, noting its significance as one avenue for citizen participation in wartime. Contending that the collapse of the capital

occurred before the Habsburg state's military and diplomatic defeat, she argues that this collapse was not inevitable as the Monarchy "was in fact never more alive in the lives of its citizens and subjects than during World War I."[192] This is epitomized in the participation of imperial figures, local officials, and the general population in ceremonies at the nail memorials. While Healy and others have examined Vienna's Wehrmann to varying degrees, the unveiling of the statue and surrounding rhetoric is worth examining here briefly given the extent to which other areas of the Monarchy referenced the events in the local press and subsequently copied these actions in practice. The events in Vienna are also telling as they demonstrate who participated in the unveiling ceremonies and what was being promoted with the memorials.

The unveiling of Vienna's Wehrmann and ceremonial first nailings took place on March 6, 1915. The events were captured, at least in part, on film. "Kaiser Franz Josef I. and Kaiser Wilhelm II. on Film" contains a series of clips of Emperor Francis Joseph—for example, at the inauguration of Vienna's Künstlerhaus, an art display hall, and proceeding through the capital on his way to Schönbrunn, the imperial summer palace west of the city center—and of objects related to the Emperor, such as images Tom von Dreger's last portrait of the Emperor and the statue of the Emperor unveiled in Sarajevo on August 18, 1914. The inclusion of the Wehrmann's unveiling with these events indicates the degree to which this was connected to the emperor, though he was not present at the unveiling, and to the larger world of late Habsburg Imperial culture.

The clip of the Wehrmann's unveiling shows dignitaries arriving by car—Archduke Leopold Salvator representing the emperor, the German Ambassador, and the

[192] Healy, 1-3, 24.

Ottoman Ambassador. The Wehrmann can be seen on the left edge of the screen. Archduke Salvator is shown walking past a military band. Other upper and middle-class men are seen as well. Poor weather caused the first part of the ceremony to be moved inside the Military Casino on Schwarzenbergplatz. Inside, dignitaries including the Archduke, as well as War Minister Baron Franz Schönaich and Mayor Richard Weiskirchner, spoke. Weiskirchner discussed the "iron times" during which the "iron man" would become "a new military symbol for Vienna, as a symbol of the bravery of our troops, and will take over the community as an honorable commemoration and will keep it in constant protection." Only after these speeches was the ceremony moved outside for the nailing of the statue.[193]

Once outside, dignitaries drove the first nails into the statue in what was an elite masculine display of patriotism. The footage of the unveiling shows the actual nailing of the Wehrmann as well as providing glimpses of the crowd, giving some indication of the target audience for the festivities. Archduke Salvator drove in the first nail; the German and Turkish Ambassadors followed. The footage also captures the crowd, which appears largely to be upper and middle-class and male, gathered immediately in front of the statue. The Archduke and other male dignitaries are later shown standing around, speaking with one another. Members of the military are also shown. Women appear only briefly in the background.[194] This footage depicts an unveiling event that was heavily

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[193] *Neuigkeits Welt Blatt*, March 7, 1915, 9; *Wiener Kommunal-Kalender und städtisches Jahrbuch für 1916* (Vienna: Gerlach & Wiedling, 1916), 1026.

[194] European Film Gateway, Österreichisches Filmmuseum, *Kaiser Franz Josef I. und Kaiser Wilhelm II. im Film*, (1910-1916), 9 min., 9 sec, http://www.europeanfilmgateway.eu/node/33/detail/Kaiser+Franz+Josef+I+und+Kaiser+Wilhelm+II+im+Film+%5BArchive+Title%5D/video:YWJjYWYzYmQtMzM1MS00ZDQ5LWE2ZmUtMDRmZWFiYmU3MzZmX1VtVndiM05wZEc5eWVWTmxjblpwWTJWU1pYTnZkWEpqWlhNdlVtVndiM05wZEc5eWVWTmxjblpwWTJWU1pYTnZkWEpqWlhNdlZSNWNHVT06OmF2Q3JlYXRpb24uT0ZNL09GTV9hdkNyZWF0aW9uXzEwMzc0NzkwMDAwMDAyNjMwND

masculine in both symbolism—the Wehrmann—and in terms of overall participation. The structure of these ceremonies was patriarchal as men in positions of authority gave the keynote speeches and began the process of nailing the statue while women in the audience watched. It was also an elite event, for those in important state positions, the upper and middle classes, and the military. This was perhaps even more pronounced given that part of the ceremony had to be moved indoors, likely limiting the audience more than originally intended and adding a further militarized element to the day. Ordinary citizens, however, were to take part in the nailing at noon, following the elite festivities.[195]

Those who drove in a nail had their names written in a memorial book and received a certificate with a picture of the Wehrmann and of the imperial double eagle.[196] Like the lists of names in newspapers, the collection of names in the memorial book may have encouraged some to participate in the festivities, to perform their patriotic duty. This act of nailing was replicated thousands of times across the Monarchy.[197] As the *Znaimer Tagblatt* explained, the book of names for the Iron Cross in Znaim/Znojmo would makde future readers aware "…of the willingness to sacrifice of the residents of Znaim in the World War of 1914/15."[198] These books provided public proof of one's patriotism long after the brief moment of driving a nail into the memorial. Likewise, the certificates received for taking part in the events in Vienna in turn validated their

U=/paging:dmlkZW8tMS00LWltYWdlLTEtNC1zb3VuZC0xLTQtcGVyc29uLTEtNC10ZXh0LTEtNA== (accessed December 19, 2015). Footage of the unveiling begins at 4:41.

[195] *Wiener Zeitung*, March 6, 1915, 4.

[196] *Neuigkeits Welt Blatt*, March 7, 1915, 9.

[197] Some of these memorial books have survived. For example, see SOkA Břeclav, Valtice, Gedenkbuch, Feldsberger Wehrschild.

[198] *Znaimer Tagblatt*, June 13, 1915, 2.

individual contribution and provided tangible proof of their patriotism while also replicating the image of the warrior male.

Following the unveiling of Vienna's Wehrmann, similar unveiling ceremonies occurred across the Monarchy in rapid succession. Tulln, west of Vienna along the Danube, unveiled the first Lower Austrian Wehrschild the next month on April 5, 1915.[199] The statues multiplied throughout the Monarchy in the summer of 1915. By December, one newspaper commented, "Not a week passes without news of new unveilings of future iron memorials or plaques." The article went on to discuss the unveiling of three such iron memorials, two located in Austria and one in Germany, all of which were pictured.[200] These examples were only the latest memorials unveiled across Central Europe.

Local newspapers reported on the events in Vienna and many towns and cities subsequently sought to produce their own nail statues and plans were made immediately for Brünn/Brno to have its own statue. On March 3, 1915, newspapers in Brünn/Brno, including the German-liberal *Tagesbote aus Mähren und Schlesien* and the Moravian People's Party publication, *Lidové noviny*, contained articles detailing the unveiling of the Wehrmann in Eisen that was planned for March 6, 1915 on Vienna's Schwarzenbergplatz.[201] On March 18, *Tagesbote* printed a letter suggesting that Brünn/Brno should also construct a Wehrmann. The author suggested, "This memorial will show later generations that the emperor and the empire found hardship and as an entire people unanimously and sacrificially defeated the enemy." The writer then

[199] *Neuigkeits Welt Blatt*, April 8, 1915, 28.
[200] *Das interessante Blatt*, December 16, 1915, 14.
[201] *TMS*, March 3, 1915, Evening Edition, 3; *Lidové noviny*, March 3, 1915, Evening Edition, 2; *Neue Freie Presse*, March 6, 1915, 10.

suggested that such memorials should not be confined to Vienna.[202] On March 23, the paper announced that the city of Brünn/Brno would also display a Wehrmann. The board of the German National Commission for the Protection of Children met on March 20 and decided that they would establish a Wehrmann in Brünn/Brno in cooperation with other associations for the aid of war orphans. The Moravian Aid Committee for Artificially Limbed and Blind Warriors also passed a resolution that there should be a Wehrmann in the city. The Moravian Aid Committee had suggested to the city government that the space on the east side of St. James church could be used temporarily for the display of this memorial.[203]

After great anticipation, the unveiling of Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann occurred on August 1, 1915.[204] *Lidové noviny* noted the loyalty and devotion of the city's population to the Habsburg Monarchy.[205] This unveiling was of interest beyond the Moravian provincial capital. On July 28, Prague's *Národní listy* also briefly reported on the impending unveiling, the visit of Archduke Salvator to Brünn/Brno and the Emperor's gift of 1,000 crowns for the memorial.[206]

The unveilings around the Habsburg Monarchy mirrored the ceremonial events held in Vienna, and the unveiling in Brünn/Brno was no exception. The city had a history of Czech-German conflict, and the Wehrmann was located in the center of the city, in the midst of these previous sites of conflict. According to newspaper accounts of the events, the unveiling occurred smoothly. Archduke Salvator, whom *Lidové noviny*

[202] *TMS*, March 18, 1915, Evening Edition, 4.
[203] *TMS*, March 23, 1915, Evening Edition, 4.
[204] *TMS*, July 31, 1915, Evening Edition, 4.
[205] *Lidové noviny*, August 1, 1915, Morning Edition, 4.
[206] *Národní listy*, July 28, 1915, 4.

had noted had a relationship with city as he had been stationed there as part of his military service, arrived in the morning at the main train station, where the governor and the mayor greeted him.[207] They drove to Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Platz, which had been decorated in Austrian, German, and Turkish flags. *Lidové noviny* observed that thousands of people had gathered for the unveiling. The Wehrmann ceremony included speech by the mayor. A band played the anthems of Austria, Germany, and the Ottoman Empire. The Archduke spoke, acknowledging the patriotic devotion of the officials and the population of Brünn/Brno. He then drove in the first nail in the name of Emperor Francis Joseph and then one in his own name. Other state and provincial authorities repeated his actions. Residents, young and old, drove in some 1,000 nails into the Wehrmann that day.[208] Nails could be purchased for one crown, and they were half price for soldiers and children, making it easy for all to contribute.[209] The following day locals drove another 656 nails into the Wehrmann.[210] The crowds as well as the donations gathered indicate—at least initially—some sense of the popularity the memorial generated.

Ceremonies were also held in smaller Moravian towns, as in the case of the unveiling of the Wehrschild memorial in Nikolsburg/Mikulov. An article in the *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift* announced the decision to erect a Wehrschild in the city. The article explained that the sacrifice of the Austrian people had been great during the war. Thousands of families had lost fathers who had made the ultimate sacrifice. Thus,

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[207] *Lidové noviny*, August 1, 1915, Morning Edition, 4.

[208] *Lidové noviny*, August 2, 1915, Morning Edition, 2,5; *TMS*, July 29, 1915, Evening Edition, 4; August 2, 1915, Morning Edition, 3-4; August 2, 1915 Evening Edition, 1-5.

[209] *TMS*, July 29, 1915, Morning Edition, 5.

[210] *TMS*, August 3, 1915, Evening Edition, 5.

it was the duty of all to support the widows and orphans of these fallen men, "to save them from poverty and misery." In following the example of other cities, the local men's group of the Association of German South Moravia (*Bund der Deutschen Südmährens*) decided that the city should establish a Wehrschild and invited other associations in the city to join them. The shield was to be decorated with the city's coat of arms though it would follow the Widows and Orphans Fund's general plan, and the Fund would also execute the wooden sculpture.[211] The creation of the Wehrschild was the epitome of the interweaving of local and state interests. The decision to establish a Wehrschild was a local one but followed the nailing practice that had begun in Vienna. While the city selected the Wehrschild's design, it followed the pattern of the Widows and Orphans Fund, which executed the shield. The process of establishing these memorials intermingled the local and the imperial.

A lengthy announcement in the *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift* related the statue's upcoming unveiling on the city's Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Platz, reminding residents that large amounts of money had been raised for the poor widows and orphans in Vienna with the Wehrmann in Eisen as well as, for example, in the Moravian town of Friedberg/Místek, where a Wehrschild had already raised more than 17,000 Crowns. Thus, citizens of Nikolsburg/Mikulov should also donate a large sum, and the article went on to demand that "every circle, every man, every youth, every boy, every woman, every girl, every kid—in short, every human being should hammer more nails into our Wehrschild and thus add to the beautiful, noble aim that should be accomplished in this way." Everyone in the city was to participate in these events and even perhaps participate in the nailing

[211] *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift*, August 7, 1915, 4.

more than once in order for the Wehrschild to be fully covered. Furthermore, while this shield would benefit the widows and orphans, it was also to be a landmark for the city.[212]

In the weeks leading up to the statue's unveiling, the *Nikoslburger Wochenschrift* continued to remind the city's residents of its impending debut and the events planned for the statue's unveiling, scheduled to take place on October 3 in recognition of the emperor's name day the following day. The day before the unveiling, the newspaper explained that the ceremony was to be "a quiet celebration of gratefulness and loyalty" as the events would honor "the memory of the brave, dead fighters, that are far from their loving home in foreign soil peacefully sleeping" and would honor the sacrifice they had made. The newspaper stated that a "considerable number of our brave German girls" had made the preparations for numerous nails to be driven in during the celebration. Around 17,000 nails would be available for purchase. However, given the large size of their shield, many more nails than that would be needed to fill it. Thus, the article encouraged groups to come to the Wehrmann and take part in driving nails into the shield. It also asserted that "family fathers, who are not standing in the field, can go on a pilgrimage with their dependents to the display site and lay a small sacrifice there on the altar of the fatherland, thinking of the fighting brothers, who, far from their loved, ones must bring an unequal difficult sacrifice." Thus, the article made clear the role home front fathers should fill; they—leading their families—were to make a donation to the Wehrschild fund in honor of men who were fulfilling a higher war time calling, that of the warrior. While everyone was called on to support the war effort and perform some type of self-

[212] *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift*, September 25, 1915, 1.

sacrifice, this took place according to a gendered hierarchy that privileging the service of those on the fighting front, counting their service to the war effort and thus as real men.

Everyone was invited to the unveiling of the Nikolsburg/Mikulov Wehrschild. Nails were available for one, five, ten or twenty crowns, making participation in the nailing affordable to all. Events were to begin in the morning with Franz Schubert's "German Mass" at the church of St. Wenceslas. From there the crowd would move to the Wehrschild. Primary and secondary school students were to lead the procession, the veteran's association following afterward, providing music. Then came local authorities and clergy, with the associational groups into which many of the Monarchy's residents divided themselves, bringing up the rear. Once the parade reached the Wehrschild, there would be an opening greeting, and the choral society's performance of two songs would follow. Then the Wehrschild would be transferred from a representative of the association to its patron, local Prince Dietrichstein. Additional singing, including the imperial anthem, and a speech followed. Then the nailing was to begin; local officials led this activity and the associations followed in alphabetical order. Representatives of other municipalities that had donated nails followed. A male representative of the Wehrschild fund would then hammer in a nail. Finally, the public was invited to join in the nailing.[213]

Days after the event, the *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift* described the unveiling as having been "uplifting hours" in which representatives of the emperor, the district commissioner Kretschmer, family members of the shield's patron Prince Dietrichstein, spiritual and secular authorities, members of various groups and associations, and a great

[213] *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift*, October 2, 1915, 1

number of celebrants all gathered. The shield raised a large sum of money in the days after its unveiling: By October 6, an impressive 6,293 Crowns, seventy-four Hellers had been collected. The newspaper stated, "When the history writer someday immortalizes the events of the enormous world war, then will our women and girls in a glorious chapter also be dedicated, brightly shining for future generations!" All of the days' events had been beautiful. However, the newspaper reminded its readers that "the celebrations are over—but not our sacrifice."[214] Though the people of the city had given generously to the Wehrschild fund and celebrated in great number with much patriotism at its unveiling, their work was not done; they still had much to sacrifice.

The ceremonies retained a similar structure and sense of social hierarchy, even when some memorials were unveiled in more private spaces rather than public ones. The autumn 1915 unveiling of the Wehrmann in the Budischowsky Villa was a private event. Bishop Paul Graf Huyn drove in the first nail, followed by other aristocrats, members of the military, the district commissioner, the mayor and his wife, and the deputy mayor.[215] In great social contrast, the following July, workers of Budischowsky and Sons celebrated the unveiling of a Wehrschild in the courtyard of the factory. Despite the private location, the unveiling festivities were not limited to the factory's employees; numerous local officials joined the festivities, including the district commissioner, who opened the ceremony with a speech and struck in the first nail. A representative from the nearby garrison in Iglau/Jihlava also joined him. The heads of the company and their families, who had financed the unveiling, then drove nails into the Wehrschild. Other guests joined in the nailing. A concert for the workers in the woods near the factory

[214] *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift*, October 9, 1915, 3-4.
[215] *Mährischer Grenzbote*, October 10, 1915, 8.

followed.[216] While this shield was for the factory workers, the unveiling ceremony unfolded in a manner that still privileged the actions of local authorities and of the well-to-do participants.

Unveiling ceremonies stressed male patriotism and the notion of sacrifice for the war effort. While men on the home front in positions of authority, including imperial and local officials as well as religious figures, led the festivities, other residents of the Monarchy understood that they were expected to follow their example and purchase a nail. By and large, men officiated the ceremonies and drove in the first nails, though there were few exceptions, such as the unveiling of the Wehrmann in Amstetten, in which Archduchess Marie Valerie drove in the first nail.[217] The prevalence of men in the celebrations may provide some indication of the state of home front masculinity: The Ceremonies show the need for men at home, or at least those not presently engaged at the time in front line combat, to prove that they too were contributing to the war effort. The comments pertaining to the Nikolsburg/Mikulov Wehrschild seem to suggest this, as well as the notion that these fathers at home were lesser men than those on the fighting front. These memorials served as a surrogate warrior for hinterland men.

Wehrmänner and Nagelobjekte in the Public Sphere

After the ceremonial unveiling events, these memorials continued to be important sites during the war, as place of patriotic celebration. During these subsequent events,

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[216] *Mährischer Grenzbote*, July 23, 1916, 5. See also *Wiener Bilder*, July 30, 1916, 10, which included an image of the shield.

[217] *Neuigkeits Welt-Blatt*, June 20, 1915. See also WiR, TBA, 1650. Women often played an important role in nail ceremonies in the military and civic association banner ceremonies that Hugh Agnew analyzes in his in-progress study of political ritual and symbol in Czech nationalism in the nineteenth century.

there was also a broadening of participants involved in the ceremonies as additional individuals and groups joined in nailing the memorials. School children, women's and men's groups, professional associations, and local recreational groups took part in their own nailing ceremonies.

Nail memorials served a didactic purpose: They taught children about patriotism and loyalty to the state. Children had played prominent roles in the unveiling ceremonies of the memorials in both Nikolsburg/Mikulov and Prerau/Přerov, according to local newspaper accounts.[218] They also continued to visit the memorials after the unveiling. In the month following the unveiling in Prerau/Přerov, school children took part in a nailing ceremony at the city's memorial.[219] In Brünn/Brno, just days after the Wehrmann's unveiling, a teacher and twenty of her pupils from the school for girls on Giskrastrasse gathered on August 7 at the Wehrmann to celebrate the conquest of Warsaw.[220] As the *Tagesbote* explained, officials stressed the importance of having all the school children participate in a nailing ceremony in order to educate and instill patriotism in the state's future citizens. School children would be instructed about the importance of the Wehrmann prior to attending one of these ceremonies. Brünn/Brno's city and school officials hoped that donations would be made so that even poor children would be able to take part in the event. On September 30, the newspaper urged citizens who were able to leave donations in the mayor's office with the idea that these funds would in turn be dispersed to needy schools.[221] The paper later recounted instances of school groups

[218] *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift*, October 2, 1915, 1; *Přerovský obzor: týdenník osvěty a vzdělání lidu*, August 19, 1915, 3.
[219] *Sleské listy*, September 16,1915, 3
[220] *TMS*, August 9, 1915, Morning Edition, 4.
[221] *TMS*, September 20, 1915, Evening Edition, 4-5.

taking part in these festivities due to the help of generous benefactors.[222] Thus, children became some of the most common visitors of Brünn/Brno's statues, even if others financed their visits.

Though they often did not participate in leading roles at unveiling ceremonies, women's groups and their leaders actively participated in providing additional donations and participating in subsequent events at the memorials. The Brünn Housewives Association (*Brünner Hausfrauenorganisation*) contributed to the city's Wehrschild and also encouraged support for the Wehrmann.[223] On August 11, 1915 about 400 women from the group Rohö (*Reichsorganisation der Hausfrauen Österreichs*) became the first women's group to assemble at Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann. At the ceremony, the president of the association, Katharina Wacht, and the vice president took part along with local officials. Wacht drove in the first nail, telling the crowd, "The Rohö believes that it is best to praise the hero when she remembers the widows and orphans." Wacht's statement reflects a sense that patriarchal order needed to be maintained when caring for widows and orphans. The hero who had sacrificed himself also must be remembered. In all, Rohö members donated approximately 500 nails that day.[224] Other women's groups that assembled at Brün/Brno's Wehrmann included the Women's War Help Association in nearby Neu-Leskau/Nový Lískovec, as the *Tagesbote* recorded on June 3, 1916.[225] The Wehrmann generated interest not only from the city center, but also the surrounding suburbs.

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[222] For example, see *TMS*, October 19, 1915 Morning Edition, 5; and November 24, 1915, Morning Edition, 5.

[223] *TMS*, August 7, 1915, Evening Edition, 4.

[224] *TMS*, August 12, 1915, Morning Edition, 3.

[225] *TMS*, June 3, 1916, Morning Edition, 3.

Numerous professional associations took part in ceremonies at Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann. The German Economic Association in the Third Municipal District of Brünn/Brno (*Deutsche Volkswirtschaftliche Verein im III. Brünner Gemeindebezirke*) took part in a nailing ceremony on September 5, 1915.[226] The Brünn Association of Innkeepers and Coffee House Owners gathered for a ceremony with association leaders and local officials on October 27. The report of the gathering points out that all of the German members attended as well as seven Czech members, implying that not all of the Czech members took part in the ceremony.[227] Why this occurred is not explained, but this perhaps indicated some consideration of nationality may have factored into the nailing of the Wehrmann, though clearly some Czechs, perhaps feeling compelled to do so, took part. A delegation from the Czech Technical Red Cross Hospital participated in the nailing of the Wehrmann on December 2.[228] In Nikolsburg/Mikulov, farmers gathered at the Wehrschild days after the unveiling, continuing the outpouring of support for the fund.[229]

While events at the nail memorials prominently featured home front men, some events more explicitly connected the work of home front men to the war effort. On November 7,1915 200 employees of the Austrian state railway took part in the nailing of Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann. Deputy Mayor Jelinek spoke, stressing the importance of the Wehrmann for the widows and orphans, but also took the opportunity to stress the value of the railway workers due to the need for rapid transportation during the war.[230] This

[226] *TMS*, September 6, 1915, Evening Edition, 5.
[227] *TMS*, October 28, 1915, Morning Edition, 6.
[228] *TMS*, December 2, 1915, Evening Edition, 4.
[229] *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift*, October 9, 1915, 4.
[230] *TMS*, November 8, 1915, Morning Edition, 4.

example highlights another instance of the use of the Wehrmann as a site to rally "home front" men and, in stressing the importance of their profession for success in the war, reaffirms their masculinity despite not serving on the front lines.

While the number of nailing ceremonies at Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann diminished in the winter months, they resumed in the spring. Donations to the fund continued to pour in. Members of the German Engineers Association in Moravia and their families took part in a large rally on Sunday May 28, 1916. [231] The Association of the Wool Industry of Moravia in Brünn donated 8,000 crowns to the Wehrmann and 2,000 crowns to the Wehrschild fund, a donation taken from numerous companies across the region.[232] Additionally, the Board of the Moravian Trade Association gathered for a nailing ceremony at the Wehrmann on June 5, 1916.[233] Additional local associations also took part in nailing ceremonies. Both the German Association for the History of Moravia and Silesia and the German Historical Association were among the first groups to take part in nailing ceremonies.[234] On Saturday, August 21, the German Historical Association took part in a nailing ceremony with local leaders and associational officials. In his speech, the chairman of the group noted that each nail added to the work of art, the Wehrmann, and helped to make it stronger. He continued, "so too can the old, newly awakened Austria blossom to new glory and fame with the bravery of our soldiers and the sacrifice of the people!"[235] This idea of a "newly awakened Austria" offers an indication that at least some members of the German community were optimistic about the Monarchy's

[231] *TMS*, May 31, 1916, Evening Edition, 5.
[232] *TMS*, June 3, 1916, Morning Edition, 3.
[233] *TMS*, June 16, 1916, Evening Edition, 4.
[234] *TMS*, August 14, 1915 Evening Edition, 5; and August 20, 1915, Evening Edition, 5.
[235] *TMS*, August 23, 1915, Evening Edition, 5.

future. Other participating associations included the local German-language men's choir association, *Liederborn*, which gathered at the local Schwechater Beer Hall, and marched to the Wehrmann for a nailing ceremony on September 12.[236]

Additional ceremonies at the memorials further emphasized the proper gender roles that were to be fulfilled on the home front. Children were to be raised to be future citizens. Women and men both took part in ceremonies that emphasized their differing roles in supporting the war effort, rallying the home front while also emphasizing the heroic efforts of those on the front. Taken together, these various additional ceremonies at the Wehrmann indicate the sustained use of these memorials as objects to rally the population in patriotic support of the war effort and to collect aid funds.

While the Monarchy's newspapers reported positively on the nail memorials, these objects could also be targets of ridicule. Karl Kraus mentions Vienna' Wehrmann briefly in his satirical play *The Last Days of Mankind (Die letzten Tage der Menschheit)*, a scathing commentary on the war. Though Kraus wrote much of the play during the war, it was not published until the end of the war.[237] In Act 2, Scene I, the [war] profiteer announces his intentions of participating in the nailing of the statue while the agent states his dislike of such things. The profiteer does not understand the agent's position, stating that the purpose of the nailing was for the soldiers and that those who participated received a souvenir in return. The conversation between the two men is cut off when two

[236] *TMS*, September 11, 1915, Evening Edition, 5; and September 13, 1915, Evening Edition, 5.

[237] The play was published first in four special issues of Kraus' magazine, *Die Fackel*, beginning in November 1918 and subsequently in book form in 1922. For background on Kraus and the play, see Edward Timms and Fred Bridgham "Introduction: Falsehood in Wartime" in Karl Kraus, *The Last Days of Mankind: The Complete Text*, translated by Edward Timms and Fred Bridgham (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), xvi.

women pass by, averting their attention.[238] One of the many practices Kraus satirized, this incident provides some indication of other reactions to and opinions of the nailed statues counter to official political culture.

Donations for Widows and Orphans

The stated aim in pounding nails into the memorials was to raise funds for the Widows and Orphans Aid Fund (the *Witwen- und Waisenhilfsfonds*, which later in the war received support from the k.k. Ministry of the Interior.[239] As evidenced by the wide range of groups that participated in nailing the memorials, the donations raised came from many sources, from associational and school groups as well as from individual men and women. Many newspapers reported regularly on the donations made to the memorials for these funds, thanking those who had donated, and encouraged those who had not done so to show their support and sacrifice for this cause.

A commemorative brochure from the unveiling of Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann highlights the importance of the Wehrmann as a symbol to generate donations for widows and orphans. On the first page it alludes to the upending of the social order that the war had caused. Thousands had left for the battlefront and had seen their homes for the last time; thousands more had become sick or returned home crippled. Those who "should have been their aged parents' provider, their wife and their children's breadwinner, aid, and leader, now require help themselves!"[240] Clearly, the war had an emasculating effect on many men, preventing them from fulfilling the tasks of their

[238] Karl Kraus, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit: Tragödie in fünf Akten mit Vorspiel und Epilogue* (Salzburg: Jung und Jung, 2014), 231-38.

[239] Eminger, 107-108.

[240] ÖNB, WK1/KS/I/2/13/3 Por, *Der Brünner-Wehrmann mit Wehrschild*, Brünn, 1915, 3.

ascribed male role. The brochure noted that in order to protect the poorest of the poor, the Widows and Orphans Fund was established under the patronage of Archduke Salvator and his wife. The Wehrmann in Eisen and the Wehrschild were selected to be the symbols of this fund, as they were thought to be of interest to and represent everyone.[241] In this way, the memorials provided a means to uphold traditional gender roles in society, as the funds given to nail these masculine images supported women and children who found themselves lacking a male provider. The Wehrmann could then serve as a surrogate breadwinner for those whose brothers, husbands, and fathers were at the front.

Across the Monarchy, these memorials helped raise funds for the Widows and Orphans Fund. The Fund's first year report noted that the Wehrmann in Eisen had been one of the most successful of their efforts to raise money, raising 358,335.10 crowns and 121,800 worth of donations in kind, far surpassing the amount raised from other sources and events such as exhibitions and images of "Our Emperor," of concerts, and evening teas at the Officer's Casino. The report noted the widespread popularity of the 350 Wehrmänner and Wehrschilde. The Wehrschild fund had generated 549,268.47 crowns in revenue.[242] While initially popular, the unveilings and ceremonies trailed off in 1916, and as Stefan Eminger has shown in his work, in the case of St. Pölten's Wehrmann, more than seventy percent of the donations to the Wehrmann had already been made by the end of 1915.[243] These objects succeeded in rallying the population—at least initially—to fulfill their home front sacrificial war duty through contributions to the war

[241] ÖNB, WK1/KS/I/2/13/3 Por, *Der Brünner-Wehrmann mit Wehrschild*, Brünn, 1915, 4.
[242] K.k. österreichischer Militar- Witwen- und Waisenfonds, *Bericht über das erste Bestandjahr 1914/15* (Vienna, 1915), 21-23.
[243] Eminger, 119.

effort. The purpose for which they collected funds aimed to reinforce traditional breadwinner roles that the war disrupted.

Commemorating Emperor Francis Joseph

Ceremonies at the nailed memorials often took place in conjunction with celebrations of Emperor Francis Joseph, the most important patriarchal figure in the Monarchy. The events commemorated his birthday, name day, or ascension to the throne and could be read as related to other commemorative ceremonies in the late Habsburg Monarchy, which had a vibrant—if contested—political culture, as historian Daniel L. Unowsky has demonstrated.[244] The prominence of military culture also rose in late Habsburg society as veterans associations became more prevalent and society became more militarized as Laurence Cole has recently demonstrated.[245] The rhetoric of both militarism and the emperor collided in celebrations at the nailed memorials.

The Emperor's birthday on August 18 was one occasion locals celebrated at their nail memorials. The Lower Austrian town of Gars am Kamp unveiled a Wehrschild on that date in 1915.[246] Similarly Prerau/Přerov also unveiled its memorial in celebration of the Emperor's birthday.[247] In Brünn/Brno, the local *Tagesbote* reminded readers of the Emperor's birthday and stressed that it was an important day for all— "old and young in city and country"—to celebrate in an effort to unite home front residents in support of the Monarchy. Though the celebration would need to be tempered due to the war, it was still

[244] Daniel L. Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1948-1916* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2005).

[245] Laurence Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism in Late Imperial Austria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[246] *Eggenburger Zeitung*, July 30, 1915, 4.

[247] *Mährisches Tagblatt*, August 23, 1915, 5; and *Přerovský obzor: týdenník osvěty a vzdělání lidu*, August 19, 1915, 3. The article in the latter was also reproduced in *Seleské Listy*, August 24, 1915, 3.

hoped that the day could be celebrated and an occasion for sacrifice for the widows and orphans.[248] The residents of Brünn/Brno commemorated the Emperor's birthday, driving in 651 nails on the Emperor's birthday, as compared to only 119 the previous day and 588 the following day. Both executives and some 300 workers from the firm Ig. Storek took part in the festivities. The *Tagesblatt* suggested that other firms were also encouraged to do the same.[249] Soldiers also sent money home for the Wehrmann on the occasion of the Emperor's birthday.[250] The participation of various groups and individuals, both those at home in Brünn/Brno and those away on the front, in these local, imperial festivities provide some indication that the Wehrmann could function as a memorial to unify the population that had been rent by wartime circumstances.

Nail memorials were also incorporated into celebrations of the emperor's name day on October 4. German speakers organized many of these festivities to celebrate the German community. Like Nikolsburg/Mikulov (see above), Trebitsch/Třebíč also unveiled its Wehrschild on October 3, 1915 as part of celebrations of the emperor's name day. Their shield featured the Moravian coat of arms, a red and white checkered eagle. Local political officials, including the city councils in Znaim/Znjomo and Iglau/Jihlava, received invitations to the unveiling festivities. While the program noted the connection between the unveiling and the emperor's name day, invitations to both city councils suggested that these were to be German festivities. The invitation to Iglau/Jihlava began noting the excitement of "we Germans." Likewise, the invitation to Znaim/Znojmo hinted that this was a German celebration, as the local Germans invited Germans in the

[248] *TMS*, August 17, 1915, Evening Edition, 5.
[249] *TMS*, August 19, 1915, Evening Edition, 6.
[250] *TMS*, August 26, 1915, Evening Edition, 5.

vicinity to the festivities. The invitations closed "with German greetings and handshake." Furthermore, the city council of Iglau/Jihlava provided a 100-crown donation to the Trebitsch/Třebíč Wehrschild fund on the occasion and received a thank you card, complete with the image of the Wehrschild, in return.[251] This Wehrschild served as a means to help celebrate the emperor as well as to rally the local German community.

These ceremonies marking the emperor's birthday and coronation served to reinforce Habsburg, male-dominated social order by asserting the emperor's place in society and reaffirming local loyalties to the emperor and to the Monarchy. As much as the stated aim of nailing the memorials was to raise funds for widows and orphans, the statues also reinforced the place of the emperor in Habsburg society. However, after the Emperor's death on November 21, 1916, there was no longer a need to mark important events in the Emperor's life at these statues, and the practice did not transfer to Emperor Charles I.

Remembering the Fallen: The Nail Statues as Sites of Memory

The Wehrmann and other nail objects were constructed with the aim of using them as memorials to the fallen. These statues were, however, only one type of public memorializing act undertaken as efforts to construct memorials and plaques began during the war.[252] Many of the commemorative efforts listed the names of local men who had died on the battlefield.[253] In contrast, the names listed in association with these nail

[251] SOkA Jihlava, Městská správa Jihlava- Hospodářská Registratura 1891-1923, Karton 100, letter to the mayor of Iglau, September 28, 1915; program from the festival celebration, October 3, 1915, and thank you card to the city council of Iglau, October 3, 1915. SOkA Znojmo, AMZ, válečné hospodářství, Box 64, Letter to the City Council Znaim, September 28, 1915.

[252] *TMS*, September 10, 1915, Evening Edition, 5.

[253] Goebel, 29.

statues—either in newspapers or memorial books—were those who had donated money for the nailing. Newspaper articles discussing the nail memorials repeatedly referenced their memorializing function. Announcements of the memorials' unveiling often stressed this function. The nail statues were not the only means taken to memorialize fallen heroes during wartime. The unprecedented loss of so many men on the fighting front meant that death and mourning became a significant part of everyday life in the provinces.

The war changed the practices of mourning and burying the dead because many men perished on far away battlefields and were buried there, sometimes in unmarked, mass graves. Traditional burial rituals were not possible, and those left behind had to come to terms with their grief in new ways.[254] The nail memorials may have served in part to help fill a need to grieve fallen soldiers. On October 23, 1915, the *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift* noted the importance of these objects as memorials in conjunction with the upcoming celebrations of All Saint's Day and All Soul's Day in early November. Because many soldiers had died on battlefields far from home, and thus had no grave for their families to visit, this Wehrschild could serve as an accessible place to remember fallen heroes.[255]

[254] On the rituals of death and mourning during wartime, a milieu that women dominated, see Melissa Bokovoy, "Gendering Grief: Lamenting and Photographing the Dead in Serbia, 1914-1941" *Aspasia* 5 (2011):46-69; Melissa Bokovoy, "Kosovo Maiden(s): Serbian Women Commemorate the Wars of National Liberation, 1912-1918," in *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, ed. Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Claudia Siebrecht, *The Aesthetics of Loss; German Women's Art of the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Claudia Siebrecht, "Imaging the Absent Dead: Rituals of Bereavement and the Place of the War Dead in German Women's Art during the First World War," *German History* 29, no.2 (2011): 202-23.

[255] *Nikolsburger Wochenschrift*, October 23, 1915, 4.

Soldiers also participated in this memorialization. Soon after Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann was unveiled, newspapers and soldiers connected them with honoring the dead. The *Tagesbote* reported on September 4, 1915 that Brünn/Brno's 17th Feldjägerbataillons sent donations to the Wehrmann to aid the war widows and orphans. However, some specifically contributed in memory of a fallen comrade, as the battalion had experienced several losses in fierce fighting in July. The paper noted that the battalion also gave an approximately equal donation to Vienna's Wehrmann.[256] In this way, soldiers themselves actively worked to memorialize their fallen comrades, likely with the knowledge that such a memorial could one day commemorate their own lives as well.

The role of these objects as memorials to the fallen also strengthened traditional patriarchal society through the gendered remembrance of male heroes. The ideal wartime role was that of the warrior, and the only part of war worth commemorating was their sacrifice. As Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur have argued in *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, the memorialization of both world wars was gendered: Most public memorials commemorated the deaths of heroic soldiers, leaving many, particularly women and their personal sacrifices, out of public wartime memory.[257] This gendered exclusion of women from public memorializing began during the war itself, helping to shape the contours of gendered interwar memory. These nail memorials, many erected in the name of aiding women and children, used masculine imagery. In

[256] *TMS*, September 4, 1915, Evening Edition, 5.

[257] Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur, eds, "Introduction" in *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, ed. Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 10.

doing so, these memorials reinforced the warrior male and battle front sacrifice while making invisible the home front sacrifices of women.

Conclusion

The nail memorials constructed in wartime Lower Austria and Moravia served to reinforce traditional patriarchal society, male heroism, and sacrifice. These memorials formed a Monarchy-wide network of nail statues, connected through newspaper reports, commemorative brochures, and commemorative objects that circulated throughout the provinces. The memorials were meant to facilitate and encourage patriotism, unifying all of Habsburg society. They helped to promote the image of the ideal male warrior in the absence of many men who had left for the front. They also promoted a particular type of masculinity, privileging fighting front males at the expense of the wartime efforts of home front men and women. As these memorials raised funds to support the widows and orphans of those who had lost their lives and made the ultimate sacrifice, the funds served to replace the support of male providers. Furthermore, the ceremonies at these memorials provided a platform for many home front men to celebrate the image of the warrior and perform the role of men themselves. The patriotism associated with these ceremonies involving so many home front men suggests the need for these men to prove that they too were engaged in the war effort. They could make a monetary sacrifice to the aid funds connected to these statues even though wartime propaganda posed this as a lesser act than the sacrifices men made on the battlefield.

Although the public unveiling and locating of these memorials was a Monarchy-wide phenomenon, these statues were site-specific objects, taking different sizes and

shapes, and incorporating local iconography. These objects, the unveiling ceremonies associated with them, and their subsequent use illustrate the intermingling of the local and the imperial. Vienna's Wehrmann was unveiled with the intention of creating a larger war memorial, and other cities and towns soon followed suit, with many local groups initiating the process and creating their own memorials, some more unique than others. That so many communities unveiled these objects and took part in fundraising efforts provides some indication that these memorials were successful in fulfilling their various purposes, even if only temporarily. Nailing ceremonies trailed off after the monuments successful first year. While many of the memorials had been covered, or largely covered, in nails by that time, the decrease in donations and nail ceremonies suggests that people had already given what they had to the aid effort. The sale of nails and new Wehrmann memorials died down as inflation increased and war enthusiasm died down. Aspects of everyday life, such as provisioning, were taking precedence over the war effort as morale was declining.

Chapter 3: Provisions and Requisitioning

The linked issues of requisitioning and provisioning, together with often female-led protests against them, plagued local and regional officials across imperial Austria from the war's outset. Adolf Schlögl, a child who lived in Groß-Harmanns, Lower Austria during the war, would later recall officials coming to his family's farm to requisition food. He explained:

> The farmers had to deliver various crops, even eggs and butter. At my father's house this is what happened: A commission came in the house, measured grain— wheat and oats— stored in the attic, left only as much as the bread card allotment, and seized the rest.[258]

This kind of experience was common across the Habsburg home front because officials requisitioned food from the provinces to feed more urban areas of the Monarchy. As Schlögl suggests, the farmers who produced the food became central figures in state provisioning efforts. Farmers and other provincial residents were important to the Monarchy's overall provisioning efforts because food supply often pitted rural and urban populations against one another.

Habsburg officials faced challenges in producing sufficient food to feed the population. Before 1914, Austria-Hungary had been largely agriculturally self-sufficient, although even before the war, feeding the citizens of the imperial capital had posed great challenge to provisioning. Vienna relied on the surrounding provinces, including Lower Austria and southern Moravia, as well as the more agricultural Hungarian half of the Monarchy, to feed its approximately two million residents. Agricultural output declined as military mobilization resulted in labor shortages. Moreover, Hungary discontinued

[258] Hämmerle, ed., *Kindheit im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 230-31.

existing exports to Austria. Imports declined from the first year of the war and continuing to drop for its duration. While many Austrians attributed Hungarian unwillingness to provision Cisleithania to nationalist sentiments, decreased exports from Hungary were likely a result of decreased production beginning in fall 1914 owing to the war.[259]

Food shortages and the high prices of what food was available led to urban-rural tension around the imperial capital. The Viennese believed that Austrian and Hungarian farmers were taking advantage of them, that these farmers had plenty of food, and that they overcharged Viennese residents for it. The Viennese bourgeoisie worried about the change in economic relations with the rural population, who had gained the upper hand in trade. As a result, some urban residents were now forced to barter with luxury goods in order to feed themselves. As Healy has observed, the war reversed trade patterns; before 1914, food traveled to Vienna, but during wartime, Viennese residents traveled to the provinces for food.[260] One aim of this chapter is to examine the under researched perspective of food smuggling from the provinces, showing problems smuggling caused provincial residents as well as authorities trying to follow a food distribution plan.

Widespread hunger also resulted in conflict among provincial residents. Similar to other women in wartime Europe, women in Lower Austria and southern Moravia repeatedly clashed with officials over food shortages, which sometimes set neighbors against neighbors. Shortages led to demonstrations, and women played an important role

[259] *1914-1918 Online, Internet International Encyclopedia of the First World* War, s.v. "Food and Nutrition (Austria Hungary)" by Ernst Langthaler, accessed January 27, 2018, https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/food_and_nutrition_austria-hungary.

[260] Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 53-54.

in leading protests aimed at municipal, district, and provincial authorities. Consumers—often women—regularly complained to local officials about what they considered price gouging, unequal distribution practices, and the overall lack of available goods.[261] Hungry women increasingly took to the streets in protest beginning in the winter of 1915-1916. Who were the women who led and participated in these protests? We do not always know much about them because the police and journalists who reported on the protests were not always interested in the protesters, but rather in the protests, which challenged local and imperial authority. The documents rarely describe the female protestors in detail, often simply providing their names, if that, but some of the women appear to have been living on their husbands' military salaries, while some of the others were members of the working class. Similarly, the documents offer little information on the adolescents who participated in protests, but many were likely to have been living in households without fathers owing to mobilization.

Historians of the First World War have widely addressed food protests because they were a key home front concern that destabilized society, decreased civilian morale, and took the time and attention of authorities away from events on the fighting front. Discussions of sacrifice on the home front often included mention of food. Indeed, officials understood that provisioning food and social stability were linked. Thus, protests were inherently contentious.[262] Historians focusing on wartime hunger have

[261] On food as a means of understanding relations between state and society as well as between consumers and retailers and that treats consumers as active participants in food politics, see Frank Trentmann and Flemming Just, eds., *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the Two World Wars* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

[262] Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 32-33; Antoon Vrints, "Beyond Victimization: Contentious Food Politics in Belgium during World War I," *European History Quarterly* 45, no.1 (2015): 87, 102. On the Bohemian Lands, see Peter Heumos, "'Kartoffeln her oder es gibt eine Revolution. ' Hungerkrawalle, Streiks und Massenproteste in den Böhmischen Ländern 1914-1918,"

often examined urban or industrialized areas, where food supplies decreased rapidly and were critical in the last two years of war. At that time, mass hunger demonstrations took place across the Monarchy and elsewhere in Europe.[263] Indeed, the food situation in Vienna became so desperate that by 1917 residents were limited to only 830 calories per day—if they could get their rations cards filled. By the war's end, ninety-one percent of Vienna's school-aged children were malnourished.[264] During the war, the demands of food protests shifted so that from 1917, hunger demonstrations sometimes included an element of nationalism, especially in the Bohemian lands.[265] Food shortages were acutely experienced in urban areas of the Monarchy, but shortages in the provinces also resulted in unrest.

This chapter analyzes food rationing and the effects of shortages and requisitioning, which were part of the state's failed attempts to feed its people while waging war. Wartime sacrifice entailed shortages in urban areas but sacrifice for provincial residents also included requisitioning in addition to limited rations. Because the state tried and failed to fulfill its patriarchal role, it exhausted provincial residents—materially and spiritually. Consequently, home-front residents, many of them women, took to the streets in protest. These protests were not a new phenomenon nor were these

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Slezský sborník, 97, no. 2 (1999): 81-104; and Rudolf Kučera, *Rationed Life: Science, Everyday Life, and Working-Class Politics in the Bohemian Lands, 1914-1918* (New York: Berghahn, 2016).

[263] On hunger and demonstrations in Europe, see Thierry Bonzon, "Consumption and Total Warfare in Paris (1914-1918)" in *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the two World* Wars, ed. Frank Trentmann and Flemming Just, 49-64 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and Barbara Alpern Engel, "Not by Bread Alone: Subsistence Riots in Russia during World War I, *The Journal of Modern History* 69, no.4 (December 1997): 686-721. On food and conflict, see also Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012).

[264] Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 31.

[265] Peter Heumos, "'Kartoffeln her oder es gibt eine Revolution' Hungerkrawalle, Streiks und Massenproteste in den Böhmischen Ländern 1914-1918," *Slezský sborník* 97, No. 2 (1999): 87.

the only demonstrations taking place during the war; however, these protests contributed to the breakdown of social order on the provincial home front. In contrast to studies that focus solely on hunger and lack of food, this chapter also considers provincial residents who failed to comply with the state's requisitioning and provisioning scheme, which was expected of them as part of their wartime duty to sacrifice. Instead, they chose to provide for themselves. In failing to comply, they undermined the state's efforts to feed more urban locations. I begin with analysis of the challenges that provisioning in the provinces posed in the war's early days followed by discussion of residents from the imperial capital who traveled to the provinces to obtain food. I address the military's food requisitioning and the removal of metals from the home front, including copper and tin to be melted down for the war effort. Because home front conditions failed to improve during the war, increasing numbers of people took to the streets, voicing their frustration with their circumstances to authorities. These demonstrations showed that officials were failing in their roles as patriarchal providers for residents. Examining provisioning and requisitioning together offers a means to analyze both the relationship between the provinces and imperial authorities and the relationship between urban and rural populations because residents came into increased contact during the war.[266]

[266] On the urban/rural relationship in Bohemia and the effect of tension over food conflicts on ideas of the nation, see Claire Morelon, "A threat to national unity? The urban-rural antagonism in Prague during the First World War in a comparative perspective" in *Frontwechsel: Österreich-Ungarns "Großer Krieg" im Vergleich*, ed. Wolfram Dornik, Julia Walleczek-Fritz, and Stefan Wedrac (Böhlau: Vienna 2014), 326.

The Challenges of Provisioning

While civilians of the provinces were not starving in the first years of the war, provisioning tested morale and the ability of municipal, provincial, and imperial authorities to ensure adequate distribution. The imperial government introduced ration cards soon after the war's outbreak owing to the difficulties officials faced in provisioning the population. Cards were introduced in Lower Austria in April 1915 for the distribution of bread and flour.[267] Days later on April 15, the German Liberal Party's *Der Bote aus dem Waldviertel*, published in Horn, printed a complaint about the bread cards. The newspaper did not mince words, asserting that "the rations are small, too small for a stomach equipped with a normal appetite, but our bread is better and more nutritious than the cornmeal bread consumed in the city for months…"[268] The article reflected resident dissatisfaction with the bread cards; in describing the poor quality of bread available in urban areas, it also made clear that the food situation in cities was worse than it was in the provinces.

Provincial communities faced provisioning difficulties, even when local officials intervened. Znaim/Znojmo in Moravia and nearby Retz in Lower Austria exemplify these problems. In September 1916, the municipal council in Znaim/Znojmo reported problems with provisioning over the previous two years. Council members reported that when obtaining flour became difficult, city officials took control of the supply. In the winter of 1914/1915, several wagons of flour meant for local distribution had arrived from Hungary. Difficulties in procuring flour continued, however. Znaim/Znojmo

[267] Stadtarchiv Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Z. 125 W.M., K.k. Bezirkshauptmannschaft Oberhollabrunn, Instruktionen für die Brotkartenverteiler, April 5, 1915.

[268] *Der Bote aus dem Waldviertel*, April 15, 1915, 2.

officials took responsibility for purchasing and processing grain, then allowing local businesses to distribute it. In early February 1915, the same officials introduced flour ration cards to ensure equal distribution and to prevent hoarding. In September 1916, the municipal council succeeded in procuring needed flour through "energetic intervention" with the Vienna-based War Grain Distribution Institution (*Kriegsgetreideverkehrsanstalt*), which oversaw the distribution of food in wartime Austria. Their actions had prevented shortages in the city.

Not only was flour in short supply, the city also faced challenges in obtaining other goods. Already in fall 1914, the council purchased a large quantity of potatoes to sell, an action it repeated in 1915, thus supplying the community with potatoes at low prices. In Znaim/Znojmo, the price of potatoes in 1914 was 12 Hellers per kilogram and increased to 14 Hellers per kilogram in 1915/16. Despite challenges, municipal officials were able to obtain some food. Other items, including eggs and fat, proved more difficult to obtain by autumn 1915. Despite the efforts of Znaim/Znojmo's municipal authorities to purchase additional provisions, they were unable to provide local residents sufficient food. The municipal council purchased a large quantity of meat in 1915 and sold it to residents through the local butchers. Municipal officials also purchased a large quantity of fish for resale at cost to locals and had managed to secure pigs for slaughter for 1916, and they sold other foods to residents at cost.

Znaim/Znojmo's officials successfully provided food for residents early in the war, but securing provisions made a significant dent in the town's budget, because food was sold at cost and officials were unable to recoup the expenses that resulted from

damaged or spoiled goods.[269] In addition to drawing attention to shortages in the provinces, the 1916 report from Znaim/Znojmo highlights local officials' role as middlemen working to obtain food for the local population.

As in Znaim/Znojmo and elsewhere, Retz's city fathers faced provisioning challenges early in the war, but they actively worked on the behalf of local residents, even questioning the state's flour distribution plan. City council members managed to obtain flour for the community by August 1915 but only with difficulty. Labor-intensive, local efforts to provide food were aided by the War Grain Distribution Institution's centralized plan of distribution that made the process of obtaining food somewhat easier for local officials. Sometimes, however, centralized distribution reflected a lack of knowledge of existing local supply networks. The Retz municipal office employees could not understand why the mill in Seefeld, some thirty kilometers to the southeast, should supply them flour when the mill in Schattau/Šatov, just northeast of Retz in Moravia, was much closer. That mill owner had more flour than what was needed locally, and Retz's city officials had taken steps to have flour transferred from there. Flour from Schattau/Šatov was the simplest and cheapest solution for Retz's flour needs, the mayor suggested. A mill in Neunmühlen/Devět mlýnů, only eight kilometers from Retz, could also be used instead of the Seefeld mill.[270] The War Grain Distribution Institution insisted, however, that officials could not buy flour independently.[271] The

[269] SOkA Znojmo, AMZ, válečné hospodárství 1914-1921, Box 64, Bericht: Über die Tätigkeit der Gemeindevertretung der Stadt Znaim während des Krieges, September 7, 1916.

[270] Stadt Archiv Ret, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Zl. 1225, Versorgung mit Mahlprodukten, August 10, 1916.

[271] Stadt Archiv Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Kriegs-Getreide-Verkehrsanstalt Abteilung Niederösterreich, August 12, 1915.

Institution-mandated mills replaced already-existing supply lines, reconfiguring local trade networks.

The food situation in Retz deteriorated even as local leaders tried to follow the state-mandated provisioning plan. On September 16, 1915, the mayor wrote district officials to complain of late flour shipments from the Seefeld mill as well as transport costs. Only after repeated requests did the town receive the allotted flour. The mayor explained that delays could not continue in the long term, suggesting the toll the delays took on local residents. In the last week, there had been not a speck of flour available in the community. Taking matters into their own hands, residents of the city and the surrounding area had even gone to the mill in Schattau/Šatov to fill their ration cards. Those making the journey claimed that the flour they obtained was of better quality than that the mill in Seefeld provided. The mayor suggested that district officials should check this claim. He also noted that bread was unavailable in some nearby communities. The letter concluded with the observation that "the community itself is powerless compared to the mill."[272] The mayor's closing comments reveal that local authorities did what they could to provision residents, but this was not enough to meet locals' needs.

The food situation in Retz failed to improve. The mayor again wrote to district officials in October 1916 to complain about provisioning problems, which were negatively influencing the local mood. Instead of the 10,000 kilograms of flour monthly that Retz was to receive, only 2,495 kilograms had arrived in October. While neighboring communities covered some of the shortages, not all the residents' bread cards could be honored. The mayor observed that residents could not be expected to be

[272] Stadtarchiv Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Zl. 1426, Mehlversorgung, September 16, 1915.

satisfied with only half the allotted bread and flour, and it would be understandable if agitation increased. The mayor thus requested that the War Grain Distribution Institution provide the entire quantity promised.[273]

The shortages affected daily life in Retz in several ways. A letter dated October 27 from the municipal government to the Lower Austrian provincial government complained again about the failure to meet the flour quota. They had received less than one third of their flour quota for October. Municipal officials demanded immediate steps to correct the situation because monthly bread cards would soon expire, and residents would be left without flour or bread. Indeed, they wrote that "under such circumstances a continuation of the business of the community is simply impossible." And the situation was only going to get worse: Local officials complained that now the War Grain Distribution Institution wanted to regulate the distribution of potatoes and prevent community members from purchasing them directly. These potato regulations made the situation worse for those without their allotted bread or flour ration.

The letter concluded with several demands that linked food and unrest. Due to rationing and other problems, city officials feared that unrest among the local population would grow because in general the population seemed of the impression that a solution could only be found through demonstrations. In order to prevent unrest, officials made several proposals. First, the community should receive the necessary provisions immediately. Second, the ration cards should be available for an additional two weeks since they had expired before the provisions arrived. Finally, the community should be

[273] Stadtarchiv Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Zl. 1463, Mehlversorgung, October 18, 1916.

assigned the promised amount of potatoes. The letter ended with the comment, "here the population is simply exposed to hunger."[274]

This correspondence highlights several provisioning problems. First, municipal and provincial authorities faced significant challenges in getting food, as the examples in Retz and Znaim/Znojmo indicate. Local officials, who feared unrest if there was not enough food, advocated on behalf of their residents to district and provincial officials. Despite these pleas for assistance, the provisioning issues in Retz, as in other communities across the home front, would not be soon remedied.

Women Take to the Streets: Protests and Demonstrations in 1916

Protests over lack of food began early in the war across Austria.[275] There were already civilian protests over widespread food shortages and unfilled ration cards in Lower Austria in winter of 1915-1916. Locals took to the streets, demanding provisions. These protests constituted a kind of dialogue between residents and local officials as women made demands and officials responded. Women were active in these protests, engaging in their own form of battle on the home front as they struggled to feed their families. They demanded that municipal, district, and provincial officials fulfil the state's patriarchal role in feeding its people.

Women led some of the earliest protests on the home front. In Moravia, ten-to-fifteen women gathered before the offices of district officials in Boskowitz/Boskovice, a

[274] Stadtarchiv Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Z. 1495, Stadtgemeinderat Retz, October 27, 1916.

[275] There were thirty-one hunger demonstrations in the Bohemian Lands in 1915, and 70 the following year. See Peter Heumos, " 'Kartoffeln her oder es gibt eine Revolution' Hungerkrawalle, Streiks und Massneproteste in den Böhmischen Ländern 1914-1918," *Slezský sborník* 97, no. 2 (1999): 81.

small town approximately forty kilometers north of Brünn/Brno, on December 7, 1915 to demand food. These women, some of whom officials described as working class, asserted that district officials were obliged to supply much-needed flour. When officials assured the women that the flour was on its way, they stopped protesting. However, the issue was not resolved, and the next week, double the number of women assembled before the same offices, again demanding flour. Protestors were assured that flour was on its way and would be distributed on December 17. Day laborer Barbara Ševčik complained about unequal access to food, claiming that officials had food but that "we will die of hunger."[276] Her words, recorded in a gendarme's report, reflect the local sentiment that officials were better fed than the residents they were meant to serve. Ševčik's comments were overheard and she, together with four other local women, were arrested for protesting.[277] In this case, as in other demonstrations during the war's first two years, women led the protest—sometimes, protesters were all women—as they challenged the authority of local officials who were not meeting their expectations. While calling for the upholding of traditional gendered expectations, these women and others like them were also part of a process that chipped away at the patriarchal structures of Habsburg society.

Sometimes women vented their frustration over the lack of bread at the merchants who were to provide their allotted rations. Indeed, female grievances over the failure of the rationing regime took on the language of war and diplomacy in at least one newspaper account. The *Eggenburger Zeitung* reported on January 21, 1916 that "bread-

[276] "*Sam se nažere a mi abychom chcipali hladem" / "Allein frisst er sich an, und wir sollen vor Hunger krepieren*." Ševčik was Czech-speaking, and the German report of the incident included her statement in Czech, followed by the German translation.

[277] MZA, B13, Box 407, No.16658.

card women" had "declared war…not on an enemy state, but on a man in Zwettl [Lower Austria]." While the women had not yet broken diplomatic relations with him, they charged that the merchant in question had not gotten sufficient flour from his source to distribute it to all bread cardholders. The article concluded that these "cooking spoon-wielding women" were not "so entirely wrong" to protest because the lack of flour was not a problem elsewhere.[278]

The specter of demonstrations owing to food shortages haunted officials in spring and summer 1916. District officials in Tulln, Lower Austria reported to the provincial governing committee in Vienna in early June of planned demonstrations against the inflation of food prices in Klosterneuburg, just north of Vienna. The first hint of unrest had been statements women expressed in a Klosterneuburg office while they were awaiting support payments (*Unterhaltsbeiträgen*), paid to the women and families of those serving at the front. These women were seeking the state's surrogate efforts to provide assistance in light of the absence of male bread winners. The suggestion of unrest caused officials concern, and the district commissioner sought to prevent possible protest, although he did not believe that the demonstrations were being planned in Klosterneuburg. Rather, he suggested any potential protests were being devised in Vienna. Indeed, the Klosterneuburg police commissioner had traveled to Vienna the previous day to consult with authorities and to ensure that possible demonstrators from Vienna, especially those from the nearby nineteenth and twenty-first districts, home to many working-class residents, would be kept away from his municipality. He also increased temporarily the number of gendarmes posted in Klosterneuburg who joined the

[278] *Eggenburger Zeitung*, January 21, 1916, 5.

city guards in keeping peace. On June 10, the district commissioner again wrote to Vienna noting that no demonstrations had taken place in Klosterneuburg.[279] Local officials took these women's comments seriously, a reflection of female agency, and officials scrambled to respond to rumored demonstrations. Since the city was close to Vienna, this episode also highlights the tensions between the imperial capital and the surrounding area. The district commissioner tried to blame the rumored demonstrations on the Viennese interlopers.

Although there were no protests in Klosterneuburg, there were demonstrations in other Lower Austrian cities. District officials in Krems an der Donau wrote to the Lower Austrian Governing Committee on August 19, 1916, complaining that flour from the War Grain Distribution Institution was insufficient and there were largescale bread shortages. A hunger demonstration had occurred the previous day in Krems. Some sixty to seventy working-class women participated. Protesting shortages, they gathered at the building housing the offices of local officials, occupying the entire staircase. The district commissioner explained that upon hearing the women's commotion, he invited four of them to share their grievances. The women complained that they feared for their survival. They complained of weeks-long food shortages in Krems, particularly of eggs, butter, fat, and potatoes. Now residents were unable to find bread. The district commissioner promised protesters that the new harvest would resolve the situation and assured the women that he would work to ensure this. The explanation seemed to satisfy these women. The other demonstrators calmed, and the incident was resolved. Nevertheless, the district commissioner wanted to bring these matters to the attention of

[279] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 752, 248, XVb, 1916.

the provincial government with the hope of avoiding a repeat event involving even more protesters.[280]

The causes of protests were both lack of food and conditions that made it difficult for women to provide for themselves. On March 8, 1916, about 200 people—"exclusively women, whose spouses were in the field, or found themselves in war service,"—held what officials described as a peaceful demonstration in front of the district commissioner's building in Prossnitz/Prostějov, Moravia. The report offers little detail about the women, but clearly, what they were being paid was not enough while their husbands were absent, an indication that the state was not fulfilling its role as breadwinner. The women both protested poor food rations and demanded better working conditions and wages from factory owners, reflecting the deleterious effect of shortages on the working class. The women also demanded increased welfare payments for their families due to rising inflation. Police reporting on the protests noted that the women dispersed when local officials promised to meet their demands.[281]

These protests reflect increasing hunger on the home front during 1916. They reveal the deterioration of relationships on the home front between residents and the state. The female protestors took their frustrations directly to local authorities, whom they viewed as having the role of bread suppliers, demanding better provisions. Shortages hurt working-class women and those whose husbands had been mobilized. While authorities made attempts to respond to their demands, these protests were increasing in size and frequency. Protests early in the war were an indication that women were

[280] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 752, 248, XVb, 1916.
[281] MZA, B13, Box 407, No.9648.

increasingly taking a more prominent role in the public sphere, and these examples provide some indication of the strain placed on Habsburg patriarchal society.

Invasion of Human Hamsters

Some residents of the Monarchy's larger—and even smaller—cities came to rural regions of the provinces in search of food. These food hoarders, known as Hamsters, sought food, which they took home for their families or to sell to other hungry city dwellers. Their trips to the countryside brought them into contact with the local population and caused frustration in small towns and farming communities, whose residents were themselves struggling with shortages. Kati Muhr wrote from Gurdau/Kurdějov, Moravia, (about half way between Brünn/Brno and Lundenburg/Břeclav) on February 26, 1917, "…for us farmers it is not so bad, but in the cities…I thank God that I am not in town…"[282] While people in the provinces faced provisioning challenges, food shortages were worse in Vienna.

Local newspapers regularly recounted incidents involving Hamsters, and many blamed local food shortages on these invaders. An article in the July 14, 1916 edition of the *Eggenburger Zeitung* posed the question "What causes the lack of flour and bread in

[282] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3750, No. 4595, Bemerkenswerte Nachrichte zur Verpflegungsfrage in der Monarchie, Bericht II, Geschöpft aus den Korrespondenzen vom 8. bis 21. IV. 1917.

Censors compiled reports on the situation in the hinterland used excerpts from the correspondence of the Monarchy's citizens. The Joint Central Evidence Office of the Red Cross (*Gemeinsames Zentralnachweisbüro des Roten Kreuzes*), or GZNB, files contain several series of reports derived from correspondence on the home front. The monthly *Stimmung und wirtschaftliche Lage der österreichischen Bevölkerung im Hinterland* begins March 31, 1917 and the final report details September 1918. Oscar Thalberg's reports describe conditions on the home front by province and language group. They contain excerpts taken from censored correspondence, including direct quotations as well as the author's name and residence. The reports also discuss the economic conditions, including diets and the agricultural situation. The excerpts provide voices of citizens in the provinces, even if they have been filtered through the lens of censorship officials.

Eggenburg?" City dwellers and other strangers were to blame. The article described that the mayor had acknowledged shortages of flour at a recent public meeting, noting that he had contacted authorities about the situation, by telephone, telegraph, and letter. The author described the present flour shortages as the result of outsiders taking what was intended for Eggenburg's residents. Outsiders, including people from Gmünd and Vienna, traveled to Eggenburg with their flour cards, and with the help of acquaintances or their acquaintances' children, bought flour. Some Eggenburg residents also sent flour to their friends by train or by post. Indeed, one woman had sent "no less than ten kilograms [of flour] at a time," and the article noted that she happened to be one of the "loudest troublemakers," allegedly sending flour away from Eggenburg and then complaining about subsequent shortages. New ration cards had, however, been marked with the community seal in the hopes of preventing outsiders from traveling to the town to have their bread cards filled.[283] While there may have been shortages in the region, this problem was, paradoxically, due to the area's plentiful supply. Hamsters from several urban areas targeted Eggenburg. At least one local woman was accused of aiding the Hamsters, undermining the efforts to feed Eggenburgers. This case provides an example of a woman undermining the home front. The smuggling incident, and others like it, suggest that residents themselves looked to bypass the state's requisitioning and provisioning system, undermining the state's ability to function.

The Viennese who sought food from the nearby rural areas posed a significant challenge for imperial and local authorities, who attempted and failed to prevent hoarding. The number of Hamsters only increased as the war went on. In

[283] *Eggenburger Zeitung*, July 14, 1916, 3.

correspondence with the Office for People's Nutrition in April 1918, one Lower Austrian food inspector addressed the issue of food diversion from the provinces to Vienna. Though his district was responsible for providing Vienna with important commodities, it was unable to fill its quotas of milk, potatoes, fat, and flour. The amount of milk that could be provided to Vienna was insufficient to provision the sick, the hospitalized, and children because the city was short 10,000 liters per day. The food inspector's report conveys that Viennese officials lacked awareness of the situation in the provinces, which were unable to provide the amount of provisions officials in the capital demanded.

Who were the Hamsters leaving Vienna in search of food? This food inspector implied that while many blamed Vienna's poorest residents for hoarding and shortages, they were not at fault; rather, the Hamsters mainly provisioned merchants in Vienna, those with restaurants and hotel owners. Railway workers were also Hamsters, and they could travel easily to the borders of Lower Austria to get food. Hamsters in turn offered goods such as petroleum, candles, and tobacco, which were not necessities for producers. The inspector pointed out that Vienna's poor did not have access to such goods, again rejecting the rumors that Vienna's poor transported illicit goods from the countryside to the capital.

It was necessary to control the smuggling, owing to the great food shortages—the worst in history. Why were authorities unable to control the illegal transporting of food? Provincial officials had repeatedly requested that district officials manage the situation, but they had proved incapable of doing so, due to limited staff and gendarmes to cover the entire railway network. Each district had between ten and fifteen railway stations from which food had been illegally removed, and food supervisors rarely controlled these

stations. Even had they been able to monitor these stations and the many trains that passed through them more closely, officials might still have been unable to stop the Hamsters. The inspector described the Hamsters as "brutal," explaining that they "appeared in such numbers on the trains that the concerned food supervisor was exposed to violence on the part of these people and in the end could control only individuals, while the large crowd with their goods reaches the goal." It was impossible, according to the inspector, for provincial officials to control food smuggling to the capital. A different system was needed to control this flow of people and food. The train stations in Vienna would need to be monitored, rather than all of those spread out across Lower Austria. Trains arriving in Vienna should be searched for goods before passengers would be allowed to exit. Owing to the lack of personnel to carry out these measures, the inspectors would rotate to different stations in Vienna, never fully staffing all stations at one time. The inspector wrote that the proposed measures, especially those for milk, would be successful and would benefit the public, since so many children in Vienna did not receive any milk.[284] Indeed, the milk supply to Vienna had declined from approximately 800,000 liters in 1915 to roughly 200,000 liters in 1918.[285] Yet, the food inspector explained that even if the practice made some additional amounts of milk available, the Hamsters could not be completely brought under control given the extent of the shortages and the prevalence of food smuggling.

As the food inspector explained, controlling the Hamsters at the local level was difficult, despite the efforts of municipal and district officials. In Mistelbach, Lower

[284] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 153, Z. 58612.

[285] Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 47.

Austria, the area's proximity to Vienna and easy accessibility along the railways led to a "flood" of illicit traders and Hamsters in the area. Monitoring streets and railway stations in the district proved ineffective in preventing illicit trade. In March 1918, municipal officials discussed the problems illegal trade posed for individual municipalities and for producers because these illegal actions made it increasingly difficult to meet quotas. The district commissioner recommended the following measures be taken: First, a group of individuals should be used for surveillance in the district with the size of this service varying on different factors such as the size of the community and the number of streets and railway stations. Additionally, those serving in this capacity were to understand the importance of their service for the state economy as well as for the community. They were advised to watch for grain, flour, legumes, potatoes, fruit, eggs, fat, milk, dairy products, meat, and sausages. The agents carrying out these acts of surveillance would have to know the producers well to determine if the goods they delivered for the local requisition quota were in line with their production as well as to find persons carrying away these goods. The mayor, or a deputy he appointed, would supervise these surveilling forces. Those who violated the law were to be presented to the mayor. The surveillance officials were to know that they themselves were being watched and to behave appropriately.[286] The food crisis led to layers of surveillance in the provinces as citizens became organs of surveillance and in turn were observed themselves. These orders also indicate the state perception that its own people were undermining its provisioning efforts.

[286] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 153, Z. 58612.

Hamsters were part of a flood of outsiders who invaded provincial Lower Austria. In search of food, for themselves and their families as well as for profit, their actions significantly worsened the provincial food situation. Hamsters posed a serious challenge to authorities at many levels and to residents. Officials struggled to find ways to manage the removal of food outside of the state's requisitioning efforts, grappling to find measures to stop the theft of food.

Children in the Provinces: Healing the Monarchy's Youth

Hamsters were not the only city dwellers who journeyed outside the imperial capital to improve their diet. Viennese authorities sent malnourished children to the countryside during the summer months to help them regain their health. There they lived in groups or with individual families. These children were among the many people traveling to or residing in the hinterland during the war. Local newspapers often called upon the local population to volunteer to host these children, yet another call to sacrifice in wartime.

The June 24, 1917 cover of the *Neues Wochenblatt: Zeitung für das Viertel unter dem Manhartsberg*, a provincial paper in Lower Austria, depicted Vienna's children, and the accompanying article described that the children clearly needed help, which is why readers should support efforts to bring as many children as possible to the countryside.[287] The central image of the cover depicts a city street scene showing several tired, thin, and run down youths, many of them shoeless, and one exhausted mother holding a small child. Absent from the image was an adult male, a father figure. The children's poor

[287] *Neues Wochenblatt: Zeitung für das Viertel unter dem Manhartsberg*, June 24, 1917, 1-2.

health and living conditions reflected the breakdown of the family in wartime. The border surrounding the image contained scenes of the countryside, of flowers, trees, and open fields, all components of the ideal location for children to regain their strength.

The young campers engaged in activities to strengthen their bodies. A 1916 propaganda film, one of the many wartime films the AOK's Imperial and Royal War Press Bureau produced**,** *Recovery Welfare for the Community of Vienna in the Refugee Camp in Oberhollabrunn* (*Erholungsfürsorge der Gemeinde Wien im Flüchtlingslager Oberhollabrunn*) provides a glimpse of daily life, showing scenes from one day in the camp. The film opens with a view of the camp and the surrounding area, showing a calm, peaceful environment. Happy, lively children are waking up to start the day. One of their morning activities is being measured, weighed, and bathed. The film then shows two boys, facing the camera, eating. The accompanying intertitle explains that the two are exemplary: One has gained twelve kilograms and the other eleven during four weeks at the camp. The film focuses on the program's success in helping these children recover their physical strength.

Figure 5. *Erholungsfürsorge der Gemeinde Wien im Flüchtlingslager Oberhollabrunn*. Source: Filmarchiv Austria. Copyright Filmarchiv Austria.

The film shows the gendered measures employed to heal these children. Boys and girls participated in different, gender-specific activities. One of the scenes shows two of the boys wrestling in front of a gathering of other boys and adult chaperones. While the wrestling could be read as one of the many efforts taken to return physical strength through activity and develop their lean bodies, it also shaped these young men into strong potential warriors. Another scene from the film, titled "A Little Bit of Strengthening" ("*Eine kleine Stärkerung"*), shows girls at the camp gathered around a woman who reads to them as they passively eat a snack (Figure 5). Another scene shows a young woman leading the girls in singing. While the program's stated aim was to

return physical strength, the program employed childhood activities within traditional gendered categories, restoring social order.

Figure 6. *Erholungsfürsorge der Gemeinde Wien im Flüchtlingslager Oberhollabrunn*
Source: Filmarchiv Austria. Copyright: Filmarchiv Austria.

Feeding and strengthening these children was the program's chief concern, and the film included several scenes of children eating. At lunch time, children are shown walking toward the camera in twos, carrying large pails. The boys and girls ate their lunches separately, and the film focused on the boys. First showing the boys eating with one of the camp buildings in the background, the camera angle then changes to show the boys eating with the countryside in the background (Figure 6). The film highlights the

importance of the provincial environment in addition to the food in strengthening these children.

Figure 7. *Erholungsfürsorge der Gemeinde Wien im Flüchtlingslager Oberhollabrunn*
Source: Filmarchiv Austria. Copyright: Filmarchiv Austria.

Figure 8. *Erholungsfürsorge der Gemeinde Wien im Flüchtlingslager Oberhollabrunn*
Source: Filmarchiv Austria. Copyright: Filmarchiv Austria.

The film shows the children's activities following their mid-day rest. Two boys sit at a table, drawing (Figure 7). Behind them, a man with a hand on each child and other children look to see what they boys are drawing. The film then cuts to show their drawings: It shows a page filled with male warrior figures (Figure 8). The figures in the drawing itself provoke questioning. Some of the men—such as the center figure in the bottom row—are in military uniform, yet another symbol of the war infiltrating all aspects of everyday life on the home front. Even children's drawings made in a setting designed to heal them from the physical toll wartime hunger had taken on their bodies reflected war. After lingering on the sketches, the camera again cuts to show the boys drawing. While these children had come to the countryside to recover from the war's

effects, at least some of their free time activity included images of war. The film also showed the arrival of additional children to the camp, and children already residing there welcomed them. In the end, the nearly fourteen-minute film concludes showing the children at the end of the day preparing for bed.[288]

The army propaganda office produced this film, which offers a glimpse of home front life in Oberhollabrunn while highlighting the experience of Viennese children who were taken some fifty kilometers away to regain their health in the countryside. As the film shows, this camp—and the convalescing children living at that camp—became part of the provincial landscape. The film does not show the children going into the town itself because the camp was constructed on the outskirts of the city center. Nor does the film depict interactions with the local population. The film highlights the experiences of Viennese children to regain their health and through this conveys the importance of food through the scenes showing the children eating.

While some of the children who recovered in the provinces spent their time in camps, others lived with individuals and families.[289] Frättingsdorf, north of the imperial capital near Laa an der Thaya, was one of many small Lower Austrian communities that housed Viennese children during the summer of 1917 as did nearby Poysdorf, which welcomed thirteen boys and eight girls; they were not all Viennese because two of the children were refugees.[290] In Frättingsdorf, for example, nineteen local families each took in one Viennese child in July 1917.[291] One newspaper announced that when these

[288] Filmarchiv Austria, *Erholungs Fürsorge der Gemeinde Wien im Flüchtlingslager Oberhollabrunn*. (Filmstelle des k.u.k. Kriegspressquartier, 1916).
[289] For example, see *Mistelbacher Bote*, June 1, 1917, 5.
[290] *Neues Wochenblatt: Zeitung für das Viertel unter dem Manhartsberg*, August 5, 1917, 12.
[291] *Mistelbacher Bote*, July 13, 1917, 4; and *Mistelbacher Bote*, July 8, 1917, 5.

children departed Frättingsdorf two months later on August 30, all of the "poor, emaciated Viennese children" had gained weight. One had even gained seven kilograms in two months.[292] Frättingsdorf hosted Viennese children again the following summer, and the children reportedly recovered quickly, regaining strength to face the war's fifth winter.[293]

These examples of sending children into the countryside, indicative of the situation in the capital, also provide some insight into the situation in the provinces. While residents may have been some pressure to host a child and have one's name placed among other community members supporting the war effort, these communities at least had enough available resources to take in and feed these children. The incidence of children being sent to the provincial home front also provide an indication of the experience of the war for those living in the countryside, as they witnessed the arrival of emaciated children in their communities, brought them into their own homes, and fed them. These groups of convalescing children are another example of outsiders in the provinces, changing the social landscape and using provincial resources in wartime. But unlike the refugees and other groups, these children do not seem to have been a nuisance.

The Changing Physical Landscape of the Home Front: Requisitioning

The imperial bureaucracy requisitioned materials other than food, and owing to the need for metal for armaments, the state requisitioned objects that could be melted down and used for the war effort. Objects made of requisitionable metals such as copper and tin included church bells, roofs, and organ pipes. For those in the hinterland, the

[292] *Mistelbacher Bote*, September 14, 1917, 4.
[293] *Mistelbacher Bote*, October 11, 1918, 5.

removal of these objects was a significant wartime event. Young Hermine Kominek, of Trasdorf, Lower Austria, later recalled, "All items of brass and copper had to be delivered, likewise almost all the bells were confiscated."[294] Christine Schleifer also mentioned the seizure of metal and the bells in Retz.[295] Requisitioning efforts that targeted churches were especially significant in the provinces, where people were religious. The requisitioning of these materials from towns across the home front changed both the physical and the aural landscapes of communities large and small.

This requisitioning was part of the home front sacrifice for the war effort. A cartoon from the *Neues Wochenblatt,* titled "War Requisitioning" contained a series of images, which illustrated actions that culminated in battlefront success. The top image depicts the requisitioning of anthropomorphized bells and other metal goods. Subsequent images portray foodstuffs and cattle walking away from provincial landscapes under a soldier's direction. The fourth image in the strip depicts the feeding of people—mostly children—in an urban, industrial landscape. Images of the fighting front follow and ultimately lead to the war's end, depicted by angels bringing peace—*Friede*—in the final image.[296] The cartoon shows a chain of support for the fighting front that begins with requisitioning in the provinces. The task also included the provisioning of the Monarchy's urban peoples.

Officials began collecting bells in 1915, first as a voluntary effort, but later they would requisition them. As part of the early efforts, Kattau, Lower Austria donated one parish church bell in December 1915.[297] Bell donations from across Austria continued in

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[294] Hämmerle, ed, *Kindheit im Ersten Weltkrieg,* 62-63, 65.
[295] Hämmerle, ed, *Kindheit im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 147.
[296] *Neues Wochenblatt: Zeitung für das Viertel unter dem Manhartsberg*, February 18, 1917, 4.
[297] *Eggenburger Zeitung*, December 24, 1915, 4.

1916 and early 1917. On Ash Wednesday, February 21, 1917, the bells in Feldsberg/Valtice in Lower Austria rang out for the last time before being removed for the war effort, an event significant enough to the community to be recorded in a city memorial book.[298] These were just some of the many examples of bells being donated or removed that were repeated across the home front. The need for metal drove a May 1917 decree requiring the seizure of bells for war purposes.[299] Subsequently, the state requisitioned more bells, and the collection moved from a voluntary—though certainly encouraged—measure to a mandatory effort as those on the home front gave up their bells in service of the war.

The need for metal drove officials to seek other sources, metal fixtures and roofs, which could be replaced with less valuable materials. The materials targeted for these requisitioning measures were often part of prominent public buildings. In Retz, the requisitioning measures in 1916 not only included the parish church tower roof, but also the roof of the town hall tower, a central landmark in the town.[300] In Znaim/Znojmo, representatives of the military command, local municipal council members, and religious representatives met on January 28, 1916 to discuss the requisitioning of copper from three town churches. The roof of St. Nicholas had been restored in the last decade, and the art historical protections, which allowed for some buildings to be exempted based on historic and artistic merit, did not apply in this case. Some copper fixtures were to be removed and turned over to army officials although others could not be requisitioned owing to the difficulty of removing them. At the Jesuit Michael's church, the copper roof

[298] SOkA Břeclav, Archiv města Valtice, Gedenkbuch von Feldsberg, 1877-1943, 81.
[299] *Znaimer Wochenblatt*, May 30, 1917, 3.
[300] Rudolf Resch, *Retzer Heimatbuch*, *II. Band* (Retz: Verlag der Stadtgemeinde Retz, 1951), 521.

of the sanctuary was also kept in place, but the church tower's copper roof, which was a more recent addition, was to be requisitioned. At the Dominican church, the copper roofing of the two towers came from recent times and thus was not of historical value and, "in view of the patriotic and highly important military purpose," was subject to military requisition with other copper components.[301] Thus, while officials took care not to destroy the historical or artistic merit of the structures in question, these buildings and those who used them, faced the effects of wartime demands and the effects of military shortages.

While a significant amount of copper and metal products were removed from communities across the provinces, several objects remained. A local director of the monument committee in Brünn/Brno and a member of the Central Commission for the Preservation of Monuments (*k.k. Zentralkommission für Denkmalpflege*) evaluated the Peace Monument to the fallen on the battlefield of Austerlitz, the site Napoleon's victory over Austrian and Russian forces in 1805. The report stated that the monument, which dominated the battlefield, was of both religious and artistic character (Figure 11). Officials concluded that given the monument's artistic merit, and its use as a tomb for "heroes who had fallen on the field of honor," it would not be subject to the copper collection efforts.[302] Both the monument's artistic value and its connection to fallen heroes—at a critical time for encouraging male battlefield sacrifice—prevented this monument from falling victim to wartime requisitioning. While the metals from other public buildings were dismantled for the war effort, this symbol honoring male heroes remained in part through the privileging of symbols of male sacrifice.

[301] ÖStA, AVA, BDA, Box 14, Z. 728, 1916.
[302] ÖStA, AVA, BDA, Box 14, Z. 916, 1916.

Figure 9. Undated postcard of the Peace Monument at Austerlitz/Slavkov u Brna. (From the author's collection.)

Communities faced repeated requests for copper materials. Already on March 8, 1916, representatives of the community and of the military met in Pöltenberg/Hradiště svatého Hypolita, just west of Znaim/Znojmo, to discuss the requisitioning of copper from that town and from nearby Gross Maispitz/Mašovice. Because the dome of the local Probsteikirche contained artwork dating to 1765 and was considered of great artistic value, the copper was excluded from the requisition claim; however, some of the building's copper cables would be seized for the patriotic effort. The Gross Maispitz/Mašovice church was built in the mid-fifteenth century, but the copper roof of the tower dated to 1894 and had no art historical value. Thus, the copper roof was to be removed for "patriotic, military purposes" in the coming weeks.[303] Later that year on September 29, Pöltenberg/Hradiště svatého Hypolita parted with both the large and the small bell of the local *Schlosskirche*. The military also requisitioned the small bell from a

[303] ÖStA, AVA, BDA, Box 14, Z. 1392 1916.

second local church.[304] This town serves as an example of repeated requisitioning and sacrificing for the war effort.

The army's demand for all available metal resulted in the requisitioning of organ pipes in 1917. The terms of the requisitioning stipulated that organ pipes made of tin or tin alloy were to be collected, though pipe organs with eight or fewer registers were excluded from the measures, presumably to preserve playability, as were organs of special historical value. Military officials were to carry out the confiscation of organ pipes, which were not to be sold to third parties. Officials provided a remuneration of fifteen crowns for each kilogram of pipe weight. During the organ pipe removal, efforts were to be taken to allow for the playability of the organs and not damage the overall integrity of the instrument. If the organ was damaged during the pipe removal, the owner could demand compensation from the military administration. Those infringing on these requisitioning efforts could be punished.[305]

The requisitioning of organ pipes constituted yet another layer of deprivation for home front residents. Many of the locations that had already given up their bells and roofs then had to turn over their organ pipes. In Retz, which had already seen the requisitioning of the town hall tower roof, 1917 brought additional demands as both bells and organ pipes were requisitioned.[306] In many locations, local priests wrote letters to officials in charge of the organ pipe requisitioning, requesting that their organs be spared. In some cases, priests mentioned the earlier requisitioning of bells, a reminder of the

[304] *Znaimer Wochenblatt*, October 7, 1916, 6.
[305] ÖStA, AVA, BDA, Box 15, Z. 1369 1917.
[306] Rudolf Resch, *Retzer Heimatbuch, II. Band* (Retz: Verlag der Stadtgemeinde Retz, 1951), 522. On the requisitioning of bells, see also *Neues Wocheblatt: Zeitung für das Viertel unter dem Manhartsberg*, December 24, 1916, 12.

church's previous sacrifice for the war effort. In Iglau/Jihlava, a priest of the church of Maria Himmelfahrt wrote to the official evaluating organs to be requisitioned. The priest described the artistic vale of the gothic organ, which had eight registers, six of metal and two of wood. He pointed out that the parish was poor and that the attached monastery also struggled to survive. He mentioned their bells had already been taken. The only metal the parish had left were the items that stood on the altars. He thus requested that the church be spared. This letter describes a series of deprivations on the home front: Earlier requisitions, struggles to live, and now the prospect of losing the parish's organ pipes. Fortunately for this parish, their organ was spared due to its art historical value.[307]

Similarly, a letter from the parish priest in Polkowitz/Polkovice in the district of Prerau/Přerov requesting that the parish's organ be spared mentioned the removal of the bells. The priest also began his letter stressing the artistic merit of the organ and its gothic style, even though it was a recently built in 1909. He explained that the parishioners had erected the organ in a pious effort. He repeatedly emphasized the parishioners' patriotism in surrendering the bells. Among other reasons for keeping the organ pipes, the priest suggested that the instrument was an important component of mass, which would allow the people to forget their suffering, at least for the duration of the service.[308] The requisitioning of organ pipes, coming well into the war, was yet another blow to the home front, which had already been sacrificing for over three years for the war effort. The letters from these priests convey the weariness of the home front population, which had sacrificed repeatedly for the war effort; yet, the state kept demanding and taking more from its people. The removal of organ pipes was part of a

[307] ÖStA, AVA, BDA, Box 17, Z. 5770 1917.
[308] ÖStA, AVA, BDA, Box 17, Z. 5851 1917.

spiritual deprivation on the home front because it removed some of the aural richness of mass while also being yet another form of deprivation.

The requisitioning of these organ pipes, on top of the roofs, bells, and other materials, brought wave after wave of deprivation to the home front. The removal of these goods physically, visually, and aurally reshaped the landscape of the provinces. While the state projected this sacrifice of material goods as a significant component of wartime sacrifice in its propaganda, requisitioning placed a significant burden for waging war on the home front. As the priests indicate in their letters asking that the organ pipes not be removed, these objects played a role in the spiritual lives of those in the parish, and their removal represented a type of spiritual deprivation during a time at which morale was already low.

Provisioning, Requisitioning, and Protest in a New Key

Demonstrations in the provinces served as a symptom of the increasing deprivation and low morale many in Lower Austria and Moravia experienced. During the winter of 1916/1917 circumstances across the Monarchy took a turn for the worse because the provisioning of food became increasingly precarious, and conditions in the hinterland rapidly declined. In this region and across the Monarchy, beginning in early 1917 and continuing into 1918, protests increased in size and frequency and expanded far beyond the small, female-led protests of the war's early years. State officials recognized that food procurement placed severe constraints on the lives of its citizens. A March 1917 report suggested that Moravia's Hanna/Haná region had a good harvest the previous year and had suffered little effect from food requisitioning. However, food shortages as

well as the lack of clothing and shoes affected most of the Bohemian Lands and the coastal provinces.[309] Reports from both Lower Austria and Moravia suggested that mice ate much of the grain stored through the winter.[310] Many small farmers, particularly in the northern crownlands, including Moravia and Lower Austria, complained that they lacked seed to plant in the spring because too much had been seized or requisitioned.[311] The constant demands on the home front were taking a toll, frustrating farmers and potentially contributing to a cycle of shortages.

The government struggled to provide the promised provisions at the designated time so that community officials could distribute bread card rations. On January 5, 1917, Retz's mayor complained to district officials that "the War Grain Distribution Institution's allocation of flour is, despite all execution on the part of the distribution agency and also on the part of the municipality, in such manner irregular and bad, that the municipality is compelled to complain about this action of the War Grain Distribution Institution, and thus to request the removal of the evils and regulation of the assignments." Retz was not getting the resources it needed, and municipal authorities wanted to end the institution's grain assignment scheme, a sign of the institution's ineffectiveness and local frustration. The mayor complained that Retz received too little flour and that the deliveries were delayed. When it did arrive, it was near the end of the period of the bread card's validity. [312] After the January 5 letter, supplies arrived on the

[309] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3751, No.4614, Der Staatliche Unterhaltsbeitrag, Bericht I, abgeschlossen am March 31, 1917, p. 12-13.

[310] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3751, No.4614, Der Staatliche Unterhaltsbeitrag, Bericht I, abgeschlossen am March 31, 1917, p. 15.

[311] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3751, No.4614, Der Staatliche Unterhaltsbeitrag, Bericht I, abgeschlossen am March 31, 1917, p. 16.

[312] Stadtarchiv Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Zl. 19 Beschwerde wegen Mehlversorgung, January 5, 1917.

evening of January 6, the day of the flour cards' expiration. The mayor subsequently informed district officials that the flour they had received was of poor quality. However, the mayor asserted, "In Vienna, very good bread is available generally and present everywhere." But in Retz, he noted that bread prepared with a high percentage of oat flour, the type of flour the community had in December, resulted in a finished product that was "bad and bitter, that it is hardly edible."[313] He suggested that conditions in Retz were not as good as those in the imperial capital and, in providing the provincial perception of life in the imperial capital, hints at the tense relations between these regions. His suggestion also seems to be incorrect as the imperial capital was struggling acutely with provisioning challenges.

The Retz mayor's efforts to secure provisions did not end with the inquiries to district officials, and he actively worked on the community's behalf to secure the necessary provisions. He sent a complaint to the Land Committee of Lower Austria in Vienna on January 11.[314] He also contacted his friend, Rudolf Wedra, a representative to the Reichsrat, on January 15, writing about the poor provisioning. Lamenting the lack of bread and flour, he explained, that the distribution center in Retz needed 48,400 kg monthly to support the twenty-two municipalities that depended on it. However, the quota was not being filled and the distribution center was not receiving what it was owed. He noted that it was never known in advance what types of flours would come, how much would come, or when it would arrive. He also complained that other nearby distribution centers received proportionally more of the supply needed to fulfill the quota.

[313] Stadtarchiv Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Zl. 19/1 Beschwerde wegen Mehlversorgung, January 8, 1917.

[314] Stadtarchiv Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Zl. 19/2, January 11, 1917.

The Oberhollabrunn distribution center had received three-quarters of its flour allotment while Retz had only received one quarter of the promised amount. He asked his friend if it would be possible to improve the situation, for which the community would be thankful, requesting that he visit the War Grain Distribution Institution to ascertain on what grounds the distribution of flour was determined. The community was not only dealing with flour shortages, but also lacked meat. It would seem, he noted, that their written complaints were going unanswered, and authorities had taken no action. The local population would like to know that the supply process was uniform across the different supply centers.[315] Wedra replied, noting that he had been in Vienna and had not seen the letter for four days, but found it upon his return to Eibestal. He was going back to Vienna in the upcoming days and promised his friend that he would visit the relevant offices to investigate the situation.[316] Wedra followed through on his promise to investigate the situation and on January 24 spoke of Retz's provisioning issues with Viennese officials. "As always," he related to his friend in a January 30 letter, "I received the best assurances that it would only be better with the assignment and the supply of food." He acknowledged that there was probably no equality in the distribution of food stuffs and it seemed that more rural locations received less, since Viennese officials assumed that local farmers could partially make up for this deficiency.[317] His observations and subsequent conclusions about the situation of provisioning may indicate a lack of awareness on the part of imperial officials as to the situation those in the provinces faced, perhaps not understanding the full effect of the shortages there.

[315] Stadtarchiv Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Tichtl to Wedra, January 15, 1917
[316] Stadtarchiv Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Wedra to Tichtl, January 20, 1917.
[317] Stadtarchiv Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Wedra to Tichtl, January 30, 1917.

In February 1917, Retz's mayor observed that complaints in the community about the sale of bread in recent days made it necessary to remind local bakeries of the provisioning rules. First, nonresidents were only to receive seven decagrams of bread. Additionally, attention needed to be given to the number of persons in each family that received bread. The mayor suggested that businesses knew the family relations of community members, and thus, businesses needed to ensure uniform provisioning of bread. If these directives were not followed, the offenders would face immediate punishment and their permission to sell bread would be revoked.[318] The letter implied that at least some locals provided non-residents with more than their allotted amount of bread and that some families in the community knowingly received more than their allotted ration; local distributors likely knew they were providing them with more than their share. These instances of provisioning more than the allotted amount likely complicated the city's ability to properly provision the entire community and chipped away at authorities' Monarchy-wide efforts at food distribution. That residents circumvented state regulated provisioning efforts also shows the extent to which their needs were not being met and provides an indication that the state was not successful in its provisioning attempts.

As provisioning difficulties mounted during 1917 and needs were not being met, demonstrations increased in size and frequency, becoming more concerning for officials at multiple levels of government. In February, food supply conditions became more precarious.[319] On February 3, more than one hundred women from Waidhofen an der Thaya and the surrounding communities gathered to protest provisioning difficulties.

[318] Stadtarchiv Retz, Archiv Stadt Retz, Box 173, Zl. 253, February 17, 1917.
[319] Kučera, *Rationed Life*, 46.

While officials labeled the events as "no incident" and provided little detail about the events or the women involved, the district commissioner nevertheless reported this instance to provincial authorities, meaning that he considered it to be of some significance. Officials responded to the protest, sending 5,000 kilograms of oat flour to these communities. Women again protested provisioning difficulties in Waidhofen three weeks later. While the official again described the demonstration as minor and added little additional information in his report, officials responded and worked to fix the unequal distribution of bread and flour.[320] These incidents were some of the several small-scale episodes that took place in the opening months of 1917. Authorities would try to continue meeting demands, but the increased frequency and growing size of protests indicates that they were failing. Authorities were unable to keep up with demands, and protests such as these quickly developed into much larger demonstrations throughout 1917 into 1918 as more and more women and children took to the streets, protesting their conditions.

Lack of rations was not the only force driving protests: The requisitioning of local products led to disruptions as local women took measures into their own hands. A January 1917 announcement required that the southern Moravian municipality Kněžitz/Kněžice provide 100 liters of milk to Vienna daily. The milk for this effort was brought to the small town of Pirnitz/Brtnice daily and transported to Vienna. On February 3, about fifty women gathered in Pirnitz/Brtnice before the house of the municipal director just as the milk was to be delivered. When the milk arrived, they took it and distributed it among those women present. Then again on February 5, about 100

[320] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 717, 752 VII, 1917.

women gathered and waited on the street for the milk. When the milk arrived, the women seized it and divided it among themselves. The Iglau/Jihlava district commissioner's report on the incident suggested that the demonstration could be explained by the fact that the municipal director had announced that all milk was to be delivered to Pirnitz/Brtnice, and could not be sold locally.[321] The incident highlights the toll that requisitioning efforts to support the imperial capital took on residents in smaller communities, who were ordered not to consume local products and instead hand them over to authorities. However, here in Pirnitz/Brtnice, women took measures into their own hands, subverting the efforts of authorities to meet their own needs, taking the local supply and publicly redistributing it as they deemed appropriate. Officials struggled to keep control of the situation and to continue moving much-needed supplies to the capital.

Adequate milk distribution was a widespread problem in early 1917 Moravia. On March 13, approximately 150 women and girls gathered in Prerau/Přerov at the district captain's office. A letter from the district captain noted that those assembled complained generally about the food shortages and inflation, but also presented individual cases of irregularities in milk distribution. Complaints also surrounded the allocation of potatoes and legumes and the provision of cheap meat. However, the district captain noted, the sale of meat at a significantly reduced price had begun. The letter stated that the appearance of the women and girls had "operated instructively" and that measures were taken immediately. The district captain concluded that the women had left "completely satisfied" and there was no full-blown demonstration or riot.[322] The women's protests

[321] SOkA Jihlava, Okresní úřad-okresní národní výbor Jihlava do r. 1949, Box 38, j.č. 324 1917.
[322] MZA, B13, Box 408, No. 5443.

got the attention of local officials, who brought about at least some change and worked to reduce prices.

State officials made some attempts to change their approach to provisioning, observing events and attempting to adapt to the circumstances to improve conditions. However, the situation was not improving. Far from it. The June 1917 censorship report on the interior economic situation in the Monarchy stated that the evaluation of about thirty-four letters in Moravia and Silesia indicated that the general economic situation had deteriorated more than in previous months. The area had experienced drought conditions for approximately twelve weeks. While current grain prices were cheap, the ongoing crisis was likely to cause complete disaster in the region. Correspondence also indicated that circumstances were somewhat more favorable in southern Moravia because the fields there were in good condition. The procurement of coal, however, continued to generate complaints as those in the cities attempted to store up supplies for the winter months. Those in Lower Austria faced similar circumstances. Examination of approximately forty letters indicated that the countryside in Lower Austria also felt the effects of continued drought, and farmers complained about requisitions and inexpedient actions, including the complaint that pregnant cows were being slaughtered.[323] They suggested the inefficiency of the measures taken as well as the incompetence of officials. Farmers knew best how to farm.

By July 1917—if not earlier—the situation in the Monarchy reached a point at which the immediacy of everyday life dominated the lives of those on the home front "while the discussion of major political and military events of the last days are

[323] ÖStA, KA, EvB, GNZB, Box 3752, No. 4713, Innere Wirtschaftlich Lage Monatsberichtes pro Juni 1917, Res. No. 1350.

increasingly rare."[324] The ability of the home front to fill a supporting role for the fighting front was compromised. The Thalberg report for July noted that the overall picture of the Monarchy gleaned from the correspondence at this point could be viewed as "programmatic and stereotypical," because it contained the same problems and complaints. The correspondence even contained comments suggesting that life would not be better after the war.[325] This may indicate that summer 1917 marked a turning point on the home front because the actual fighting on the battlefront no longer mattered in comparison to the immediate needs of everyday life. There was a realization that circumstances had declined so that even the end of the war would not immediately fix circumstances in the lands of the Habsburg Monarchy.

The report described largely unfavorable agricultural conditions in the rural hinterland, but at the same time, listed several favorable conditions in several locations. Although the report listed generally favorable agricultural conditions in Lower Austria, it provided a list of several places in the region experiencing poor conditions, including Laa an der Thaya and Nikolsburg/Mikulov.[326] The overall assessment, coupled with the list of poorly provisioned areas, suggests that overall provisioning of the province was uneven. Meanwhile in Moravia, good reports came from several locations in the province's southern region, but bad reports also came from several other locations.[327] In Moravia, as in Lower Austria, provisioning was uneven in summer 1917.

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[324] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3752, No. 4766, Stimmung und wirtschaftliche Lage der österreichischen Bevölkerung im Hinterland, Juli Bericht, 1.

[325] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3752, No. 4766, Stimmung und wirtschaftliche Lage der österreichischen Bevölkerung im Hinterland, Juli Bericht, 2.

[326] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3752, No. 4766, Stimmung und wirtschaftliche Lage der österreichischen Bevölkerung im Hinterland, Juli Bericht, 10. It is unclear why Nikolsburg/Mikulov is listed in the report as part of Lower Austria as it was in Moravia at the time.

[327] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3752, No. 4766, Stimmung und wirtschaftliche Lage der österreichischen Bevölkerung im Hinterland, Juli Bericht, 13.

In August of 1917, shortages took their toll on workers at the Adolf Löw and Sons factory in Klein Beranau/Malý Beranov near Iglau/Jihlava. A letter from the company to the local military command on August 1 described the poor provisioning conditions in Klein Beranau/Malý Beranov. While complaints had circulated on July 22, and they had requested that the district officials improve provisioning, the situation had not improved. As of August 1, there were no legumes, no fat, nothing to distribute other than flour, and some families had not received any of that. Because most families already had no potatoes, they faced an impossible situation. Though district officials had written on July 23 of a small pea supply for the workers, to date they had not received any. As a result, the situation deteriorated further, and the people could no longer work due to lack of provisions. Therefore, the factory requested intervention immediately, preferring the distribution to take place in the form of direct, daily provisioning from the factory to the needy workers.

The next day, the local military command passed on this request to district officials in Iglau/Jihlava, noting that the situation was critical because the complaints had increased. Furthermore, he suggested that because of provisioning difficulties, workers now frequently left their labors without authorization and force had to be used to bring them back, which was not helpful for the people or for the factory. Provisioning in recent times had been difficult because there were shortages of flour, bread, fat, and potatoes. Increasingly, factory management had tried and failed to procure food. The shortages would lead to further discontent among the workers, and correspondence suggested that shortages could lead to strikes if the workers did not receive their rations. In response to these complaints, on August 18 the Moravian governing committee determined that the

factories in Helenenthal/Helenín and Klein Berenau/Malý Beranov that produced military cloth must be provided with flour, bread, fat, and potatoes.[328] Provisioning difficulties extended to feeding factory workers in small communities surrounding Iglau/Jihlava. Since they were engaged in the production of goods for military, their unwillingness to work was detrimental to the overall war effort, and authorities took steps to feed them because their work had military significance. This incident also illustrates how the struggles of the home front and the fighting front were intertwined. These workers were concerned with feeding themselves, not with clothing the army.

Reports and records of the food inspectors provide some indication of the widespread, unending shortages across southern Moravia in the final months of 1917 due in part to drought and poor weather conditions. The Iglau/Jihlava inspector reported in his day book that in September, provisioning of fat had improved in Znaim/Znojmo, but the shortage of animal feed there was oppressive. At the same time in Iglau/Jihlava, the municipality complained of having had no bread for some time.[329] A report from November related that Iglau/Jihlava faced shortages of fat, soap, sugar, and petroleum so that these items could only partially be provisioned.[330] Authorities essentially engaged in a whack-a-mole-like effort of provisioning the provinces: Feed one community one commodity while it lacked another, all while another nearby community faced shortages. The reports from the food inspector in Brünn/Brno also suggested generally unfavorable conditions among the locations the inspector had visited in September. The poor weather conditions and drought further complicated the situation and the provisioning of

[328] SOkA Jihlava, Okresní úřad-okresní národní výbor Jihlava do r. 1949, Box 40, Inv.č. 5314 j.č.2251 1917.

[329] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 130, Z. 96012.

[330] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 130, Z. 121433.

vegetables was in turn very poor. [331] Drought conditions resulted in poor harvests in many communities, such as in Gaya/Kyjov, which only perpetuated the provisioning challenges in the region.[332] In December, the food inspector in Brünn/Brno acknowledged that many areas faced shortages and certain groups of people, particularly children up to the age of six, as well as pregnant and breastfeeding women received inadequate allocations.[333] These shortages hurt the hinterland population along gendered lines. It is not surprising that demonstrations often prominently featured women and children since shortages hit these groups hardest and because so many were left to provision themselves.

In early 1918 conditions continued to be volatile, and in the year's opening weeks, wide-spread, large-scale strikes erupted across the Habsburg Monarchy. During the January strikes hundreds of thousands of protestors across the Monarchy demanded better provisioning, better working conditions, and an end to the war.[334] These January strikes included cities in Moravia, such as in Trebitsch/Třebíč, where about 8,000 workers walked out and in Iglau/Jihlava, where 2,000 workers walked out. However, the local food inspector noted that these demonstrations were not disruptive.[335]

The nature of the demands made had changed as protestors across the Bohemian Lands included demands for more than just better provisioning from 1917.[336] In Triesch/Třešť and Höditz/Hodice, workers participating in the January strike demanded better rations and the end of the war. The workers protested lack of flour and the

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[331] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 129, Z. 92072.
[332] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 129, Z. 128369.
[333] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 129, Z. 5620.
[334] Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy*, 871-875.
[335] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 147, Z. 10678.
[336] Rudolf Kučera, *Rationed Life: Science, Everyday Life, and Working-Class Politics in the Bohemian Lands, 1914-1918* (New York: Berghahn, 2016), 135.

inadequate fat supply. They also protested the lack of lighting and fuel. This affected the local school, which had closed due to the shortage of coal for heating, a problem that was not limited to the area.[337] In sum, the workers sought permanent improvements in their situation through peace. However, in addition to making demands along class lines, workers also made demands along national and gender lines. They also insisted, "Then in our empire [here meaning the Habsburg Monarchy] that means that our Czech nation should be master in its own home." (*Tedy i v naše říši jmenovitě aby náš národ Česky stal se pánem ve vlastním domě*). Notably, while the workers sought more rights for Czechs, they did so within the structures of the Habsburg Monarchy. They also requested the end of the militarization of industrial enterprises, the introduction of general rights to the municipalities, and the restoring of general, equal ballots, and restoring the freedom to gather. They also called for women to have the right to vote.[338] These protests were different from those in late 1915 and early 1916. Requests for foods and other goods remained consistent; yet, the additional demands listed represented a development in attitudes of the local population. Considering the conditions faced, they requested not just those privileges enjoyed before the war. They requested additional rights—demanding rights for Czechs and for women, causes that had been intertwined prior to the war and here were reemerging within protests involving provisions.[339] Authorities

[337] Coal shortages also plagued areas of Lower Austria in early 1918. On February 4, women from Dietmans protested the shortage of coal. While Lower Austrian authorities noted that the event did not develop into a serious incident, they included the event in a compiled report of incidents relevant to the state sent to the Interior Ministry. The events may have been more serious than authorities wanted to admit. See NÖLA, Präs P, Box 732, 161 VII, 1918.

[338] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 148, Z. 30515.

[339] Czech feminists linked the issue of women's rights with the nationalist movement and the building of a democratic society; at least some Czech nationalists viewed women's demands for equality to be part of the fight against the Habsburg Monarchy. See Katherine David, "Czech Feminists and Nationalism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy: 'The First in Austria,'" *Journal of Women's History* 3, No.2 (Fall 1991):26-45; Melissa Feinberg, *Elusive Equality: Gender, Citizenship, and the Limits of Democracy*

had been unable to manage provisioning efforts so that now the protests and demands were growing and evolving in a manner that questioned officials authority and proposed an upending of society within the Habsburg Monarchy.

Food scarcity, protests, and strikes continued throughout spring and summer 1918. Women led many smaller demonstrations including a series of incidents in May over the provisioning of milk in Znaim/Znojmo that involved about 100 women.[340] The next month, a similar number of women in Prerau/Přerov protested the limited sugar rations.[341] Yet in the larger, more industrialized provincial capital Brünn/Brno, working-class industrial strikes also continued, including a mid-May involving thousands of protesters.[342]

Yet, the lack of food was not the cause of a strike on May 7 in the smaller town of Triesch/Třešť that involved thousands of protestors. In this case, the threat of local grain being removed caused unrest. Some five wagons of grain for the provisioning of Triesch/Třešť and the surrounding area were stored in a local mill. Although the grain was needed locally, four wagons were to be sent to feed residents of Brünn/Brno. When news of this arrangement reached workers at six small local factories, all of them, some 1,200 people, stopped work. They joined other workers and members of the community assembled before the town hall, forming a crowd of about 3,000 people to protest the grain's removal and delivery to Brünn/Brno because there were no stocks of flour in Triesch/Třešť. Because the city's deputy mayor had not received a satisfactory answer

in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1950 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014), 12-13; and T. Mills Kelly, "Feminism, Pragmatism, or Both? Czech Radical Nationalism and the Woman Question, 1898-1914," *Nationalities Papers* 30, no.4 (2002):537-552.

[340] MZA, B13, Box 409, čj. 8828.

[341] MZA, B14, Box 409, čj. 10511.

[342] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 149, Z. 70301.

from district officials, a deputation that included members of the local work force planned to go to the provincial government in Brünn/Brno the following day to prevent the grain delivery. Officials informed the crowd of this and asked them to resume work the following day. The demonstration lasted about two hours. However, officials feared that if the grain was handed over, force might be needed to ensure its delivery. In case the grain must be removed, work stoppages and riots could occur.[343] The district commissioner in Iglau/Jihlava wrote to the provincial governing committee in Brünn/Brno on May 8, 1918 noting that workers in Triesch/Třešť had gone back to their jobs after it was established that the grain would remain in the mills in Triesch/Třešť and Jesowitz/Jezdovice.[344] In this incident, the threat of moving local supplies to provision people elsewhere prompted workers in Triesch/Třešť to take action. Their demonstrations prompted officials to act on their behalf to stop the removal of grain from the community, derailing larger plans for provisioning southern Moravia.

That summer, the city of Horn in Lower Austria's *Waldviertel* faced significant shortages and requested immediate intervention from the state. The city's mayor sent a letter to the Office for People's Nutrition in Vienna explaining that no flour had been received for weeks. Owing to hunger, local workers undertook important agricultural work either reluctantly or refused altogether. The mayor claimed that in Vienna, the deficiencies of flour could be offset with other foodstuffs, including corn, millet and barley, but they did not have these grains in their community. The municipality had already asked permission from the district of Zwettl to buy potatoes on the free market; however, they received no response. They requested that authorities in Vienna send

[343] MZA, B13, Box 409, čj. 8638.
[344] MZA, B13, Box 409, čj.8638.

additional corn, millet, barely, or any other available resource so that the community could survive the next several weeks until the new harvest.[345] Yet again, the shortages and delayed harvests took their toll on those in the provinces. Here too the authorities in Horn perceived their situation as worse than that in the imperial capital, suggesting that they had fewer resources at their disposal in the provinces and conveying an idea that Vienna had provisions available to distribute.

What were the causes of provisioning problems in summer 1918? A July report from the local food inspector on the conditions in the *Waldviertel* to the office in Vienna provided a detailed list of the problems the district faced. Based on his inspections in Gmünd and Waidhofen an der Thaya, he ordered the early allocation of flour or potatoes to both districts as well as Pöggstall and Zwettl. What led to his request? First, he noted the delayed potato harvest in the *Waldviertel* owing to repeated frosts, so that the general harvest would not occur before August and other crops were also delayed. The official observed that the farmers in the area struggled with food shortages, noting that for weeks many farmers had bread cards. Drought had contributed to a low milk supply as well as to the lack of cattle feed. The report also noted the widening of the circles of production and consumption. When compared with the neighboring districts in Upper Austria, Bohemia, and Moravia, the population in the *Waldviertel* was aware that the neighboring areas received less and yet the supply of the consumer was still much better. The *Waldviertel* shortages had had significant effects on the local population. The report listed an increase in the cases of famine edema, especially among children. The number of beggars in the area had increased. Parents often sent their children to the forests to

[345] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 120, Z. 86957.

gather blueberries, otherwise they would have no food. The increased theft of the not-yet-ripe potatoes from the fields would lower the harvest's final yield. The report noted these circumstances contributed to the revival of mistrust of the government, which had not fulfilled its promises. The official asked that authorities in Vienna take seriously the report and requested that listed amounts of provisions—which he added, were the absolute minimum required for the districts—should be made available immediately. If it was necessary, he would allow for a double allocation of slaughtered cattle for the four weeks; however, the seizure of cattle already occurred under gendarmerie assistance—suggesting that the local population provided their cattle unwillingly. Unsurprisingly, the food office in Vienna was unable to transfer additional provisions to the region.[346] The difficulties of the food situation drove a wedge between the people of the provinces and the state—particularly officials in Vienna. The ongoing war widened the distance between these provincial towns and the imperial capital.

Meanwhile in southern Moravia, the situation continued to deteriorate. On July 23 and 24, 1918, there were hunger demonstrations in Iglau/Jihlava. There was only a small quantity of porridge available for distribution, which in turn led to a noisy demonstration in front of the city hall. Around 6:30 p.m. a crowd of about 700-800 gathered, many of them female employees of the Iglau/Jihlava Cigarette Factory and children. They assembled in front of Mayor Vinzenz Inderka's home. Because the city police failed to disperse the crowd, a town council member telephoned to request gendarmerie assistance. The district commissioner assembled a gendarmerie group and went personally to the mayor's house, where he gave a long address to appease the

[346] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 120, Z. 101580.

crowd. Afterwards, he promised the arrival of food in the next few days. At 8:30 in the evening peace and order was restored without the need for further gendarmerie assistance. The next day, a group of people assembled in front of the town hall; however, the crowd dissipated as the report arrived that officials in Brünn/Brno had sent peas and beans to the city.[347] Yet again, even at this point in the war, officials made attempts to meet the needs of residents.

Lack of provisions also affected local pubs, cafes, and restaurants whose proprietors protested rationing and shortages, noting the effects on their industry and in turn, on consumers. The Czech Provincial Association of Pubs and Cafes for Moravia and Silesia in Brno (*Zemská jednota hostinských a kavárníků pro moravu a slezsko*) sent petitions to the Moravian governor in late August 1918 with several petitions. First, members complained that the "infinitely long war" and the subsequent reduction of available food hurt their industry. With the rationing of necessities and beer along with the regulation of food and drinks, owners were unable to make a living. Therefore, the association demanded first and foremost the end of the war. Secondly, they addressed the food crisis: poor nutrition damaged both physical and mental well-being. The letter suggested that some members of society received less than other groups, undermining the notion that all received fair and equal treatment. They also complained of a lack of clothing and footwear. They complained Czechs received fewer provisions than others. Additionally, "in order to avoid harmful appearances" the group demanded that flour and bread card rations be increased and that when the meat rations had to be reduced, other

[347] MZA, B13, Box 409, čj. 14143.

food rations including legumes, vegetables, eggs, poultry, fat from Hungary, and sugar needed to be increased.

The petition also addressed concerns about beer and wine production. The association reminded officials that barley was necessary for beer production and suggested that "good beer is a supplement to poor nutrition." They implied that beer could help to make up for some of the deficiencies due to food shortages. The group pointed out that stopping the production of beer in breweries and bars would not save a grain of barley; on the contrary, it would strengthen and expand home brewing. The group also expressed concern about the region's wine: They called for the end of exporting wine from the region. The Association also advocated for the increase in allocation of food to the hospitality industry, which was engaged in serving residents as well as military personnel. Thus, the industry attempted to stake a claim to having a direct connection with the war effort. They also requested necessary allotments of fuel for the winter months as well as more soap to maintain proper sanitation standards, and in doing so drew attention to the shortage of all consumer goods on the home front.[348]

The state's ongoing removal of goods from some areas to provision others took its toll on those doing the providing, especially in industrial areas. On October 15, 1918, the Association of Industrialists in Moravia and Silesia (*Jednota průmyslníků pro Moravu a Slezsko*) protested the exporting of food from their area. The group expressed its concern that the government exported large amounts of food, flour, grain, and potatoes from Moravia. As a result, local industrial workers suffered, particularly owing to the flour shortage. Despite poor harvest, the Association alleged that the state continued to

[348] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 119, Z. 127126.

purchase more grain from the province than the previous year, and they also claimed that the state exported fifteen to twenty wagons of grain and hundreds of potatoes. The group asserted that if the export of food from Moravia was not stopped immediately, the non-agricultural workers, especially the urban population and industrial workers, would face even greater nutritional losses. The Association also stated its desire for peace, and a desire for it to come about "without large takeover—calmly." However, it was difficult for people to understand how a place with fertile land, such as Moravia, could experience such shortages and that its population could suffer from hunger. Therefore, on behalf of Czech industrial interests in Moravia, the groups felt obligated to demand that the provincial governor stop food exports from the province immediately.[349] This incident, like other incidents described in this chapter, demonstrates that the removal of food from the provinces could erode morale and faith in the state's ability to provision them just as much as in cases where the state was unable to feed its people.

Conclusion

Analysis of the food crisis from the perspective of the provinces reveals the wartime breakdown of home front morale and relationships between residents and officials during the war as the state tried but consistently failed to meet residents' needs. Relations between different levels of Habsburg bureaucracy became frayed in the war. Municipal officials often worked on behalf of local residents in efforts to procure sufficient provisions, conveying the community's and their own frustrations with the War Grain Institution's failure to distribute full rations in a timely manner. City and district

[349] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 119, Z. 148685.

officials struggled to keep order as food demonstrations became increasingly common. That these demonstrations even took place indicates that needs were not being met.

Women played a key role in the changing structure of home front society as they increasingly participated in public protests of poor provisioning. Women instigated many of the war's early demonstrations, and they continued to play a significant role in these events as the war continued. In addition to often leading demonstrations, women actively helped thwart requisitioning efforts. In doing so, they undermined the Monarchy's wartime provisioning system and as a result compromised its ability to carry out its role as provider, the effects of which influenced the lives of urban residents.

Residents of the provinces frequently assumed that those elsewhere in the Monarchy—especially those in the imperial capital—were better provisioned than they were and complained of hunger. Yet, numerous Hamsters came to the provinces to find food, and children were sent there in an effort to reverse the effects of malnutrition. Conditions in the provinces were, in fact, better than in the Monarchy's urban centers. Although this was the case, personal perceptions of hunger mattered because they drove individual complaints and attitudes, leading provincial residents to protest. And, even if the shortages were not as severe as in other urban areas, they were enough to spark unrest and decrease morale.

By examining provisioning and requisitioning together, a larger picture of wartime deprivation emerges. People living in northern Lower Austria and southern Moravia felt the war's effects in ways that those in Vienna did not. The state regularly asked people in these communities to sacrifice—charging them with helping to feed residents of the imperial capital, the Moravian provincial capital, and members of the

military—in addition to coping with their own shortages. While authorities made attempts to respond to requests for better provisions, they also continued requisitioning, demanding more and more sacrifice from its people. The challenges of feeding the Monarchy led these communities to turn inward, looking to secure provisions for themselves.

The influx of outsiders further complicated the problem of securing food for the community. Hamsters were an ongoing nuisance for residents and officials alike, and they undermined the state's provisioning program, which had failed to meet their needs. The state sent urban children to the countryside to recover their health. These children represented more mouths to feed. Public pleas to aid these children counted among many calls for sacrifice among those on the home front, and it seems that provincial residents rose to the challenge of providing for them. However, the presence of refugees, POWs, and other internees in the provinces further complicated the provisioning of the home front.

Chapter 4: Refugees: Outsiders in the Provinces

The onslaught of refugees from elsewhere in Austria complicated local and regional Habsburg officials' attempts to provision the home front, even as complaints of shortages increased. The presence of these refugees added to the difficulties of home front life because they represented more bodies to house and mouths to feed. Mobilization, shortages, and requisitioning had already taken their toll on home front residents; refugees were simply another wartime complication. The presence of refugees heightened the sense of the local and of the other, and relations between the two groups were not friendly, deteriorating as the war went on. The refugee crisis could also divide residents of the hinterland. The general wartime shortages coupled with the frustrated and hostile reactions of locals meant that refugee women and children were among the most vulnerable people on the home front.

This chapter focuses on the relationships between residents and refugees in the provinces. I argue that the refuge crisis contributed to the collapse of the provincial home front because feeding and housing refugees placed yet another burden on an already overwhelmed society. Moreover, people of the provinces viewed refugees as "other," drawing distinctions between who belonged to the community and who did not, and in doing so, sometimes revealed nationalist or antisemitic prejudices. I also show that while Habsburg officials sought to manage the refugee crisis, they failed to keep up with the demand for assistance, another failure to fulfill patriarchal duties toward their own people—both refugees and residents living with refugees in their midst. Though officials placed internees and refugees into separate categories, locals did not always recognize this distinction. They sometimes conflated the two as this chapter demonstrates.

The "Jewish Affair" in Windigsteig

A series of incidents in spring 1915 in Windigsteig, Lower Austria involving Russian-Jewish internees, also referred to in letters and reports as refugees, reflects the antisemitism that flared throughout the Monarchy during wartime, and demonstrates how the arrival of outsiders could intensify local social tensions. In this case, animosity between residents and newcomers manifested quickly in xenophobic behavior and antisemitism. The local Jewish community was also involved.

A letter that eighty residents of Windigsteig sent to district officials in Waidhofen an der Thaya on April 14, 1915 reveals one side of the local disagreement. After affirming their commitment to Austria and claiming to be good citizens of the Monarchy, they stated that they were willing to house Jewish refugees, owing to wartime circumstances. However, they wrote to protest Jewish behavior, because they, the local population in Windigsteig, believed that the "Jewish element" was suppressing and provoking local Christians. The letter writers described three incidents in which they believed that they had faced discrimination.

First, they contended that the local Jewish man Alois Fürst, a local grain dealer in Waidhofen an der Thaya and administrator of the local internment home, had made anti-Christian statements to a guard, presumably assigned to oversee the internees, on the streets of Windigsteig the previous week. He allegedly requested that this guard "send three Christians from Markl over the following day, so that they can clean up the refugees!" The comment offended the letter writers who asserted that Fürst had

specifically requested Christians, although there were more than enough local Jewish residents living in Markl to carry out the task.

Secondly, the letter writers claimed that Fürst forced local residents to take the Jewish refugees into their homes. The officials had asked residents to remove holy images from the walls of the places intended for Jewish residents. The residents mentioned one widow, who objected to housing three Jewish families, but was forced to do so under the War Service Laws (*Kriegsdienstleistungs-Gesetzt*), receiving ten crowns monthly for the rent.

Finally, the letter writers described an incident that they believed called for intervention. While standing at the local butcher's stall, the Jewish cook from Markl, Max Portnoj, called the Christians housed there "pigs." He had been heard demanding, "Give me '*Treffernes*' (non-kosher meat) for the pigs!" This and the other incidents—Fürst's comments and the forced housing of refugees—agitated local Christians, who protested what they considered Jewish provocations. They demanded immediate measures to give them relief, threatening that otherwise they were likely to riot.[350] While Windigsteig's residents were aware that they were required to assist refugees, they were unwilling to help them any longer. Stressing that they were good Austrians, they sought intervention from district officials on their behalf. They believed that part of being good Austrians meant being Christians, and as Christians, they were under attack from Jewish people—both residents and refugees.

Word of the local community's grievances spread through the province, and the *Kremser Zeitung*, a local Lower Austrian newspaper, recounted the complaints in an

[350] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 698, 2068, XIIa, 1916.

April 24 article, "Annoyance from the Internment Home." It listed the various complaints, concluding that "the authorities will insist that if the Jewish refugees' arrogant behavior does not end, they will be deported."[351]

Whether these refugees were Austrian citizens or not was of little consequence to locals, who blamed "outsiders" for causing problems. When news of the events in Windigsteig reached Lower Austrian Governor Richard Freiherr von Bienerth, he reported them to the Interior Ministry on April 27. Bienerth further explained that both Christian and Jewish refugees from Russian Poland lived in Markl, but his comments suggest this distinction did not matter to local residents. He further noted that the Interior Ministry had instructed district officials to treat these Polish-Jewish refugees well. His report on the events confirmed many of the details provided in the original complaint. Yes, Fürst had demanded that a widow rent three rooms in her home to the refugees. Only after she refused did Fürst threaten her with the War Service Law. Some twelve refugees moved into Riegler's apartment, and she received ten crowns per month in rent.

Bienerth explained that refugees were living in the local Roman Catholic poor house, causing further irritation. Windigsteig's mayor permitted the refugees to live in the poor house without first obtaining permission from the town's priest. Bienerth observed that the mayor had no right to house the refugees there. Indeed, a local family wanted to apply to live there but owing to the refugee occupants, the priest was unable to grant their request. In the meantime, the poor house had become a meeting place for the town's Polish-Jewish refugees. Residents complained that refugees were noisy late into the night. Among those who complained was the community's eighty-year-old doctor,

[351] *Kremser Zeitung,* April 24, 1915, 4.

who also grumbled about the residents' uncleanliness—invoking an antisemitic trope. Bienerth acknowledged that the local population was fully prepared to make sacrifices as the war demanded, but the refugees must act appropriately. Bienerth requested that order be maintained, and the residents be satisfied, pushing for Fürst and the cook to be brought to account for their actions.[352]

Bienerth, while correcting some of the false allegations Windsteig's residents had made and that appeared in the newspaper article, agreed with the assessment of the letter writers. He suggested that those committing crimes against the local community needed to be brought to justice. Bienerth noted that while both Polish-Jewish and Polish-Christian refugees lived in the area, problems stemmed from Polish-Jewish refugees' behavior and the community's interactions with them as well as with the local Jewish man Fürst. Bienerth stressed, as did the local population in their initial complaint, that the community was willing to make wartime sacrifices, but these Jewish refugees were unwelcome because of their behavior.

On May 5 district officials in Waidhofen an der Thaya wrote to the Lower Austrian Governing Committee about the problems in Windigsteig, providing additional details about Fürst, who had served as the director of Markl's internment station since January. He had cared for refugees without discriminating on the basis of their religion, even paying for some of their needs out of his own pocket. These officials claimed that the population in Windigsteig had a history of antisemitism, particularly the priest, P. Eberhard Hahn, author of the newspaper article.

[352] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 698, 2068, XIIa, 1916.

District officials reported that the local population's allegations against Fürst did not support the case against him; various interpretations of his statements and those of the cook were given in interviews with residents. One individual, protocol number twenty-six, stated that he had not heard Fürst utter the word "Christian." Also, at the end of March and beginning of April, the Jewish community celebrated Passover, when practicing Jews did not work. Fürst might have used the word Christian in relation to Passover; however, it was unlikely to have been disparaging. The report observed that Fürst was known to be modest and had given money to various Roman Catholic organizations. Another witness disputed the second allegation that Fürst forced a widow to house refugees. The local population had already been under some pressure to house refugees, but more was needed, otherwise the refugees would have remained homeless. The district officials did comment, however, that local complaints about the cleanliness of the Polish-Jewish refugees were accurate: Terms of "cleanliness" and "hygiene…appeared to be almost alien to these people."

One female witness confirmed the statements of Portnoj, the Jewish cook. However, there was no proof that Portnoj had meant that the Christians were "pigs." The report also noted that of the approximately 110 persons at the internment station in Markl, only about thirty were Orthodox Jews, who kept kosher. Fifty of the Jewish internees did not keep kosher and ate almost the same diet as the interned Christians. Portnoj belonged to the group of non-Orthodox Jews, who regularly poked fun at Orthodox customs. He had not been known to make comments about Christians. In fact, he had been described as a quiet and very hardworking man. And yet, for this alleged remark against the Christians, which he denied having said, he was dismissed from his

post. Seventy people had signed protocols to the district officials, but officials found many of the statements to be questionable. Clearly, some of the local population was unwilling to care for the refugees.

The Interior Ministry again wrote to the Lower Austrian Governor on July 7 about the "provocative behavior of the Jews interned in Markl." Further complaints from Hahn were included. His June 16 letter begins with reference to the "Jewish affair in Windigsteig." This letter followed his previous month's visit to Vienna, where he sought "justice" for the local community against Fürst's "egregious Jewish insolence and provocative violation." Hahn alleged that there was ongoing persecution of Christians because Fürst continued to mock them and that Waidhofen district officials permitted Fürst's behavior. Hahn had complained to the district commissioner, but was told "Fürst remains the administrator in Markl, I am pleased with him and what the community of Windigsteig says, I don't care, it can turn it on its head, etc." The district captain suggested that he would bring charges of slander against those responsible for these comments and said to Hahn, "and you (namely I) leave immediately! Enough for me!" Furthermore, Hahn complained that statements against Fürst had been verified; yet, the district commissioner had not taken seriously the claims of "honest farm women" who were willing to make allegations under oath against Fürst. According to Hahn, the district commissioner had replied, "For my part you could take 1000 oaths, it will not help you!" Hahn thus wrote to Vienna in efforts to request "Fürst's dismissal" (underlined in the original) and to seek redress of the community's miserable living conditions.

Hahn and residents continued to complain about Fürst during July 1915, when many residents made additional complaints, including Hahn and three women. On July 14, the district commissioner again stressed to the provincial governing committee that the complaints against the director of the internment station in Markl were untrue. He observed, "The whole [matter] is a personal agitation of Father Hahn against the commando and the director of the internment station Markl. The director of the station, Alois Fürst is a well-known peaceful and simple person, who has never offended anyone in his life." On July 29, community members and officials met with district officials to investigate allegations stemming from the April events. The community remained entrenched in its charges against Fürst. A municipal committee meeting in Windigsteig the same day addressed the issue of housing the refugees in the local poor house. At the meeting, officials established that one room was to be kept for poor people from the area. The two persons currently living in the poor house in concubinage were to be evicted immediately, and the priest or the director of the poor house was to approve additional changes regarding the poor house's inhabitants. Finally, the committee agreed that the refugees could remain in the poor house, but only as long as they did not violate the house rules. As the district commissioner acknowledged in a note to the provincial governing committee the next day, this seemed to resolve the issues surrounding the use of Windigsteig's poor house.[353]

Fürst remained director of the internment camp, where he was popular among internees. A July 3, 1915 report of the Hebrew language censorship section included an excerpt of a letter Markl internee S. Wasserlauf sent to a woman in Skrzydlne bei Bobro,

[353] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 698, 2068, XIIa, 1916.

Galicia that noted, "We have here everything that we need, even a bath and a house of prayer…Everything here is significantly cheaper than where you are…We receive very good food here—the director is even a very good man and spends much of his own private money on us."[354] A mid-November 1915 report from the Hebrew censorship section also commented positively on the conditions in Markl. The report's author observed that in contrast to Steinklamm, southwest of St. Pölten, where the internees complained incessantly, those interned in Markl seemed satisfied with their provisions and treatment. The internees praised director Fürst; they, too, noted that he used his own funds to meet internees' needs, and internees were able to practice their religious rites and customs. Because these measures had been implemented successfully and because they had benefitted the internees, the report suggested that internees could be transferred from Steinklamm to Markl.[355]

From the perspective of the report's author, the internment camp was a successful example because it met the needs of officials and those interned, but for residents living in their vicinity, the outsiders were a source of conflict. Indeed, housing refugees became the backdrop for airing grievances between locals and officials. The allegations appeared false, and, if the district captain's statements are taken at face value, the incidents resulted from personal disagreement, primarily between Hahn and Fürst. In the end, this was less a "Jewish affair," but rather an antisemitic Christian affair—one that said more about local social relations than about the internees. Though Polish Christian internees also lived in Markl, the grievances appear to refer solely to Jewish internees. Indeed, the Christian internees are barely mentioned.

[354] ÖStA, KA, EvB, GZNB, Box 3728, Res. No.1245.
[355] ÖStA, KA, EvB, GZNB, Box 3736, Res. No. 2691.

The incident also highlights a problem in categorization and terminology. While the correspondence concerning the events in Windigsteig repeatedly refers to these Jewish-Polish Russian citizens as "refugees," subsequent censorship reports suggest that these men were internees, confined on the grounds of their status as citizens of enemy states. Just as Bienerth pointed out that these were Russian rather than Austrian citizens, the multiple identifying labels attached to these groups and their citizenship, at least to some extent, did not matter to the local population. For locals, these men were enemy outsiders to be removed, and to be used as pawns in local personal relations.

The allegations in Windigsteig and the subsequent measures to address them drew in community, district, provincial, and imperial officials. The situation demonstrates that the home-front population, which authorities needed to be undivided in support for the fighting front sometimes fractured. Incidents such as those in Windigsteig occupied the time of community members and officials, pulling their attention away from efforts that would serve fighting-front objectives. The incidents in Windigsteig suggest that the Monarchy would need to devote significant effort to promoting a stable society on the home front, especially in managing the multiple groups residing on the home front.

Refugees and Local Residents: The Rise of Xenophobia

As the tensions in Windigsteig highlight**,** relations between refugees—both foreigners and Habsburg citizens—and local residents were largely poor from the beginning and deteriorated as the war continued. While at least some locals attempted to aid the refugees, this proved increasingly impossible to accomplish. Waves of refugees continued to move into the provinces during the war owing to the shifting of the fronts,

and this created a continued demand for the resources of those in the provinces. The Brusilov Offensive, launched on June 4, 1916, resulted in additional population displacement in the Habsburg East.[356] This would bring another flood of refugees to the home front. Though at least some refugees also contributed to the war economy, officials struggled to convince the local population that refugees deserved respect and care in their current places of residence.

In summer 1916, small communities lacked the resources needed to provide for additional waves of refugees. In late July 1916, the *Tagesbote aus Mähren und Schlesien* published a letter from Hullein/Hulín resident Arnold Mueller, who wrote that more than one hundred Galician refugees had arrived there in the past week. Hullein/Hulín, however, had only three Jewish families, and residents were unable to help all the refugees.[357] Similarly, the arrival of more refugees from Galicia and Bukovina in Gaya/Kyjov increased the need for donations there as well.[358] A resident from Kremsier/Kroměříž remarked in a letter to the *Tagesbote* that there had been an influx of 285 refugees from Bukovina since mid-July. The unnamed author claimed that state government aid was insufficient for these refugees to procure food, especially given the rate of wartime inflation. The letter largely detailed the aid that had been provided—including food, clothing, shelter, and even money, indicating that many locals had contributed what they could to the cause. However, the letter also noted the "intolerance

[356] On the Brusilov Offensive, see Manfried Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914-1918* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2014), 523-533.

[357] *TMS*, Evening Edition, July 26, 1916, 5.

[358] *TMS*, Evening Edition, August 1, 1916, 6.

of Kremsier's inhabitants" to the refugees, indicating the strain this caused for the local community.[359]

As daily life in the provinces became more precarious, attitudes towards refugees became more hostile. Some local newspapers, however, printed articles humanizing the refugees, providing a counter narrative to negative reports and encouraging local residents to provide aid. In January 1917, the *Eggenburger Zeitung* printed an article explaining,

> Refugees are now housed in many places as with us. Who are these refugees? They are people like us who have hearts, who have stomachs, most are loyal [*kaisertreue*] Slovenes or Ruthenes or Poles, fatherland-loving patriots they are, who unwillingly left their home when ordered to do so, bringing with them only the most necessary belongings. They are our fellow believers, Catholics.[360]

While stressing the humanity of the refugees, the article also focused on aspects of loyalty and shared religious identity, reminding readers of aid efforts that needed to be undertaken on behalf of these refugees. It was still necessary—after refugees had lived among them for more than two years—to reinforce the similarities between refugees and locals, who had apparently forgotten that these refugees were also loyal Habsburg citizens. Religion, as a common denominator between locals and refugees, served as a means to promote aid efforts by local residents, something that could be done in some areas of Lower Austria given that both were predominantly Roman Catholic. In early 1918, the *Znaimer Tagblatt*, while relating the daily expenses of the state in caring for the war refugees, noted that during peacetime the refugees were tax-paying fellow citizens.[361] Reminders of shared citizenship, however, did not outweigh the reality of the home front,

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[359] *TMS*, Evening Edition, August 4, 1916, 5.
[360] *Eggenburger Zeitung*, January 19, 1917, 3.
[361] *Znaimer Tagblatt*, February 2, 1918, 2.

where many—permanent residents and refugees alike—faced increasingly desperate circumstances owing to ongoing wartime demands and deprivations.

Despite efforts to humanize the refugees, locals increasingly expressed the desire to expel these interlopers. Many refugees lived crowded together in unsanitary conditions, putting their health and wellbeing at risk. In September 1917 Eggenburg housed 138 Ruthenian refugees, seventy-four of whom lived in one house. The lack of available local accommodations meant that there was nowhere else to house them. The first case of typhus at the house was reported on August 7, a second case followed eight days later, and a third was reported on September 2. In light of the sanitation situation, and given that a doctor of the Lower Austrian Provincial Government had already inspected the area in July and suggested that the refugees be moved, local officials in Eggenburg requested that the refugees be relocated.[362] The refugees lived in cramped, unsanitary conditions, but the sheer number of those seeking refuge in the provinces overwhelmed the communities in which they temporarily resided, leaving few housing options. Residents in turn saw these refugees as something to be removed from their midst. This rhetoric of the refuges as "other" in opposition to the locals and as a group to be removed would continue to intensify.

Suspect Refugees

In addition to frustrating residents, some refugees also worried Habsburg officials, who feared the suspected irredentist tendencies of several nationality groups, especially Slavs and Italians. Habsburg officials considered many Italians to be irredentists and

[362] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 723, 4167, XIIa, 1917.

state enemies; yet, most were harmless citizens. The Monarchy took efforts to intern this group, especially after Italy joined the war as Austria-Hungary's enemy in 1915, making these Italian Habsburg citizens enemies. Many of them faced forced internment in camps in the Monarchy's interior, including more than 70,000 from Trentino.[363]

Habsburg officials suspected that the relationship between some Czechs and some Italian refugees in Moravia could threaten political stability. A December 10, 1916 censorship report titled "Fraternization between the Italian refugees from South Tyrol and the Littoral with the Czechs" noted contact between the refugees and the local population. The report stated that allegedly, Italian children had attended Czech schools, a site of national conflict in the Bohemian lands and a place of claiming children for a particular national cause.[364] Furthermore, some refugees had written that they had already learned Czech, or "Moravian" as the report described. The report speculated that this language study had political significance.[365] While Habsburg officials had feared irredentist behavior and disloyalty among Italian- and Czech-speaking residents all along, suggestion that the two groups could now be working together caused additional concern for authorities. In late December 1916, Moravia's provincial authorities warned district officials about alleged fraternization between irredentist refugees and Czechs. While there were no confinement or interment stations in Moravia (or Bohemia) at the time, this concern applied to the Italian refugees. Moravia's Governing Committee warned that care should be taken to prevent the association of "irredentist-minded refugees with

[363] Alessandro Livio, "The wartime treatment of the Italian-speaking population in Austria-Hungary" *European Review of History* 24, no.2 (2017): 186-187.

[364] On education and nationalist conflict in the Bohemian Lands, see Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for the Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[365] OeStA, KA, EvB, GZNB, Box 3744, Res. No. 4411.

untrustworthy members of the Czech population."[366] Authorities suspected the disloyalty of both Czech and Italians within its borders, and the circumstances of war made these groups even more suspicious. The threat that these groups were working together for political ends was of utmost concern. Habsburg officials' statements convey a fear of being undermined from within on the home front.

Refugees and Food

Feeding refugees, as with other provincial residents, posed a significant challenge for officials at all levels of government. Refugees often complained about the lack of available food and other resources and called on authorities to fulfil their paternalistic role to provide for them. For officials, these refugees further complicated the wartime provisioning system. Food was also a source of tension between refugees and the local population. Officials and residents associated refugees with the food-related crimes of hoarding and price gouging, and whether they were guilty of these crimes or not, this further strained their relationship with locals, who already felt deprived of food. The refugees then became targets of the local population's frustrations.

The fluctuating numbers of refugees in the provinces complicated the Monarchy's provisioning efforts. In fall 1916, as more refugees made their way to the hinterland, district officials wrote their provincial counterpart to request an increase in the local flour provisions. For example, in October 1916, 860 Ruthenian refugees arrived in Zwettl, Lower Austria, bringing the total number of refugees in the district to 1,324. Thus, the flour and bread supply needed to be increased. In some areas of the district, refugees

[366] SOkA Jihlava, Okresní úřad-okresní národní výbor Jihlava do r. 1949, Box 38, inv. č. 5115 1916.

now made up between fifteen and twenty percent of the population. Likewise, in November, Horn's district officials also requested that the Lower Austrian Governing Committee insure that flour allotments were adjusted to reflect the arrival of 840 Ruthenian refugees.[367] The newly arrived refugees disrupted ration calculations and the overall provisioning system. The shifting of the fighting fronts caused a domino effect, shifting the civilian population and complicating the lives of those in the provinces.

Like local residents, refugees often complained of hunger and lack of rations. The Istrian refugees living in and around Oberhollabrunn wrote and signed a letter complaining about the lack food. The refugees claimed that they had nothing to eat, and there was no milk for their children. They had not received the bread card rations due to them. The administration of the concentration camp in Oberhollabrunn forwarded their complaints to the Lower Austrian Government on May 15, 1917, explaining the situation. These refugees were destitute and received no government aid unlike others in the district. However, the official explained, "In general, the refugees in the district Oberhollabrunn have comparatively good living conditions." In their letter, the Istrian refugees also suggested the founding of a consumer association for those living in diaspora, but that did not seem feasible to authorities. The officials noted that the store in the refugee camp Oberhollabrunn was only for the Bukovinan refugees in the camp, not for Istrian refugees or for others interned or confined in the district.[368] The Istrian refugees' complaints reveal some of the frustrations that refugees faced with provisioning because not all qualified for the same government support. The conditions in Oberhollabrunn continued to deteriorate. Later that year before the harvest, officials

[367] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 711, 5796, XIIb, 1916.
[368] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 741, 1574, XIIa, 1918.

reduced rations by twenty percent, with the goal of providing the full value of the bread cards once again at harvest time.[369] Reduced and unfulfilled rations cards affected everyone on the home front, though they affected some—like these Istrian refugees—more than others.

Provisioning could divide residents and the refugees as sixteen-year-old refugee Marie Szosda indicated in a letter to officials. Szosda wrote about the refugees' difficulties and highlighted tensions with locals in Kirchschlag, Lower Austria, where she and the other refugees had lived for six months. She claimed that refugees had only received small quantities of bread and potatoes and no fat. She recognized the current challenges the Monarchy faced, writing, "We understand that we must suffer, because it is the war. But why should our small children die from hunger and the local hosts do not want to sell us any milk?" Her statement reflects that she understood war as a time of sacrifice, or at least was cognizant of the state's efforts to enforce the concept of sacrifice, and she used that language in her appeal. Yet, she questioned the local population's treatment, suggesting that they were causing the refugees to suffer beyond what was necessary. She explained that the refugees knew when the cows had milk and when not—implying that the refugees knew when the farmers were lying to them. She observed that the local population had enough pigs and eggs, but they did not suffer from emergency-level food shortages. Rather, they were unwilling to share their supplies with the refugees living in their midst.

Szosda denounced the local population, revealing their attempts to thwart the Monarchy's requisitioning efforts. When the military came to requisition goods, she

[369] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 741, 1574, XIIa, 1918.

alleged that one community member passed on the news of their arrival to the next person, and at that time they moved everything to a cellar where they covered the goods with straw and hid them. This concealing of goods undermined authorities' efforts to procure food to feed people elsewhere in the Monarchy. That Szosda shared this incident with authorities indicates that she did not feel like part of the community and the local food-hiding efforts; instead, she exposed them.

Szosda described the local population as well-off and somewhat criminal. "These farmers live very well," she asserted, "they do not know that there is worldwide war." In addition to pointing out the collective activity of the community, she drew attention to a farmer who had slaughtered one pig a month since the refugees had arrived although it was forbidden. The farmer had gone to the municipal director and had promised the meat for the Galician refugees, who lacked meat. He purchased three pigs and slaughtered one of them. As the refugees came to him and asked to purchase meat, he laughed and said that there was no good meat for them. Szosda's account implied that this farmer used refugee provisioning to his own material advantage. Therefore, she exclaimed "High Ministry, should such justice rule in this land, where there is no war?! For the war refugees?!" Szosda questioned how the authorities could permit refugees to face such circumstances in an area where there was "no war." Her comment questions the definition of war, the separation of home and fighting fronts, and the authority of officials.

Szosda's account also shows how war affected the refugees in gender-specific ways. She explained that their housing situation was precarious: They lived in small rooms that were poorly heated. Meanwhile, the farmers had five or six rooms and

laughed at the refugees' situation. For new mothers, the freezing conditions left them physically unable to breastfeed their children. The cold and deprivation affected women's bodies in specific ways that left them unable to fulfill their function as mothers. Szosda wrote that subsequently the doctor had forbidden the women to breastfeed their children, who would die from hunger if the feedings stopped. These refugees had gone to the farmers to buy milk, and one had given a farmer a crown for a liter, but he tossed away the money. He had said that the six liters of milk per day that he had were insufficient for himself, and he did not need money because he already had enough. Szosda's account of poor provisioning and the lack of heating reveal the physical toll being refugees took on women's bodies, in this case leaving them unable to feed their infants. Local farmers were unwilling to sell them milk, leaving these mothers to fail in efforts to feed their children.

Hostile behavior among local residents also occurred as the community attacked at least one of their own for aiding the refugees. The translator who conveyed Szosda's account subsequently faced repercussions for their role in mediating on behalf of the refugees. They added a note to the end of their translation of Szosda's letter, writing that the refugees did not understand German. The translator also noted that German speakers, implying the local population, had thrown rocks and screamed at them for helping the refugees.[370] Local hostilities to the refugees were such that aiding the refugees was not deemed acceptable behavior, and locals turned against other locals who provided assistance to the refugee outsiders.

[370] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 723, 2183, XIIA, 1917.

This letter describes several groups in conflict: Refugees versus farmers, outsiders versus the locals, and even locals versus locals. In this account, the farmers feature as the villains as they were for many of the Monarchy's urban residents. Farmers are unpatriotic in Szosda's account. They undermined provisioning efforts, both refusing to sell the refugees food and to provide foodstuffs to authorities for requisitioning.

Refugees living in camps also faced food shortages and hunger. The food inspectors visited refugee camps, and their reports provide some indication of the circumstances there. The inspector for Brünn/Brno described the conditions of Svatoboritz/Svatobořice, the refugee camp near Gaya/Kyjov, in December 1917. The camp housed 529 Ukrainian refugees. Of these, 290 were children between the ages of three and fourteen while forty were between the ages of one and three; children comprised over sixty percent of those in the camp. The total number of those living in the camp also included eighteen nursing mothers. The inspector recorded that provisioning in the camp was generally good, including the allocation of flour products. However, there were shortages of several other goods, including milk. This would have been particularly problematic for the camp given the large number of children residing there. The report also noted that some complained about the provisioning of pearl barley in place of potatoes. The camp also had a shortage of petroleum and had no emergency lighting.[371] While the official considered the situation in the camp "good," the label was relative as the camp continued to experience shortages and substitutions.

The local population also made known their frustrations with provisioning the refugees. The food inspectors often noted the presence of refugees in their reports, noting

[371] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 129, Z. 5620.

numbers of those living in a specific community and in some cases, potential issues with the local population. Iglau/Jihlava's food inspector explained in his daybook entry from December 22, 1917 that the community in Battelau/Batelov complained about difficulties with the Galician refugees. The complaints were general, though they did mention that the "refugee element" harmed provisioning efforts.[372]

For small communities already struggling with their own provisioning crisis, feeding the refugees provided an additional, unwelcome burden. The food inspector for Brünn/Brno described the poor conditions in Steinitz/Ždánice in his daybook for September 1917. The flour supply was inadequate, and the community faced problems with the provisioning of other goods, including sugar and fat. The lack of animal feed led to a milk shortage. "Moreover," the report noted, there were 120 Galician Jewish refugees in the community and "their removal would be desirable."[373] Here the inspector records the desires for refugee expulsion. In 1900, the town had 419 houses with 2,043 inhabitants who identified as Czech speakers and 128 who identified as German speakers.[374] The addition of 120 Galician Jewish refugees represented a significant increase in the population—of the other—at a time when the townspeople struggled to feed themselves. The food inspector's daybook indicates that the added challenge of feeding refugees proved more than the local population could handle.

Food related crimes such as price gouging and hoarding began early in the war, and newspapers related countless alleged cases—many involving refugees—to the public. Already in summer 1915, the *Mährischer Grenzbote* regularly reported price gouging in

[372] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 130, Z.134182.
[373] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 129, Z. 92072.
[374] Jan Otto, *Ottův slovník naučný. Illustrovaná encyklopædie obecných vědomostí*, Volume 27, (Prague: J. Otto, 1908), 761.

and around Iglau/Jihlava.[375] A report to district and city officials from the Moravian Provincial Government on April 25, 1915 cautioned that Galician Jewish refugees allegedly engaged in illegal activity near Ostrau/Ostrava. Newspapers had reported that the refugees were lying to peasant women about a new tax on poultry and offering to buy their chickens in advance of the tax taking effect. The letter suggested that the refugees took advantage of the local women and bought their hens, important for local egg production. The letter concluded by cautioning that the population needed to be warned of this activity.[376] That provincial authorities acted in response to the local newspaper report and passed on the news to other areas of the province suggests the seriousness with which the officials took these allegations. The report repeats the frequent trope of Jewish refugee involvement in the criminal activity related to the food supply. In summer 1916, the *Mährischer Grenzbote* reported on the "well-known" activities of the Galician refugees, who reportedly purchased small quantities of food—and other goods—from numerous businesses and then sold the food in a region experiencing shortages, selling the goods at "exorbitant prices." In the last several days, the article further explained, several refugee buyers had been arrested in the city, their products had been confiscated, and had been sent to public prosecutors.[377] Some locals believed that refugees were engaged in criminal activity connected to one of the biggest problems plaguing residents of the home front: Food provisioning.

Those requisitioning food could target refugees, and in one case, they falsely accused refugee women from the Austrian Littoral of hoarding food. At eight o'clock on

[375] *Mährischer Grenzbote*, July 13, 1915, 3; July 25, 1915, 6; August 12, 1915, 5.
[376] SOkA Jihlava, Okresní úřad-okresní národní výbor Jihlava do r. 1949, Box 34 Inv.č. 4814 j.č. 2439 1915.
[377] *Mährischer Grenzbote*, July 9, 1916, 8.

the evening of February 13, 1918, a gendarme and a civilian entered the apartment of Katarina Damijanić, from Pola/Pula, in Asperndorf, just northeast of Oberhollabrunn. The gendarme and civilian confiscated approximately fifteen kilograms of flour and twelve kilograms of wheat in a raid that came about as the result of diligent observation. In the apartment of Olga Damijanić, likewise from Pola/Pula, living at house No.12, they confiscated a large amount of food—about forty kilograms of flour, four to five kilograms of lard, five kilograms of beans, seventy kilograms of potatoes, and a half kilogram of barley. The investigators did not even leave her any food for lunch. In the apartment of Marie Gioerdana, also at house No. 12, the men confiscated an additional twenty kilograms of flour, sixty kilograms of potatoes, and smoked meat. At the apartment of the refugee Anton Matas, who lived in the same building as Katarina Damijanić, they confiscated about twenty kilograms of flour. Then the confiscated foodstuffs had been taken to a damp warehouse, where they had been stored at great risk of spoiling and were exposed to mice. The letter explained that the refugees had not been eating all their rations and instead had been saving some to take with them on their planned return home because they had received reports about poor provisioning conditions there. The Central Committee for the Repatriation of Refugees and the Rebuilding of the Littoral (*Zentralausschuss für die Repatriierung der Flüchtlinge und den Wiederaufbau des Küstenlandes*) forwarded this complaint and asked the Interior Ministry to aid the refugees. Eventually, authorities returned the provisions to those involved, except for the grain.[378] The status of these individuals as refugees may have made them targets for food hoarding raids. The seizure of all Olga Damijanić's food

[378] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 741, 1574, XIIa, 1918.

suggests an element of vindictiveness in the raid. The authorities eventually returned most of what had been confiscated, confirming that the refugees were not involved with hoarding or criminal activity. The incident conveys the concerns these refugees faced returning home. They knew how dire the situation was back home and wanted to prepare themselves as best they could.

Food became an on-going source of tension between refugees and officials as well as refugees and residents. Authorities struggled to provide for the fluctuating number of refugees while also accommodating the local population. Refugees, like other home front residents, experienced shortages, though lack of access to property and local social networks make their situation more precarious. Women and children—the majority of those described in the incidents above—especially felt the effects of shortages, sometimes in very gendered ways that left women physically unable to feed their children. The arrival of so many outsiders at a time of acute deprivation likely overwhelmed residents, who did not react kindly to those in need of provisions. Examining food and the refugee crisis illuminates another aspect delineating lines between refugees and the local community.

Damages and Reparations

Refugees across the home front were often housed in private residences, where they came into regular contact with property owners, who complained of damages that refugees caused to their land, homes, and apartments and in turn demanded compensation from authorities. These complaints provide some insight into refugees' experiences in Lower Austria and Moravia. They also serve as an indication of the relationship between

refugees and the local population, revealing local attitudes towards those living in their midst, or, perhaps even under their own roofs. The requests highlight significant grievances among home front residents and further fracturing of Habsburg society.

In May 1916, the directorate of the concentration camp in Oberhollabrunn wrote to the provincial governing committee, relating that refugees in the area had left the houses in which they were staying very dirty and in poor condition, to the owners' detriment. The letter also suggested that some of the refugees had different standards of hygiene than those already living in this province, revealing notions of the "other" regarding those from elsewhere in the Monarchy. Since authorities had forced these home owners to take in the refugees, property owners in turn requested state compensation for the damages. And, due to the prevalence of these claims and since local officials were under pressure from residents, the directorate wrote to inquire if the state would be responsible for the damages and fulfill these requests. The provincial government passed on the repayment request to the Interior Ministry. Clearly, the inquiry asserted, when the state occupied buildings that subsequently were damaged, payment should be made to the owners. But, the situation was much more complex and went beyond damages to buildings. The property in and near the refugee camp posed a challenge to officials charged with determining what damages requiring reimbursement included. Refugees could be found taking resources from the vicinity—crops from fields, fruit from orchards, for example—and the state could not be responsible for the actions of these individuals because it did not prevent their free movement. However, the letter inquired, could they not provide some compensation? Elsewhere in the Monarchy, the "emergence of large town-like, densely-populated property" in otherwise sparsely

populated areas, referring to other camps for refugees such as Steinklamm, meant that this concern about property damage must be a recurring issue. Yes, the letter acknowledged, it would be impossible to supervise all the refugee areas due to the war, since not enough guards were available to provide the level of supervision necessary. It would seem, the letter concluded, that in special cases, the local population should be compensated for damages.

The Interior Ministry replied that yes, the officials would provide compensation for some damages, but the guilty refugees should be apprehended. In the cases of the communal refugees, those scattered across home front communities rather than kept concentrated in camps, the state would pay for property damage to buildings. In all other cases, if the refugees damaged other types of property in the vicinity of the camps—crops, orchards, wood, and the like—claims had to be filed against the individual refugees who had caused the damages. They acknowledged that since these measures left small landowners at a disadvantage, potentially causing serious problems between refugees and the local population, exceptions could be made. Local police and camp administration, however, needed to punish refugees who engaged in such actions.[379] Officials seemed to recognize that efforts needed to be taken to appease the local population, because refugee-related issues could easily lead to frustration and likely decreased morale among permanent residents.

Though the state requisitioned apartments to house refugees, residents did receive compensation for use of their property. In Iglau/Jihlava, Marie Radnitzky rented her apartment to Istrian refugees beginning on October 27, 1915. She wrote to the mayor on

[379] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 711, 3518, XIIb, 1916.

December 11, requesting that she receive thirty-five crowns per month in rent as she had not been compensated for nearly two months. The mayor in turn instructed the city treasury to pay Radnitzky seventy crowns for the previous two months' rent.[380] While repayment was possible, sometimes this occurred only with the prompting of local officials.

After the refugees vacated these properties, many owners submitted requests for the repayment of damages. Numerous complaints can be found in the letters residents submitted to Brünn/Brno's Police Directorate requesting repayment for damaged apartments located in the area, where the costs for each individual case ranged from just over a hundred to several thousand crowns.[381] The records of these requests, of which there were at least forty, consist of a request for funds specifying damages and reports containing a substantial number of receipts, a reflection of the high cost of housing these refugees and providing for them during the war. Several of these cases also contain personal letters residents wrote initiating the reparations process. These files from Brünn/Brno and those elsewhere provide a window on the personal experiences and attitudes of residents while also showing how society constructed an image of the refugee population as "other."

The case of Marie Svoboda in Blansko bei Brünn/Blansko offers an example of the types of cases submitted. Her May 31, 1918 letter stated that local officials had assigned Galician refugees to live in her apartment at Huttergasse No. 24. She alleged

[380] SOkA Jihlava, Městská správa Jihlava od Roku 1849, Politická registratura 1891-1923, Box 426, Inv.č 2013.

[381] While many of the examples here come from Brünn/Brno, the housing shortage was Monarchy-wide. Olmütz/Olomouc also experienced a housing crisis as more and more refugees moved to the area. See *Deutsches Nordmährenblatt*, November 17, 1914, 3.

that the refugees caused damage to the apartment to the extent that she was unable to rent it to a new tenant. She requested repairs to be made at the expense of the state, and since the repairs would take at least two weeks, she also requested that she receive the rent she would have earned during that time.[382] A July 30, 1918 assessment of the apartment at Huttergasse 24, which consisted of three rooms, a kitchen, and a hallway, had damages worth 373 Crowns and fifty Hellers.[383] The Police Directorate submitted the request for this amount the following day to the Provincial Government.[384] On August 31, provincial authorities approved the request.[385] A copy of a letter dated September 11, 1918 informed Svoboda that officials approved her request for repairs worth 373 Crowns fifty Hellers.[386] The time taken between the initial request from Svoboda to the date of the letter acknowledging her claim points to the lengthy bureaucratic process involved in fulfilling these claims. The case also illustrates that while refugees vacated their wartime housing, theoretically returning to their pre-war homes, their impact on Moravian society lasted after their repatriation.

The complaint that refugees had left the apartment uninhabitable was a reoccurring theme addressed in letters petitioning for compensation. Elsewhere in Moravia, Emil Stepanik had submitted a complaint to the municipal council in Iglau/Jihlava, on January 20, 1918, explaining that Istrian refugees had lived in his home for twenty-seven months and left it in such bad condition that he was unable to rent the

[382] MZA, B26, Box 2181 Poškození bytů válečných uprchlíků, Svoboda to Polizei-Direktion in Brünn, May 31, 1918.
[383] MZA, B26, Box 2181, praes. 3726, July 30, 1918.
[384] MZA, B26, Box 2181, K.k. Polizei-Direktion, Brünn, No. 3726, August 1, 1918.
[385] MZA, B26, Box 2181, K.k. Statthalterei-Präsidium für Mähren, praes. 14816, August 31, 1918.
[386] MZA, B26, Box 2181, K.k. Polizei-Direaktion to Svoboda, September 11, 1918.

room.[387] Even after the refugees themselves had left, the physical traces of their presence remained.

A letter from a Brünn/Brno resident to the Police Directorate dated August 17, 1918 described the crowded conditions that refugees experienced. Hugo Ptačník wrote that his home at Adlergasse 18 had housed three Galician refugee families from November 1, 1916 until August 1918. These families lived in the third-floor apartment, which consisted of four rooms. Apartment residents were Sara Rosenbaum and her five children, Berko Roll with seven children, and Hudel Menazes and her daughter, for a total of seventeen people. Ptačník claimed that the apartment had been in pristine condition prior to their arrival, but the refugees had left it dirty and worn, and he was unable to rent it again. Because the apartment had been rented at the request of the central office, he sought payment for the damages. The Police Directorate submitted a recommendation for 400 crowns in reparations and the Moravian Provincial Government approved the request on October 28, 1918.[388]

A letter sent to the Police Directorate in Brünn/Brno on June 13, 1918 provides a clear indication of the deplorable conditions that refugees experienced in these apartments while also conveying the attitudes of apartment owners that served to construct these refugees as outsiders. According to the letter, police officials had requisitioned two apartments, consisting of three rooms and a kitchen, at Sazamtsgasse 14 in Brünn/Brno on September 15, 1916 to house Galician Jewish refugees Efraim

[387] SOkA Jihlava, Městská správa Jihlava od Roku 1849, Politická registratura 1891-1923, Box 426, Inv.č 2013.

[388] MZA, B26, Box 2181, Ptačník to Polizei-Direktion Brünn, August 17, 1918; K.k. Polizei-Direktion, praes. 5548, October 14, 1918; and Statthalterei-Präsisidum für Mähren, praes. 19486, October 28, 1918.

Rennert and Manzia Holzmann. Damage to the apartments included the destruction of the ovens and stoves, smoke damage to the kitchen ceilings, and damage to wood paneling and plaster leaving bricks exposed. The letter's author also notes the presence of bugs and lice in the apartments, commenting that the Jewish refugees "owing to their uncleanliness, were a 'plague' on the aforementioned apartments."[389] This antisemitic comment embedded in the request for reparations provides an indication of the hostility and disgust felt towards this "plague" that had taken over these previously pristine apartments and conveys the frequent association of refugees as diseased. A note from the Moravian Governor's Office dated January 26, 1919 promised reparations for the damages done to the apartments.[390]

These petitions provide a sample of the many appeals submitted for damages, and they highlight the frustrations of those who rented their property to the refugees. For residents, this was a nagging issue, since the process to procure state funds for the necessary repairs took months, turning these grievances into a lingering issue. The interactions between the permanent residents of Moravia and the refugee population did not serve to promote unity among the Monarchy's citizens. Instead, their interactions had the opposite effect. The xenophobic and antisemitic rhetoric embedded in these requests indicate the opinions of those requesting reparations. They did not view these refugees favorably or as fellow Habsburg citizens needing assistance. Instead, the letter writers employed tropes of hygiene and disease to describe former Jewish tenants, making clear distinctions between themselves and those who had lived in their apartments.

[389] MZA, B26, Box 2181, letter from Marie Fürsatz and associate to k.k. Polizei-Direktion, June 13, 1918.

[390] MZA, B26, Box 2181, Moravské místodržitelství, no. 3598, January 26, 1919.

Accusations of Ritual Murder

The antisemitic tropes locals employed to describe Jewish refugees were not limited to disease and lack of hygiene; in Kojetein/Kojetín the centuries-old claim of ritual murder surfaced in 1918. Tension between the refugees and the locals also manifested itself in rumors of ritual murder in 1918 in the Moravian town of Prerau/Přerov. Antisemitic violence had increased in the decades before the war, particularly in Moravia in 1899 following the repeal of the Badeni Ordinances.[391] District officials in Prerau/Přerov reported to the Governing Committee in Brünn/Brno detailing local events that included accusations of blood libel, Czech-German conflict, and frustrations with Jewish refugees. Reports surfaced in Kojetein/Kojetín on March 12, 1918 about the alleged ritual murder of the maid Julie Gugler, who had been found next to a sugar factory with her veins sliced open. Gugler had recently traveled to Czernowitz/Chernivtsi to visit her parents. Though rumors suggested that Gugler's death was an incident of ritual murder, this was not the case, and the district court in Kojetein/Kojetín pressed charges against two men. The report also noted that twenty Czech children harassed the German school teacher, Kornelie Kasperlik, and ten German students while they were on a walk near Kojetein/Kojetín. Two windows were stolen from the German school and someone had broken windows belonging to Rabbi Friedenthal as well as Ignatz Kaufmann. The report also commented that both local Czechs and Jewish residents disliked the refugees who were believed to buy large

[391] Michal Frankl, "From Boycott to Riot: The Moravian Anti-Jewish Violence of 1899 and its Background" in *Sites of European Antisemitism in the Age of Mass Politics 1880-1918*, ed. Robert Nemes and Daniel Unowsky (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press; Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2014), 94-114.

quantities of food and then trade it. The report's author attributed the rumors of ritual murder to locals' dislike of refugee behavior.[392]

This report connects several antisemitic episodes in Kojetein/Kojetín to the Czech-German conflict, while blaming the refugee crisis for recent incidents. The report's description of ritual murder closely mirrors a ritual murder case in Kojetein/Kojetín in 1892 that historian Hillel J. Kieval has analyzed. Kieval argues that the discourse of ritual murder served an important political function in defining political groups in the Bohemian Lands between 1892 and 1902. In the case he discusses a Christian girl employed by a Jewish family disappeared, and some of the town's residents broke the windows of Jewish homes in response. Later it was found that she had drowned in the river. The violence then subsided.[393] The connection between the German and Czech conflict made in this 1918 report and its association with ritual murder is not unique either; Kieval has argued that the discursive practices associated with ritual murder paralleled the Czech and German conflict because they did not fit squarely into either group.[394] This report makes a link between these events and the refugee population, blaming refugees for them. This report reveals othering within the Jewish community, differentiating between the Jews already living in Moravia and the refugee population. Officials also suggest that the refugee crisis further increased other social fissures in local society.

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[392] MZA, B13, Box 409, no. 5324, Praes. No. 371, March 17, 1918, Kojetein, antisemitische Bewegung.

[393] Hillel J. Kieval, "Death and the Nation: Ritual Murder as Political Discourse in the Czech Lands," *Jewish History* 10, No.1 (Spring 1996): 75, 80. As Kieval has noted elsewhere, like other modern instances of alleged ritual murder, this case is removed from religious elements and instead provides more commentary on race or ethnicity. See Kieval "Representation and Knowledge in Medieval and Modern Accounts of Jewish Ritual Murder," *Jewish Social Studies* 1, No.1 (Autumn, 1994): 68.

[394] Kieval, "Death and the Nation," 75-76.

These incidents— expressions of antisemitism and frustrations with refugees as destructive vectors of disease—show how, as the war went on and conditions at home deteriorated, tensions on the home front increased and distinctions between those who were local and those who were outsiders became more important. In the case from Kojetein/Kojetín, the local population—described in the report as Czech, German, and Jewish—stood apart from the outsiders, the refugees. The episodes highlight the way in which the war could exacerbate preexisting conflicts and how the refugee crisis could further complicate this. In their encounters with Jewish refugees, locals fell back on previous tropes. In the context of the war, these tropes furthered distinctions of who was part of the local community and who was not.

Repatriation

While local residents sought to have the refugees removed, they were not the only ones waiting for the refugees to leave. Many of the refugees themselves wanted to return home as soon as possible. State officials also tried to send refugees home when military conditions allowed. In summer 1915, the fighting front in the east with Russia shifted, and the state allowed some refugees to return home while combat continued elsewhere. On June 27, 1915, Stanislawa Gradzinska, a refugee living in Znaim/Znojmo, requested permission from the municipal council to return home to Dębica, in the district of Robczyce, Galicia, where she was a permanent resident. She was the wife of a tax official, Vladimir Gradzinski, and thus, she explained, had sufficient income. She also requested permission for her children, ages ten, seven, and four, to return home with

her.[395] Following orders from the Interior Ministry, the municipal council granted her permission.[396]

Some refugees included descriptions of the poor conditions they faced in their current place of residence. On June 7, 1915, Stefanie Słuszkiewicz wrote to the Interior Ministry requesting permission to return home. Her letter opened by explaining that "the daily increase in food prices in Znaim forces me to return to my domicile, Bochnia [Galicia], where I live in my own house and can eat vegetables, fruits, and poultry that I have raised." She also noted there was no one at home to guard the house because her husband was at the front, presently serving in the Polish Legion. Therefore, she requested that she and her children be allowed to return home.[397]

In November 1915 both imperial and provincial officials focused their attention on returning refugees to some areas of Galicia and Bukovina, because the Russian army had retreated east in the preceding months. The Moravian provincial government detailed the procedures for the return of refugees to the two provinces to officials in Brünn/Brno, Iglau/Jihlava, Olmütz/Olomouc, and Znaim/Znojmo in November 1915. It stressed the need to have proper identification paperwork for the individual refugees returning to their home districts.[398] Despite these officials' efforts, some refugees from Galicia and Bukovina remained in Moravia throughout the war due to the ongoing shifting of the eastern front, and many remained months, even years after the official end of hostilities on the fighting fronts.

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[395] SOkA Znojmo, Archiv mesta Znojma, valecne hospodárství 1914-1921, Box 15, Protokoll, Aufgenommen beim Gemeinderate der Stadt Znaim, June 27, 1915.

[396] SOkA Znojmo, Archiv mesta Znojma, valecne hospodárství 1914-1921, Box 15, Gemeinderat Znaim, June 27, 1915.

[397] SOkA Znojmo, Archiv mesta Znojma, valecne hospodárství 1914-1921, Box 15, Stefanie Słuszkiewicz, June 7, 1915.

[398] MZA, B26, Box 2180, Repatrice válečných uprchliků, Praes. 64.948, November 24, 1918.

State officials also took measures to send refugees from the Monarchy's southern provinces home before combat ceased. Moravia's Provincial Government issued a document on September 5, 1917 stating that since it was becoming increasingly difficult to provide food and accommodation for the refugees in the hinterland, and due to the need for agricultural and industrial workers in the war zones, the Interior Ministry as well as the Army High Command had decided that refugees from the south should return to their homes. The authorities recognized that the refugees further strained the already burdened population in the interior. Refugees were to be returned to most districts in Tyrol, the Littoral, Carinthia, and Dalmatia. Officials stressed that these refugees must have the proper documentation for their return. They would be transported to their homes free of charge. The document also stressed that care was to be taken not to send refugees who were ill or known to have venereal disease; they were to be cured and then sent home. Authorities in the area of the destination of the transport were to be notified, as much as possible, of the incoming population. Refugees were to be prepared with provisions to last two to three days.[399]

While correspondence between provincial and local authorities may have stressed the need to provision returning refugees in terms of proper documentation and physical wellbeing, the reality was quite different. The Moravian Provincial Government sent a letter to the provincial capital and towns in southern Moravia on June 17, 1918 conveying a message they received from the governor's office for Tyrol and Vorarlberg. The letter, dated from May 31, explained that nineteen refugees from Levico, Tyrol had arrived on a return transport from Moravia with incomplete travel documents. These refugees, who

[399] MZA, B26, Box 2180, K.k. Statthalterei-Prasidium für Mähren, Praes. 16666, September 5, 1917.

remained in Innsbruck while officials sorted out their documentation, included "old people, the sick, women, and children who of course arrived completely exhausted. All of the discussed people belonged to the poor classes." In addition to physical exhaustion and lack of documentation, the refugees were further aggravated as their luggage had already been sent on to their intended destination. These people were "demoralized" as a result of their wartime refugee return experience rather than having "feelings of gratefulness" toward the state. Therefore, the Moravian Provincial Government urged local authorities to take care to prevent further occurrences like this and follow previously described measures for refugee repatriation, such as those of September 5, 1915, discussed above, which stressed that authorities only return refugees with proper documentation and that those in poor health should not be repatriated.[400] Local officials facing the challenge of sending home those displaced during the war failed to follow the protocols for repatriation, and perhaps they were unable to do so. As acknowledged in this letter from the Provincial Government, the experience of these refugees likely did not cause the refugees to view the state positively. Though the state attempted to manage the refugee crisis as a means of control and to carry out its duty to provide for its people, it was unable to manage or to fulfill its paternalistic role in providing for its citizens.

Conclusion

The arrival of wartime refugees, many of them women and children, complicated the lives of provincial residents who were already suffering from food shortages and requisitioning measures. The demands of housing and caring for refugees constituted an

[400] MZA, B26, Box 2180, praes. 10780, K.k. Statthalterei-Präsidium für Mähren, June 17, 1918.

additional burden. However, locals could also use the refugee situation as a means to contest pre-war disagreements. These prewar conflicts could be between individuals, as in Windigsteig, or between groups, such as between Czechs and Germans, as in Kojetein/Kojetín. The circumstances of the war intensified already existing tensions.

During the war, residents constructed outsiders as other, which increased the difficulty of managing relations between refugees and the local population. Even in cases in which the refugees were fellow Habsburg citizens, the sense of difference informed locals' attitudes about refugees, who spoke different languages or dressed differently. This was especially the case in relation to Jewish refugees, who were doubly other. A symptom of the local population's increased perception of otherness was the frequent employment of antisemitic tropes, including hygiene and price gouging.

Habsburg officials, for their part, attempted to manage the refugee crisis. They made an effort to take into account local circumstances and adapt accordingly to feed and house refugees. However, like most aspects of the war, imperial officials were unable to manage this crisis satisfactorily due to the sheer strain of wartime events. The Monarchy, and those living in the provinces, however, did not only have to provide for and live with the refugees. Residents also had to accommodate and adjust to living with additional outsiders, including internees and POWs.

Chapter 5: POWs, Internees, and Military Personnel in the Provinces

Additional outsiders arrived in and passed through the provinces in wartime, including POWs, internees, and military personnel. The First World War was a war of camps and interment, designed for enemy combatants and refugees; in Austria-Hungary, civilians also faced internment. The army sent POWs, many of them Russian, to the provinces, where they joined the wartime refugees and internees. As discussed in the first chapter, the Habsburg Monarchy interned some of its own people in the First World War, especially Slavs and Italian-speakers, as well as foreign nationals that it believed to be politically suspect and untrustworthy. This chapter analyzes the effect of POWs, internees, those confined—a subset of those interned, —and military personnel on the home front, focusing on their interactions with residents. Relations between POWs and residents defied government efforts to prevent contact, and women were most often the ones undermining the state's efforts to maintain separation. I argue that, unlike interactions with other groups of outsiders, home front women sometimes formed intimate relationships with POWs, and they sometimes supplanted Austrian men with POWs, undermining the state's effort to maintain social order. Furthermore, interactions with these outsiders had consequences for morale and for the physical safety of those on the home front. Former frontline soldiers passing through the provinces sometimes continued warring on the home front, bringing civilians directly into the path of violence. The presence of various outsiders in the provinces also calls into questions the state's distinction between home front and fighting front, complicating the idea of war in the provinces and provides yet an additional example of the gendered breakdown of Habsburg civil society.

The Demand for Labor: POWs and Internees as Workers

The Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907 set the terms of POW treatment that all belligerents were to observe, allowing for the use of POW labor. Article 6 of the 1907 Convention permitted the employment of rank-and-file POWs, but exempted officers.[401] The German army began employing Russian POWs in 1915 owing to labor shortages, and Austria-Hungary soon followed.[402] In the Habsburg Monarchy, the use of POW labor expanded quickly, so that by late 1915, only thirty to forty percent of POWs remained in camps, and by early 1917 more than one million POWs worked outside the camps.[403]

Austria-Hungary and Germany faced a similar wartime challenge in using POW labor: While the labor the POWs performed helped make up for the loss of male workers on the home front, the presence of POWs and their interactions with the local population could undermine the war effort.[404] Legally, civilians and POWs were forbidden to interact with one another. In Austria, the Edicts Imperial Law no.96 regulated civilian behavior while clause 529c of the military's Mutiny Act dictated POW behavior.[405] Historian Lisa Todd has shown in her work on relationships between POWs and German

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[401] Iris Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (London, Bloomsbury, 2014), 69-71, 73.

[402] Heather Jones, "A Missing Paradigm? Military Captivity and the Prisoner of War, 1914-18," in *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration in Europe during the First World War*, ed. Matthew Stibbe (London: Routledge, 2009), 27, 30.

[403] Julia Walleczek-Fritz, "The social degeneration of the Habsburg home front: 'forbidden intercourse' and POWs during the First World War," *European Review of History* 24, no.2 (2017): 276.

[404] Lisa Todd, '"The Soldier's Wife Who Ran Away with the Russian": Sexual Infidelities in World War I Germany," *Central European History* 44, no. 2 (June 2011): 263.

[405] Julia Walleczek-Fritz, "The social degeneration of the Habsburg home front: 'forbidden intercourse' and POWs during the First World War," *European Review of History* 24, no.2 (2017): 279.

women that authorities tried to control the private—sexual—lives of its citizens.[406] Similarly, Austrian police sought to enforce appropriate behavior among civilians, soldiers, and POWs who "offended public morals."[407]

Owing to the mobilization of men for the war and the subsequent shortage of workers, many POWs worked in varying capacities as agricultural laborers on farms or in factories. The military in conjunction with local officials coordinated the distribution of POWs workers across the home front. They struggled to organize the use of POWs as laborers while maintaining social order. Officials recognized that these workers needed close monitoring, and the Interior Ministry mandated close oversight of these POWs. Political authorities worked to maintain what they considered to be proper relationships between the local population and the POWs. Officials stressed that POWs should be treated humanely; they feared that if they did not, enemy states would take measures against their own captured military personnel. Above all, district authorities were responsible for surveilling POWs who lived in local residences

Their monitoring involved three primary tasks. Officials were to observe the relations between POWs and the local civilian population, the behavior of employers, and the POWs themselves. First, officials sought to prevent hostile actions aimed at the POWs and to limit all non-essential POW-civilian interaction. They were to prevent POWs from moving among the civilian population unless a guard accompanied them. Officials warned the home front population that anyone attempting to help POWs escape would be punished under military law. The gendarmerie was to take whatever means

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[406] Lisa Todd, '"The Soldier's Wife Who Ran Away with the Russian": Sexual Infidelities in World War I Germany," *Central European History* 44, no. 2 (June 2011): 261.

[407] Nancy M. Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 226.

necessary to keep POWs and the local population separate. Secondly, the behavior of employers also required surveillance to ensure that POWs received proper treatment. Inspections were to be carried out in urgent cases and randomly. If necessary, POWs could be removed from their employers. The behavior of the POWs themselves was to be closely monitored. If they refused to work or comply with instructions, the gendarmes could be called to intervene. On top of these various levels of surveillance, district authorities were to provide insight on the treatment of the POWs and report to the provincial government every month, including the number of POWs working in the district.[408] The presence of POWs, from the state's perspective, necessitated observation on several levels. However, enforcing these stipulations would prove difficult to accomplish.

Some POWs faced poor and even deadly conditions in the provinces. Some provincial residents commented on the poor treatment of POWs. In correspondence postmarked in Iglau/Jihlava and intercepted by the Czech language censorship section, Veronika Musil wrote that "…here there is already no one, only children and women and here there is no one who would work in the field. God alone knows what will happen next, if only you are not hungry there! The Russians here are hungry; so many run away. Are you also kept as strictly as the Russians here? No one can talk to them, they are supervised and those who talk to them are imprisoned…."[409] Her comments provide several observations of home front life. First, she notes the gendered workforce, often comprising women and children. She also alludes to both the poor conditions some of the Russians experienced and to the measures taken against local residents who tried to

[408] ÖStA, AdR, KFL, Box 16, Z. 10.022.
[409] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3746, Res. No. 4240.

interact with them. The letter suggests that Musil feared for the treatment of her correspondent, also a POW.

Hermine Kominek described the arrival of fifty Russian POWs in Trasdorf, a small town near Tulln an der Donau in Lower Austria in 1915, to work as agricultural laborers, replacing local men called up for military service. Kominek's father, a day laborer, had to train four of the POWs, a task that she later wrote "was very difficult, because these people were very backwards." She explained that her mother had encouraged her father to "be very good and patient with the people," which he seemed to have taken to heart, and "after the initial prejudice against the prisoners, good contact was soon established, and it went relatively well." The POWs became integrated in home-front life and into individual families. "On Sunday afternoon they happily came to our apartment and were very pleased to be received so kindly." Initially, the Trasdorf POWs all lived together in their one house, where "before nightfall every evening there sounded a wonderful, powerful chorus that sounded like a prayer. Almost the entire village heard this new sound; we children were totally fascinated by it." The POWs slowly "integrated in 'their' families, so that in the end almost everyone could sleep in 'his' house, sometimes also with the farmer's wife."[410] The last comment indicates that POWs might also take over the intimate relationships of men who had departed to the front. Kominek's memories of the Russian POWs in her village encapsulate the experiences of many provincial residents who encountered and formed relationships with POWs. As her account suggests, many POWs worked on the home front, filling in for absent men who had been called to the fighting front. Kominek reveals how POWs who had initially been

[410] Hämmerle, *Kindheit im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 64-65.

viewed as backward could be integrated into Austrian families, some even forming intimate relationships with the women there.

Kominek also observed that other POW workers faced difficult conditions. She commented on the "indescribable" treatment of the few hundred Romanian POWs working at a factory in nearby Mossbierbaum. They had little to eat and many died of hunger or dysentery. Able-bodied prisoners often wandered into the community asking for food, and according to Kominek "there were some merciful people. Also, my mother gave what she could." She noted some were badly beaten, even killed. She recalled, "Yes, we children were confronted there with the most awful images on the way to school. There we saw the dead lying in the ditches." The scene she describes is horrifying: dead men in trench-like positions, an image that belongs to the fighting front rather than the home front.[411]

Factory managers and associations requested POW workers from state officials. The Austrian Corporation for the Paper Industry asked for twenty internees for its factory in Pribislavitz/Přibyslavice near Trebitsch/Třebíč, Moravia. The firm justified the request on the grounds that the factory produced paper for ration cards. The district commissioner, however, asked that the request be rejected because the available POWs were barely sufficient to fill all the open positions in Lower Austria. His response shows that the use of POWs did not make up for the lost labor of mobilized men. Consequently, they could not provide additional workers to a factory in a neighboring province. However, the factory received sixteen POWs, assigned by the Ministry of War.[412] This case suggests that while local officials might have been loath to part with their own

[411] Hämmerle, *Kindheit im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 66-67.
[412] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 706, P2500, IXa, 1916.

resources, looking to protect their locality, the imperial perspective was that the request needed to be filled, especially given the extent to which POW workers engaged in a task critical to waging war. The engagement of enemy actors from the fighting front in work on the home front calls into question the distinction between the terms.

Lower Austrian officials received other requests from Moravia for laborers, revealing the struggle to find workers. In July 1916, a wholesale business in Znaim/Znojmo requested internee workers from the Lower Austrian Governing Committee. The business needed five coopers, because its coopers had recently been conscripted. The business also requested five additional workers from the concentration camp in Oberhollabrunn to assist with canning cucumbers and sauerkraut for the army, which made his request of direct importance to events on the fighting front and to the state. Lower Austrian provincial officials in turn wrote to the directorate of the Oberhollabrunn concentration camp, asking whether they could send the requested workers. The station replied that there were no coopers among the internees, but some could probably be found among the Romanian refugees. However, the other workers could be taken from the internment station, and the factory eventually employed five of the Romanian refugees.[413] Neither provincial leaders nor the factory officials in Moravia were concerned with the status of the labor they sought—internees or refugees—because the work needed to be done.

In addition to factory work, many POWs and internees filled agricultural positions in the provinces, bringing them into close proximity to residents. The dairy owner, Alois Glaninger in Loosdorf, wrote to the district office in Melk, describing how he had sought

[413] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 706, 4760, IXa, 1916.

agricultural workers among the local population, but it was impossible to find the workers needed to keep operations running at the dairy. To meet his own needs, as well as those of the community, he requested ten Russian POWs or internees to perform this labor. He noted that he was aware of the conditions under which these workers were made available to farmers, and he would be able to meet them. Given the urgency of the work, he requested the immediate fulfillment of his request.

In April 1916, the Workers' Inspectorate for the Waidhofen an der Thaya district responded with a contract containing the terms of employing POWs on a job site in Loosdorf. First, the workers would be provided with the necessary clothing, linens, and shoes for the job. These workers were to undergo physical examinations before being sent to their employer. Secondly, the employer was to house, feed, guard, and return the workers as well as pay for the quartering and provisioning of the military guard who accompanied the workers. The employer was to pay each worker a minimum of forty Hellers daily. The need for repairs to clothing, linens, and shoes was to be forwarded to the work superintendent in a timely fashion. Sick workers were to be sent to the nearest general hospital or the camp hospital with either an escort or with a medical certificate, and the employer or the guard was to inform the work superintendent immediately.

While it seemed that everything was in order for Glaninger to receive the workers, this did not happen according to plan. A representative had attempted to pick up the workers on behalf of Glaninger; however, the representative had explained that of the ten approved workers, only two were for Glaninger: the other eight were intended for other farm owners. Because the agreement had stipulated that the workers were for Glaninger—and not for others in the vicinity—he refused to hand over the internees and

forwarded the request to the Lower Austrian Governing Committee.[414] The file ends with this, so it is unclear if Glaninger—and the other employers—received the requested workers. What is clear is the effect mobilization had on the everyday operation of agricultural endeavors in the region. Glaninger's suggestion that he had attempted to find workers among the local population but with no success indicates that the war had depleted the local labor force. The contract between Glaninger and the work superintendent also provides some indication of the conditions under which these internees were employed. The state seemed to take steps to assure that workers' bare necessities were met, and their welfare accounted for. Undoubtedly, the state understood the importance of filling these positions; yet it was not afraid to terminate contracts when potential employers violated the terms, demonstrating that officials took some efforts to enforce regulations that protected interned workers, perhaps knowing that their own soldiers would be treated in kind.

Men and women both requested internee laborers. The archives contain numerous examples of women requesting workers. They suggest that employing workers was just one way in which women came into close contact with internees and POWs. Having taken over roles formerly held by men as head of farms and businesses, these women transgressed traditional gender roles. While authorities wanted to keep POWs separate from the local population, especially from women, the need to fill wartime labors shortages overcame the desire to keep the sexes separate. In one case, Johanna Kruck, a business owner in Deutschbach, southwest of St. Pölten, requested a worker. Kruck's husband had died in Russian captivity, and she had four children. The Lower

[414] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 706, 2743, IXa, 1916.

Austrian Government report of this case portrayed Kruck as reliable, and she was granted permission to employ a worker.[415] Kruck's case suggests that POWs could in some sense serve as ersatz husbands for those who had lost their spouses and now found themselves without a partner to fulfill work obligations, particularly critical in Kruck's case as she had four children.

As these examples of POWs working in factories or on farms demonstrates, POWs are the quintessential example of the mixing of the home front and the fighting front, the very distinction that the state attempted to promote in maintaining social order in wartime. As workers, these POWs carried out important tasks, helping to keep civilian society functioning in light of the absence of so many men on the fighting front. Yet this labor came at a price: The restructuring of home front social relations as enemy combatants replaced Austrian men.

Internment and Hunger

Just as the residents of Lower Austria and Moravia faced shortages of food and other goods, POWs, internees, and those confined were often poorly provisioned and hungry. Those living in the provinces had a range of experiences regarding food procurement, which varied in part according to category of internment. Those categorized as "internees" were those who were citizens of enemy states and were without means. Those who were "confined" were foreigners who were largely middle class and of means, relegated to live subject to restrictions and curfew in certain villages, including the Lower Austrian communities of Drosendorf, Kautzen, and Raabs. These categories mattered in

[415] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 706, 2043, IXa, 1916.

terms of wartime provisioning: Those who were confined faced a disadvantage as the war went on because they had to purchase their own food and pay rent. In contrast, internees could receive Red Cross aid parcels and did not have to purchase their own food or pay rent.[416]

The Austrian Italians in Lower Austria and Moravia, whether they were interned, confined, or evacuated to the region, faced hardship in the winter of 1915-16. Riccardo Valle, interned in Göllersdorf, Lower Austria wrote to Vittorio Freiser, in Trieste on November 10, complaining that they didn't have much food, and he was forced every day to spend additional money in order to have enough to eat. Furthermore, he wrote, "The food prices are excessively high, almost ten times and still climb in an alarming manner." On December 19, 1915, O. Cosulich in Göllersdorf wrote to Anna Cosulich in Lussinpiccolo/Mali Lošinj, in the Austrian Littoral, that "Oil costs nine crowns per liter. Make the necessary arrangements for as much supply as possible because the prices are still on the rise and one must be prepared for this for at least a whole year."[417] Some of the correspondence suggested that the difficulties of war were hard to convey. Rosa Perssa, interned in the camp near Sitzendorf, not far from Oberhollabrunn, wrote to Luca Liveric in Bohutin/Bohutín, in northern Moravia, "I am hungry, I would write you how bad it is, but it cannot be written."[418] It is unclear whether she was unable to convey this due to censorship, or whether the conditions proved unthinkable and indescribable. Complaints were not limited to the provisioning of foodstuffs. Luigi Benigni, interned in

[416] Stibbe, "Civilian Internment and Civilian Internees in Europe, 1914-20," in *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration in Europe during the First World War*, ed. Matthew Stibbe (London: Routledge, 2009), 58-60.

[417] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3741. Res. No. 3630.

[418] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3741, Res. No. 3645.

Mittergrabern near Oberhollabrunn wrote on March 8, 1916 to Antonietta Poli in Capodistria/Koper, in the Austrian Littoral, "Here even suicide attempts occur and cases of insanity, hysteria, and neurasthenia."[419] While he does not say so explicitly, he likely describes the physical manifestations of hunger and poor living conditions.

While many faced hardship, some—particularly men from the Monarchy's southern provinces—noted that they found good conditions or that the situation was better than in other camps and areas of the Monarchy. Antonio Sinsich, who was interned in Göllersdorf, wrote to Urbano Sinz, an evacuee interned in Mittergrabern, northwest of Oberhollabrunn, in mid-December 13, 1915, that he was well, that he worked, earning twelve crowns weekly. Moreover, Sinsich commented, "I eat well, drink wine and beer."[420] On January 14, 1915, Fabio Martinuzzi, who was confined in Oberhollabrunn, wrote to Giuseppina Martinuzzi in Trieste that he was in

> a rich area, all are well-off. Here one does not feel the need for food that was the case in our stony Istria already last winter. At the inn, where approximately twenty of us eat, we pay 80 Kreuzer for a midday meal…consisting of soup, meat, side dish, dessert. From time to time new confinees come so that a small Italian colony has formed. The local people are good-natured and friendly.[421]

Not only did Martinuzzi describe eating well, he was part of a group of interned Italians in the area. One internee described Oberhollabrunn as "a charming city." It was more affordable than Trieste, from whence he and some internees hailed. Indeed, with 70 to 80 crowns monthly, one could find a suitable apartment and the food was cheaper than in Trieste.[422] Another internee suggested that conditions in the area were good, that

[419] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3745, Res. No. 4186.
[420] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3745, Res. No. 4186.
[421] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3741, Res. No. 3630.
[422] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3741, Res. No. 3630.

"Oberhollabrunn is better than Gmünd."[423] Luigi Manfredi, interned in Weyerburg near Oberhollabrunn, wrote to Maria Scromet in Görz/Gorizia, "We are interned here six hours away from Vienna and find ourselves a thousand times better than when we were still refugees in Leibnitz [Styria], where young and old died daily."[424] Antonio Defranceschi wrote to Matteo D in Pola/Pula from Mittergrabern on December 16, 1915 that "here is a lot better than in Weyerburg."[425] At least at this point in the war, Weyerburg, located east of Oberhollabrunn, had a favorable reputation with internees. Peter Haider, interned in Weyerburg wrote to Maria Haider in Trieste on November 14, 1915, "The food is very good; in hygiene, a lot of care is used. The sergeant is strict, but fair."[426] Emanuel Baring wrote in his correspondence from May 8, 1916 of being transferred to "a very beautiful, rich land with the name Lower Austria. —Here it goes so well for us, that we could not wish it better for us…"[427]

Internees' complaints about hunger mounted in the camps during 1916, as they did among the general population. Anna Mares, interned in Weyerburg wrote in March 1916, "We are not well. We receive very little to eat. Send us something to eat."[428] Shortages took a physical toll on the internees, shaping their bodies. A second internee in Weyerburg, Antonia Stegovec, wrote in May of that year, "We are very emaciated. If it should go on, I have no hope of a reunion. We have never suffered so much, as we now must suffer here."[429]

[423] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3741, Res. No. 3645.
[424] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3745, Res. No. 4186.
[425] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3745, Res. No. 4186.
[426] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3745, Res. No. 4186.
[427] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3747, Res. No. 4393.
[428] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3746, Res. No. 4267.
[429] ÖStA, KA, AOK, GZNB, Box 3746, Res. No. 4267.

Later that year in August, a complaint of hunger and discontent from the internment station in Mittergrabern surfaced. A letter from the management of the concentration camp in Oberhollabrunn related to the Lower Austrian Governing Committee that a statement had been made against Mittergraben's command. Reportedly, shortages of flour had been ongoing in the district in the last four weeks, affecting the internment station, and internees had suffered. The only bread available had been made with bad flour, and for some the bread was inedible. While the internment station official reported that the complaint received was not unjustified, they saw no way to remedy the situation given the general shortages. However, at least in the meantime polenta flour had been made available for the internees instead of bread, improving provisioning conditions, and good bread supply had again been restored to the camp. Furthermore, the management suggested that the complaint likely came from the internee Julius Petric, whom the report suggested was always dissatisfied. Authorities were unsure of how the complaint was smuggled out of the camp, but it could have been the result of the camp's guard detachment captain doing favors for the internees in exchange for payment. The director of the concentration camp had begun an investigation to see if this was the case. In the end, it was determined that the complaint was likely from Petric. He had complained to officials at the camp on July 28 that he was hungry, that the quarter loaf of bread given to him was insufficient, and he and the camp administrator exchanged words. At the time, he had promised to complain to a higher authority. And, the report noted, to give some background on the accused, the Landwehr Division Court (*k.k. Landwehrdivisionsgerichte*) in Vienna convicted Petric of espionage on March 31, 1914

and had sentenced him to two and a half years in prison.[430] That the report included this detail at the end indicates the concern with the criminal character of Petric and his personal history as someone previously convicted of undermining the state. While there may have been shortages among those interned in summer 1916, it would seem that at least in this case, the hunger complaint was part of a longer series of grievances involving Petric. However, his status as having already been convicted of espionage factored into the authorities' analysis that blamed him.

By the end of 1916, provisioning in Lower Austrian internment stations had become dire. A draft of a Lower Austrian Governing Committee report from December suggested that the shortages at the internment stations were due to the difficulty of managing provisions and to increasing prices. The board allowance that the state paid per internee had not increased enough to match rising prices.[431] The provisions received in Lower Austria's internment stations were completely inadequate. On average, individuals living in internment centers received 1,565 calories per day, though officials considered 2,400 necessary. Averages at the stations ranged from 1,457 calories per day in Grossau, up to 2,184 calories a day from the orthodox Jewish kitchen in the internment station in Markl, though the main kitchen in Markl provided less with an average of 1,986 calories per day. The report explained that the averages pointed to the underfeeding of the internees and to related consequences, including pulmonary tuberculosis and mental illness, all of which were due to malnutrition. Other problems included typhus outbreaks. Furthermore, the poor provisioning of internees could have negative consequences for diplomatic relations because the interned foreigners could

[430] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 707, 5137, IXa, 1916.
[431] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 734, 1587, IXb, 1918.

barely live. Some supplemented their living costs, as did many at the internment station Grossau, with parcels from their homeland. To fix the conditions in the internment station, however, the report suggested that the average calories provided per internee per day had to be increased to 2,400. This would require an increase in the daily board allotted per person. The report noted that the allocation of food from the military magazines should be provided at the same level as allocated to the POW camps, particularly as the nature of the camps and their purpose was the same as that of the internment stations.[432]

In spring 1918, the internment station Karlstein faced provisioning problems like those experienced by the general population. As of April 6, the station lacked provisions as it had received no potatoes since February, and had no meat, fat, or the like to make up for the shortages. Montenegrins in the camp reportedly starved, a direct contrast to orders that the internees be treated well. Due to shortages, district officials requested that the War Grain Distribution Institution department for Lower Austria's potato division provide them with the entire potato quota for the period from March 1 to September 1 as past experiences had shown that monthly allocations had not been received on time. Just as the general population faced daily struggle for food, officials struggled to feed the internees and POWs in their districts, as they did not receive the promised provisions, prompting requests for larger deliveries. The district commissioner also contacted the Provincial Governing Committee on the same day, requesting intervention. He explained reports from the administration in Karlstein that the station would have no meat as the person responsible for deliveries refused to provide cattle for the station, leading to a

[432] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 734, 1587, IXb 1918.

state of emergency. The district commissioner thus requested that in consideration of the meat supply of the internment station Karlstein as well as all other internment stations and camps in the district, measures needed to be taken. In Karlstein, these circumstances had led to a hunger crisis and unrest.[433] These letters on the provisioning of the camp convey poor living circumstances in this camp, but Karlstein was only one example of shortages and hunger in the internment stations and camps in the district as well as of hunger more broadly on the home front in 1918.

Overall, internment and hunger were synonymous as internees faced abysmal conditions.[434] Some of the correspondence of those interned, at least at the time it was written, expressed the view that conditions in the province were more favorable than elsewhere in the Monarchy, providing some sense of comparative wartime experiences. Their more favorable assessment could in part be due to the proximity of other locations to the fighting fronts or due to the fact that conditions in the provinces had not yet deteriorated. However, many internees complained of hunger in the camps, something that camp officials also pointed out to their superiors. This severity of food shortages compounded as the war went on, as it did for the general population, becoming especially dire in 1918. Furthermore, the need for district and provincial officials to intervene in these instances constitutes yet another demand on their time and resources.

[433] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 734, 1551, IXb 1918.

[434] Female internees could be victims of gender-specific mistreatment. In February 1916, several former Sitzendorf internees recounted—with the help of a translator—their experiences at the camp. They repeatedly noted instances of brutality and impropriety carried out in the camp by a sergeant and camp physician in which women were subjected to forced gynecological examinations. NÖLA, Präs P, Box 716, 1570, XIX, 1916.

Fraternizing with the Enemy: Women Undermine the Home Front

Residents of the provinces came into contact with POW outsiders from the war's onset and continued to interact with them despite officials' efforts to keep them separate; however, authorities were chiefly concerned with the behavior of women and their sexual relationships. As Todd has shown in her work, authorities became concerned that women's sexual behavior would undermine society at a time when war already destabilized normal social relationships.[435] Similarly, Habsburg officials disapproved of relations between POWs and women. The persistence of these relations in spite of legal prohibitions reflects the breakdown of provincial Habsburg family life, but also the reformulation of familiar male and female relations by residents in a way that undermined the state.

Newspapers across the Monarchy cautioned residents not to interact with POWs. In late 1915 and early 1916, Lower Austrian newspapers like Vienna's weekly *Volksblatt für Stadt und Land*, reproduced the orders of Upper Austrian district officials in Linz, forbidding relations between the local population and POWs to protect "family honor." Clearly, the state feared actions that threated the integrity of the family unit. The announcement stated that the local civilian population had not respected the supposedly "self-evident" boundary and patriotic duty to distance themselves from the POWs. There had been multiple cases in which "women and girls had forgotten regard for nationality, race, and family honor in association with POWs." Relations between civilians and POWs were banned, except cases of employment that necessitated interaction. The decree particularly forbade romantic relationships between women and girls and the

[435] Lisa Todd, '"The Soldier's Wife Who Ran Away with the Russian": Sexual Infidelities in World War I Germany," *Central European History* 44, no. 2 (June 2011): 257-59.

POWs, and in doing so, put the onus on home front women, who yet again were to blame for undermining society and the state. POWs who transgressed these boundaries were to be punished in military court while civilians could be punished with a fine of up to 200 Crowns and a prison term of up to two weeks. Also, POWs who engaged in forbidden association with civilians could be removed from their positions, and thus punished for fraternizing.[436] This announcement made clear that the problems of fraternization with POWs was a gendered issue: Austrian women were fraternizing with the enemy and endangering the state. Engaging with POWs was an act of disloyalty to the Monarchy and further threatened to transgress supposed national and racial boundaries, the latter referencing the Russian majority among the POWs.[437]

Other newspapers mirrored the state's gendered language describing fraternization as a female crime. Olmütz/Olomouc's *Mährisches Tagblatt* printed a notice from district officials in Aussig/Ústí nad Labem in northern Bohemia concerning the fraternization of civilian women with POWs. According to the military authorities and the gendarmes, civilian women were to blame for relations, not the POWs. Furthermore, the announcement cautioned that these relations were not platonic, they were sexual. Employers were to take measures to prevent these relations. POWs working on the home front could also face punishment and would be removed from their position if they were found to be engaging in illicit interactions. The notice served to make the public aware of the condemnable actions of these women and to remind the

[436] *Volksblatt für Stadt und Land*, January 2, 1916, 12; *Neuigkeits Welt Blatt* December 29, 1915, 11.

[437] On the fear of the declining morality of the home front owing to relations between women and POWs, see Julia Walleczek-Fritz, "The social degeneration of the Habsburg home front: 'forbidden intercourse' and POWs during the First World War," *European Review of History* 24, no.2 (2017): 273-287.

public of the punishment for engaging in sexual relationships with POWs.[438] The reproduction of a district notice from Bohemia in the Moravian paper also points to the widespread concern about these illicit interactions.

Memos and decrees addressing civilian-POW interactions did not always adapt this gendered language, but local officials took steps to warn the public that these relations were forbidden and unpatriotic. District officials in Waidhofen an der Thaya announced on March 5, 1916 that multiple cases had occurred in which the civilian population made contact with the POWs or nationals of enemy states, providing them with food and cigarettes. However, "such traffic is not only unpatriotic and apt to arouse public anger, but also appears to be completely forbidden for state and military reasons." Perhaps of even more potential damage to the state, the announcement went on to describe how some individual civilians had been observed sending the correspondence of POWs or citizens of enemy states, circumventing state censorship. Only those with special permission were permitted to interact with these prisoners, and they were forbidden to forward POW correspondence. Those convicted of breaking this could face a fine ranging from two to two hundred crowns or a prison term, lasting from six hours to fourteen days.[439] While not adopting the explicitly gendered language used elsewhere, this announcement still made clear the unpatriotic nature of these transgressions. Breaking this law was a crime undermining Austria.

These potential punishments failed to deter relations between internees and residents. On March 7, 1916, Shrove Tuesday, Josefa Krivak and several of her agricultural coworkers, gathered in the apartment of Franziska Krivak at Stripfing 56 in

[438] *Mährisches Tagblatt*, September 27, 1916.
[439] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 710, 2501, XIb, 1916.

the district of Gänserndorf, for an evening of music and dancing. Six Russian POWs joined them. Josefa and Angela Krivak, Josefa Jurik, Antonia Buda, and Anna Kaspar all danced with the Russians. In total, the report listed the names of eleven women and nine men in their teens and twenties—born between 1886 and 1901. All—except one man who was absolved—faced the punishment of twelve or forty-eight hours of arrest for their crimes. The five women who had danced with the Russians either partially or fully admitted to their crime. However, being present at the event provided evidence of guilt and at least one woman, Katharina Killian, who had been present but had not danced with the Russians, also faced twelve hours arrest. The report noted that those involved in the incident were all agricultural workers, were not wealthy, and were single. The sparse details of the account implied that those present at the party had come into contact through their work. Furthermore, the report suggested that all were of Slavic nationality and sympathized with the Russian POWs, hinting at state fears of national groups undermining their authority.[440] While the report brings special attention to the actions of the women who danced with the POWs, home front men also participated in the evening's festivities and were punished for having been there. Yet, the women involved gained the most attention of the authorities as they transgressed the state's demarcations of appropriate female behavior.

Women from the upper classes also fraternized with Russian POWS. In August 1916, the gendarmerie in Kleinzell reported to provincial officials that the Baroness Minna Drecoll had permitted Russian POW officers into her villa, where they caroused and danced with Drecoll and her friends. In her defense, however, the baroness insisted

[440] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 710, 3370, XIb, 1916.

that the wife of the Salzerbad commander had brought the Russian prisoners to her.[441] The nature of the relationship between these two women was unclear.

Some POWs could benefit from their relationships with upper-class women. A July 1917 a report from Oberhollabrunn district officials to the Lower Austrian Governing Committee stated that Russian POWs working on Karl Schumpeter's property, formerly owned by Prince Friedrich von Schönburg-Waldenburg, in Schrattenthal, southwest of Retz, had recently been unwilling to do their assigned work and were unhappy. Their discontent was so great that Schumpeter had to dismiss the POWs, and the provincial employment agency transferred them to Mailberg, about twenty-five kilometers southeast of Schrattenthal. Why were the POWs so unhappy? They had found their circumstances much more favorable when Prince Schönburg owned the property than with Schumpeter because Prince Schönburg's wife sympathized with them. The previous winter she had invited the POWs to an evening of music and dance in the castle. The Princess employed one as her servant, and he dressed in civilian clothes. In July, she sent him to Mailberg with cigars and cigarettes for the POWs there. She also employed a second POW as her cook. These two POWs also exchanged letters between those POWs working with Schumpeter and those in Mailberg. Therefore, district officials demanded that the two who worked as a servant and as a cook be removed immediately from their posts. In October, the provincial government received notification that the POWs in question had been recalled by the provincial employment agency and had returned to the POW camp. Furthermore, the correspondence stated that the relationship between the Princess and the POWs was a clear violation of the existing

[441] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 710, 5336, XI, 1916.

regulations, and if she was in the vicinity of POWs in the future, she should be prohibited from interaction with them under threat of punishment.[442] It appears that the princess was not punished for using the Russian POWs as her own personal servants, although she would face criminal charges if the incident reoccurred. The lack of punishment for the offense in this case may have owed to her elite social status. This incident also indicates how POWs could benefit from their relationships with women. It appears that the two POWs who worked for the princess received favors. The first-mentioned POW was allowed to wear civilian clothing, hiding his POW status. The description provided in the report of the POWs reaction and general attitude toward the new land owner indicates that these relations could improve morale. The change also led some to be unwilling to do their work, essentially defeating the purpose of having POWs laborers.

Relations between women and POWs were a concern for Habsburg officials all across the home front, and Habsburg newspapers carried reports of specific instances of women who had fraternized with the enemy, shaming them.[443] On September 10, 1916, the *Znaimer Tagblatt* included a report from Bozen/Bolzano, Tyrol that the 23-year-old Rosa Wiesinger, the wife of the corporal in Bozen, had sex with a Serbian POW. As punishment for her relations with the POW, the town magistrate sentenced her to eight days in prison.[444] As discussed above, the presence of this report from Tyrol in a southern Moravian newspaper points to widespread concerns of fraternization. Elsewhere, twenty-seven-year-old Emma Schertler in Bregenz, Vorarlberg received a

[442] NÖLA, Präs. P, Box 722, 3648 P XIb 1917.

[443] For examples in Germany, see Lisa Todd, "'The Soldier's Wife Who Ran Away with the Russian": Sexual Infidelities in World War I Germany," *Central European History* 44, no. 2 (June 2011): 269-73.

[444] *Znaimer Tagblatt*, September 10, 1916, 3.

five-day prison sentence for contact with a Russian POW;[445] Anna Graus in Ratschings/Racines, Tyrol received a punishment of fourteen days in prison for contact with a POW;[446] in Carinthia, Klagenfurt's Maria Strasser was also accused of "intimate relations" with a Russian POW;[447] and in early 1918, in the district of St. Johann im Pongau, Salzburg, four women were imprisoned for seven to fourteen days for relations with POWs.[448]

Some of these intimate relationships between POWs and home front women produced children, and POWs allegedly fathered children across the Monarchy.[449] Twenty-three-year-old Barbara Weiss, who lived in Gigging, north of the Danube in the political district of Tulln, gave birth to a girl in September 1917. Officials reported that the child's father was a Russian POW, working in Kirchberg am Wagram, about six kilometers northeast of Gigging. According to officials, Weiss committed infanticide. The provincial gendarmerie command arrested her on September 24 on suspicion of poisoning her twelve-day-old child.[450] The report provides little detail, and it offers no perspective on her motivations.

As the war went on, military officials received an increasing number of requests to permit POWs to be allowed to marry Austrian women, a reflection of the intimacy between POWs and home front women. The issue was serious enough that in July 1917 the War Ministry established that petitions requesting permission to marry received by camp officials or military commanders would not be considered until a peace agreement

[445] *Vorarlberger Volksblatt*, May 3, 1916, 2.
[446] *Deutsche Presse*, November 4, 1916, 3.
[447] *Der Tiroler*, January 1, 1916, 3.
[448] *Volksfreund*, February 2, 1918, 3.
[449] Julia Walleczek-Fritz, "The social degeneration of the Habsburg home front: 'forbidden intercourse' and POWs during the First World War," *European Review of History* 24, no.2 (2017): 281.
[450] NÖLA, Präs. P, Box 729a, 4518, XIX 1917.

had been established.[451] Despite officials' efforts, they could not prevent POW men from supplanting Austrian men. After war ended between Austria and Russia, many former Russian POWs wanted to return to the Austrian women they had met while in captivity.[452] Some POWs who remained in the provinces wanted to marry. On March 21, 1919, district officials in Horn wrote to the Lower Austrian provincial government about two of the Italian POWs who remained in their district, one of whom intended to marry.[453] While the correspondence provided few details about the men, these POWs had built lives for themselves in Lower Austria during the war and wanted to stay.

Laborer POWs, though necessary to both the home front and the fighting front could threaten social order. In addition to providing labor, these men also become surrogates for the men who went to the fighting front, becoming dancing partners and intimate companions. This occurred despite Habsburg authorities' attempts to prevent such actions. Women bore the brunt of allegations and punishment for fraternizing with the POWs, facing public ridicule and formal legal punishment for their relations. For Habsburg officials, these relations were undermining the state, but for the women and POWs, they formed familiar relationships, disregarding the wartime distinction of "enemy."

[451] *St. Pöltner Diözesanblatt*, Volume 10, 1917, 86.

[452] For additional examples, see Julia Walleczek-Fritz, "The social degeneration of the Habsburg home front: 'forbidden intercourse' and POWs during the First World War," *European Review of History* 24, no.2 (2017): 277-78.

[453] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 764, XIIe, 1919. The other Italian POW had lost his wife and two children in the influenza epidemic and did not want to return to Italy.

Military Personnel and Violence in the Provinces

While intimate relationships could be formed between military personnel outsiders and residents, conflict could arise between these groups, endangering those on the home front. Military personnel often brought battle-front behaviors with them to the provinces, disrupting everyday life. POWs could pose a threat to provincial security, as could Habsburg army personnel and those belonging to its allies because these men could be violent. The issue of home front violence became more acute in the later stages of the war, likely a reflection of general unrest, but also as a result of deserters returning to the provinces.

Austrian Soldiers in the Provinces

Perpetrators of violent acts on the home front were not only members of enemy states: Austrian soldiers also disrupted everyday life. Early on the morning of October 6, 1915, two lieutenants with the k.k. Landwehr Ulanen Regiment No. 5 in Stockerau, Lower Austria, Theidir Hammerschmidt and Josef Knobloch, tried to enter the apartment of the wheelwright Anton Fraunbaum in Wolfpassing. When Fraunbaum refused to open the door, the soldiers smashed three windows, threatening, "If you don't open the door, [we] will shoot you all with the revolver." When those inside opened the door, the soldiers screamed, "The Russians are here." A report of the events noted that the damages in this early incident had been paid for, but his was not the only disturbance the officers caused that day.

After departing Fraunbaum's home, the two men went on their way, continuing their rowdy behavior. Arriving at an inn in Hausleiten, about ten kilometers west of

Stockerau, they demanded that a maid—the only person present at that hour—serve them coffee. She prepared the coffee and served the officers, but they harassed her. The extent of the harassment was not detailed in the report on the incident; however, the noise of the ensuing commotion awoke the hostess's mother, Theresia Weiß, who went to the kitchen. When Weiß explained that she was the mother of the hostess, "The officers insulted her in an inappropriate way." Again, the report of the events did not detail the inappropriate behavior. Then, when the hostess Theresia Krapf came into the kitchen with her three-year-old daughter, Knobloch drew his sword to attack the hostess, who fled with her child to a neighboring house. A gendarme was found to reestablish calm, and the officers continued to Stockerau.[454] The report of the incident from district officials in Korneuburg to the Lower Austrian Governing Committee on October 12, 1915 leaves many questions unanswered. How exactly were the officers harassing the women at the inn in Hausleiten? What did they say to Weiß? Were the men punished for their behavior? For the authorities writing the report, the soldier's behavior toward the women was not their chief concern; this series of incidents was of interest because of the disorder it caused. This case suggests that those in Lower Austria, in the center of what the AOK considered the hinterland, could find themselves engaging with officers from their own military and subject to disruption and violent acts in their everyday lives.

POWs and Violence

Occasionally, reports of criminal activity on the part of the POWs surfaced, reminding of the danger that these men posed to home front security. On June 15, 1918

[454] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 704, 6433 XIX 1915.

at about eleven o'clock in the morning, a Russian POW robbed an eleven-year-old school boy in the area near Sieghartskirchen, in the district of Tulln. The POW stole approximately forty Crowns sixty-eight Hellers. The perpetrator was identified as a POW from the camp Spratzern, near St. Pölten, who was part of the POW work group in Sieghartskirchen. He was arrested the same day.[455] It is not clear why the boy was carrying such a large sum of money. However, the vicinity of the workers to the local population, including this boy, facilitated the opportunity for criminal activity.

Sometimes the POWs themselves became the target of violent acts. On August 28, 1918, in a forest near Weinzierl am Walde, northwest of Krems an der Donau, the "half-clothed and strongly decaying corpse of a man with smashed cranium was discovered." After investigating this gruesome crime, officials determined that the victim was a Russian POW who had fallen victim to a robbery-murder. Police were unable to identity the identity of either the victim or the murderer.[456] The report provides little detail about how authorities concluded that the victim was a POW.

Deserters

As the war dragged on, deserters increasingly appeared in the provinces. They posed a challenge to local officials trying to keep social order and at times endangered civilians, exposing them to criminal behavior. The war's duration had taken its toll on Austro-Hungarian forces and by 1917 morale was low, leading some to desert. Sometimes, they returned home with the local population's assistance. Moreover, from late 1917, Habsburg POWs formerly in captivity in Russia began returning home. The

[455] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 756, 2528 XIX 1918.
[456] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 756, 3242, XIX 1918.

terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed on March 3, 1918, officially ended the war between Russia and Austria-Hungary. Per the terms of the agreement, POWs were to be repatriated as soon as possible, and at least 670,508 Austro-Hungarian POWs returned to the Monarchy by October 18, 1918.[457] These deserting or returning men had the ability to destabilize the home front, which at this point had long been suffering from food shortages.

In 1917, authorities first noted the formation of "Green Cadres," composed of deserters and members of the local rural population, who established control of areas of the countryside in an act of resistance against the state and its war aims. These groups formed across the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, first in Croatia-Slavonia, and then in other Slavic-speaking areas, including Moravia. These groups were in opposition to the Monarchy and sought a new social order in the provinces, and as Jakob Beneš has argued, these Green Cadres were a peasant revolt, similar to those of previous centuries, while also modern in their efforts to bring down the Habsburg Monarchy. Yet, it should be noted that these were loose groups with no centralized leadership or political platform. For imperial officials, the hundreds of thousands of deserters in the hinterland from 1916 onward were a problem, especially those who joined the Green Cadres. Given the number of deserters living on the home front and owing to the problems they caused, the army deployed seven infantry divisions in effort to manage this unrest.[458] This represented a diversion of the military's attention away from the fighting front. As with other types of home front unrest, authorities seemed unable to solve this problem.

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[457] Iris Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (London, Bloomsbury, 2014), 191-92; and Rauchensteiner, 879.

[458] Jakub Beneš, "The Green Cadres and the Collapse of Austria-Hungary in 1918," *Past and Present*, No. 236 (August 2017): 207-10, 214-15.

Deserters could threaten the local population as they attempted to flee their military obligations. In summer 1918, the unskilled laborer Franz Todsauer, a marksman with the rifle regiment No. 24, was on leave and most recently employed by a business owner in Kreisbach in the district of St. Pölten. On the evening of July 27, two men approached him. A soldier with a platoon leader's distinction and a civilian lured Todsauer into a forest next to Holzleithen in the district of Melk on the pretext of giving him a position. Once there, they stole his civilian clothing, money, and documents. The perpetrators fled. A report of the event stated that they were the two deserters from the area.[459] In stealing the civilian clothing of Todsauer, the man still wearing his military uniform may have been looking for a way to shed his attire in order to blend in with civilian society. As for Todsauer, though he was on leave, he still became of the victim of wartime violence inflicted by fellow Austrian military personnel.

Local authorities faced the task of dealing with deserters, sometimes taking violent measures themselves to keep order. On the night of August 17-18, 1918, Sergeant Schlinger, commander of the gendarmerie post in Eggenburg, killed Landsturm infantryman Franz Wiesinger. Wiesinger, a member of the worker command in Vienna, had deserted the military and authorities regarded him as "evil." He had allegedly acted aggressively, leading Schlinger to use his bayonet in self-defense, killing him.[460] While it appears Schlinger's aggressive behavior resulted in his death, his status as a deserter and alleged poor moral character also seem to have contributed to the events.

During 1918, the number of deserters increased, and the state struggled to manage this threat to home front security. In late June, the police directorate in Brünn/Brno wrote

[459] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 756, 2921 XIX 1918.
[460] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 756, 3122, XIX 1918.

district officials in Iglau/Jihlava of rumors of armed groups comprised almost completely of deserters living in the forests near Iglau/Jihlava. These deserters were said to be well armed, robbing passers-by and burglarizing nearby villages. Similar activity was rumored to be occurring in the vicinity of Kremsier/Kroměříž. The police directorate sought to discover whether these rumors were accurate, sending inquiries to district officials in both locations.[461]

The issue of the deserters in the province was serious enough that on June 30, the Moravian governor cautioned all district commissioners about the situation. Passing along instructions from the Ministry for National Defense, these officials feared that the deserters were "weakening not only the strength of the military and military discipline, but also endangering the state of security in the country and bothering inhabitants." These deserters threatened the lives of those on the home front. Officials also feared that they constituted a threat to the state directly, suggesting that the deserters were "preparing the ground for a revolutionary movement," provoking political unrest. Here officials may have been revealing their own fears of unrest in the shadow of the Russian Revolutions of February/March and October/November 1917. Therefore, officials suggested that the deserters needed to be dealt with immediately. Desertion in a time of war was a serious crime, and such criminals had to be dealt with strictly. Therefore, the district gendarmerie command had to take measures in their districts. Military patrols for the purpose of fighting these deserters were to be strongly supported. Members of the civilian population who were passive regarding the deserters or who perhaps sympathized with them were to be reported. "Quickness, ruthlessness, and energy, however, will be

[461] SOkA Jihlava, Okresní úřad-okresní národní výbor Jihlava do r. 1949, Box 41, inv. čis. 5461.

the best means of combating it." At the end of July, the district gendarmerie commands were to report on the successes of this effort and especially successful gendarmeries were to be highlighted in these reports. The provincial gendarme command No. 4 in Brünn/Brno wrote to all the gendarmerie divisions and district gendarmerie commands on July 3, announcing that on July18 to 20, measures would be taken to round up deserters and vagabonds, involving military authorities and troops in coordination with local political authorities and the gendarmerie. However, the effort to round up the deserters was delayed.[462] Considering the need to use the combined forces of local officials, gendarmes, and troops, one could say the state was engaged in war within its borders, trying to keep peace and order on the home front.

Military Excess in Grussbach/Hrušovany nad Jevišovkou

Not only Austrian troops, but also soldiers of allied armies traveled through the hinterland en route to the fighting, front. These men sometimes caused violence. Stations such as the one in Grussbach/Hrušovany nad Jevišovkou, approximately thirteen kilometers north of Laa an der Thaya in the district of Znaim/Znojmo, faced a challenge in managing transports of allied armed forces. On the evening of October 13, a German military transport train carrying 500 men arrived in Grussbach/Hrušovany nad Jevišovkou. The train was supplied with black coffee and jam for the men's supper. As previous experience had shown, soldiers on transports often stole goods at the stations where they stopped, so the station superintendent, Anton Žižka, commissioned the station's staff to guard the train wagons laden with goods. Before long railway workers

[462] SOkA Jihlava, Okresní úřad-okresní národní výbor Jihlava do r. 1949, Box 41, inv. čis. 5504.

noticed a German soldier standing on a side track, where he had broken into sealed wagons and stolen wine. The railway men apprehended the thief, but when the other soldiers noticed their comrade being led by the railway workers, they shouted, demanding his release. When the railway workers refused, the soldiers attacked them; meanwhile, the thief escaped.

But the fray at with the train station endangered not only railway workers. These events unfolded as the Vienna-to-Brünn/Brno passenger train arrived, meaning that many civilians were present as tensions escalated. The gendarmerie patrol forced the civilians into the train station's waiting rooms, avoiding a full-blown riot.[463] As the report of the incident from district officials to Moravian provincial officials indicates, the situation could have easily been much more violent had the gendarmes not acted quickly to divert the civilians from the conflict. What occurred was serious enough, and the incidents also suggest the volatility of the home front in late 1918. Many behind the supposed front lines faced war-related violence in their everyday lives. For the workers trying to guard supplies at the station, their actions constituted merely doing their due diligence to protect the goods at the station.

These instances of violence suggest how the categories of home front and fighting front obscure the danger provincial residents faced. Living on the home front did not shield residents from wartime violence; rather, it exposed them to different forms. Though not under the fire of enemy troops, deserters might arrack them or members of their own military could harass them, targeting residents on the streets or in their own homes.

[463] MZA, B13, Box 410, čj.19678, Militärexzess am Bahnhof in Grussbach, Z. 33933, K.k. Bezirkhauptmannschaft Znaim an die k.k. Statthalterei Praesidium in Bruenn, October 17, 1918.

Conclusion

The men, women, and children who remained on the home front often found themselves living among outsiders, for the most part male, who included POWs, internees, and Habsburg or other allied soldiers. Owing to the need for laborers, a function POWs fulfilled, residents came into contact with POWs. Some provincial women developed relationships with these men, who could be surrogates for the workers, husbands, brothers, and fathers who had been mobilized. The POW-civilian relationships undermined imperial attempts to keep them separate. The examples I provided in this chapter illustrate the breakdown of Habsburg civil society in wartime as women on the home front formed intimate relationships with POWs. While authorities viewed these relationships as violating social norms, residents sought to recreate traditional gender relations in a way the countered imperial interests.

The POWs and internees who spent time in Lower Austria and Moravia experienced a variety of wartime conditions that in part depended on whether or not they were remained confined in camps. Many living in camps faced difficult conditions, particularly food shortages. In contrast, POWs and internees who lived and worked outside the camps, especially those POWs working as laborers, may have found better conditions. Some had better access to food, and some found opportunities to build relationships and recreate a sense of home, talking to school children, taking part in evenings of music and dance, and forming intimate relationships with women, sometimes fathering children.

Some POW interactions with the local population—especially with women—concerned authorities who tried to unite residents to fight the enemy. The state forbade

interactions between POWs and residents, but women defied its authority as they had contact with these POWs. They were literally sleeping with the enemy. In the eyes of authorities, these women were traitors, undermining the state.

Finally, as the incident in Grussbach/Hrušovany nad Jevišovkou highlights, civilians and officials in the provinces could easily find themselves caught up in wartime violence. Furthermore, this unrest increased in summer 1918 with the return of former soldiers and continued to escalate over the course of the next several months, as conflict moved from the front to the provinces.

Chapter 6: Continued Hostility on the Home Front from November 1918

As fighting drew to a close in November 1918, daily life on the home front remained precarious—sometimes increasingly so—as food and fuel remained in short supply. The political situation along the Lower Austrian-Moravian border, was, however, rapidly changing, thus complicating provisioning. The ongoing provisioning crisis and overall war weariness influenced the border conflict. Vienna's residents still needed the resources of the provinces. Already in mid-June 1918, social order in Vienna had collapsed. The food supply was critical that summer; the potato ration was half a kilogram per person per week, and the Food Office threatened to cut bread rations again. At the same time, the Austrian Army collapsed on the fighting front at the Piave in Italy, suffering heavy loses. As Healy has argued, at this point in the war, the collapse of the home front and fighting fronts had converged. The food situation in the capital did not improve with the armistice, and rationing of bread, potatoes, and other food continued into the 1920s.[464]

Habsburg battle-front hostilities formally ended on the Italian front with an armistice agreement on November 3. With the armistice, the end of the Monarchy was clear, and conflict moved from the fighting front to the provinces in a struggle to create the so-called successor states and to establish international borders. Additional outsiders would determine the border separating Czechoslovakia and German-Austria/Austria and national tension that had been largely suppressed in the region during the war came to the fore.

[464] Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 305-09.

The exhaustion of the Austrian military and the failure of officials to manage food and fuel shortages in Vienna meant that imperial officials were unable to aid the provinces in preventing a Czechoslovak takeover. Furthermore, the ongoing shortages across former Habsburg territory meant that part of the border conflict would include fighting over provisions. This chapter analyzes provincial experiences from late 1918 through the early 1920s, arguing that conflict was ongoing in the provinces after armistice as additional outsiders arrived in the region and provisioning challenges continued. I show that life along the Lower Austrian-Moravian border became increasingly uncertain owing to political instability. My study builds on recent scholarship that has shown that the end of battle-front conflict did not bring peace to Europe; instead, various conflicts, including ethnic clashes, continued into the first half of the 1920s when the European political situation stabilized.[465] The purpose of this chapter is to provide a localized case study of these ethnic clashes that emerged between Czechs and Germans because new outsiders exacerbated national claims for territory, and wartime social problems, such as provisioning, continued as part of this conflict. This chapter builds on the previous chapters' use of gender, showing that the masculine, militarized fighting front shifted to the provinces as conflict—involving both those who had served at the front and civilians—took up arms.

While traditional political chronologies of the First World War conclude with the end of hostilities on November 11, this was not the timeline of war on in the provinces. Key studies of First World War home fronts in central Europe, such as those by Davis,

[465] Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, "Paramilitarism in Europe after the Great War: An Introduction" in *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*, ed. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1; and Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016), 15.

Healy, and Kučera end, by and large, in 1918; however, I contend that studies of the subject should be expanded chronologically because wartime conditions continued, and provisioning problems remained unresolved into the 1920s. This chapter demonstrates that the chronology of war in the region along the new international border was longer and more ambiguous than it was on the fighting front. My work also builds on Pieter M. Judson's recent study of Austria-Hungary that suggests that its disintegration occurred in different regions at different times.[466] I complicate Judson's argument by demonstrating that even within particular border regions, the disintegration was not a linear process. This chapter begins with discussion of the border war in late 1918 and the demarcation of the international border between Lower Austria and Moravia. This sometimes-violent conflict included a struggle—now international—for available resources, and I analyze on-going hunger on both sides of the border. The chapter then addresses the changed status of refugees who also factored into nascent states' discussion of borders and state creation. Ongoing conflict involving additional outsiders, the struggle for resources, and continued displacement highlight the continuation of war in the provinces.

A Diplomatic Interlude

During the war, various national groups had established national councils abroad with the aim of forming new states outside the framework of the Monarchy. Czech officials in exile had established a committee in Paris on November 14, 1915, which was the National Council of the Czech Lands and would advocate for Czechoslovak interests abroad. In January 1917, Allied Power officials began calling for the dissolution of

[466] Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, 441.

Austria-Hungary and the establishment of new states in its place. France formally recognized the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris as the authority for Czech and Slovak affairs in summer 1918. British and American recognition soon followed. Within the Habsburg Monarchy, some Czechs called for additional rights. Czech demands followed historic claims to Bohemian state rights (*České státní právo*), calling for political autonomy of the Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. In May 1917, a group of Czech intellectuals published a manifesto demanding more rights before the reopening of the Reichsrat that month. At the opening, some Czech representatives declared their intention to form a democratic Czechoslovak state that included the historic territory of the Bohemian Crown Lands.

Habsburg Emperor Charles I, who had succeeded his great uncle Francis Joseph upon his death in 1916, sought to prevent the Monarchy's dissolution with a proposal to federalize Cisleithanian Austria on October 16, 1918. His plan failed. The German deputies in the Austrian Parliament formed their own Provisional National Assembly for German Austria on October 21. German Austria was to include German-speaking areas from the Bohemian lands, divided into four provinces: *Deutschböhmen,* in northern Bohemia; *Sudetenland*, part of Silesia and northern Moravia; *Böhmerwaldgau*, in southern Bohemia along the Bavarian border, and *Deutschsüdmähren*, or German South Moravia, the area along the Lower Austrian border and the focus of this study. One week later, the First Czechoslovak Republic was proclaimed on October 28 and would encompass more territory than that called for in the traditional definition of Bohemian state rights. Indeed, the end of the Monarchy and the formation of new state would serve as a turning point in Czech-German relations.

Low-level conflict was intensifying along the Lower Austrian-Moravian border, where both Czechoslovaks and German Austrians staked claim to territory. On November 12, representatives of Austria's German-speaking areas formally founded the Republic of German Austria. Neither German Austria nor Czechoslovakia had strong, organized armed forces; both used volunteer soldiers, many of them veterans of the now-defunct Habsburg Army. While residents living along the Lower Austrian-Moravian border were spared some of the violence that occurred elsewhere in former Habsburg territory as part of efforts to establish international borders, Czech troops did occupy the region in November and December, and residents experienced an increase in armed violence. The Czech troop maneuvers and occupation of territory mattered in determining the final post-Habsburg boundaries demarcating the new international borders.[467]

Border War: Gender and the Remaking of the Lower Austrian-Moravian Border

The Czech-German conflict along the Lower Austrian-Moravian border beginning at the war's end was part of a broader process of international border formation in the lands of the former Habsburg Monarchy as soldiers returned home and the Paris Peace Conference created or recreated states and expanded others. Border formation occurred at the same time as the demobilization of soldiers, the continuing release of Habsburg

[467] Hugh LeCaine Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2004), 167-68, 176; Bruce M. Garver, *The Young Czech Party 1874-1901 and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 49-59; Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2016), 430-41; Victor S. Mamatey, "The Establishment of the Republic" in *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1918-1948* ed. Victor S. Mamatey and Radomír Luža (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 12-16, 20-30; and Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How the Bohemian Lands Became Czech* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 135-140.

POWs, and the return of Czechoslovak Legionnaires, predominantly from revolutionary Russia, but also from France and Italy. As these soldiers returned home, they repopulated the home front, regendering it masculine; however, they were not the same men that had left for war: they were warriors. In her analysis of Austrian soldiers and the process of adapting to civilian life upon returning home, Maureen Healy has written that "cleansing the war out of the warrior" included reintegrating into families, finding work, and coping with the violence they had experienced on the fighting front. Healy argues this "civilizing" process was informal, incomplete, and ineffective.[468] Traces of the failure to demobilize are evident in the provinces, where many former Habsburg soldiers continued armed conflict against other former Habsburg soldiers now on different sides of the border conflict.

Veterans of defeated states returned home to find disorder, and many described returning to a world in upheaval, where the crowd held power over law and order. Some returning troops continued to fight, joining paramilitary forces, or, armed groups that engaged in military-like practices outside of conventional armies. Historian Robert Gerwarth argues that the postwar experience of returning home defeated, to territories in disarray, to revolution, and the formation of new borders influenced these men rather than the war itself, as George Mosse has argued in his "brutalization" thesis. Additionally, Gerwarth argues that these circumstances led to the mobilization of men who had been too young to fight in the war, the "war youth generation"[469] A

[468] Maureen Healy, "Civilizing the Soldier in Postwar Austria," in *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, ed. Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 47-69.

[469] Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End*, 1, 12-15; and Robert Gerwarth, "Fighting the Red Beast: Counter-Revolutionary violence in the Defeated States of Central Europe" in *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War* ed. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 53-57. See also, Maureen Healy,

combination of men—those who had participated as soldiers and those who had remained at home—participated in the contest to determine the Lower Austrian-Moravian border, supporting the German-Austrian cause.

Nation-building and border formation are gendered processes. The national project of nation-state formation has been a predominantly masculine undertaking, though women have certainly played a role. Normative masculine behavior has often coincided with the patriotic and militaristic elements of nationalism.[470] Analysis of the postwar border conflict between Austria and Yugoslavia in Carinthia has indicated that the drawing of borders included the reinforcing of gendered norms, promoting traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity as part of the patriotic effort of state formation.[471] The conflict over the Lower Austrian-Moravian border included the reinforcing of traditional conceptions of masculine virility as Czechoslovak forces took part in the armed takeover and occupation of communities in the region, sometimes engaging German Austrians stationed there. It pitted a triumphant, emerging Czechoslovak masculinity against Austrians, who had been defeated and emasculated on the battlefield and now faced a struggle to maintain territory and political control, a situation highlighted in accounts of the Czechoslovak troops' takeover of communities in Southern Moravia.[472] The border conflict also led to the militarization of small towns and communities in Lower Austria as German Austrian officials sought to secure the border.

"Civilizing the Soldier in Postwar Austria," in *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, ed. Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006),48.

[470] Joane Nagel, "Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21 no.2 (1998): 244, 252.

[471] Tina Bahovec, "Engendering Borders: The Austro-Yugoslav Border Conflict following the First World War" in *Gender and Modernity in Central Europe: The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Its Legacy*, ed. Agatha Schwartz (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010), 233.

[472] On defeat, see Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003).

Czechoslovak Troops Occupy Southern Moravia

The founding of Czechoslovakia did not result in the immediate establishment of the borders in the Bohemian Lands; rather, the process of Czechoslovak takeover from Habsburg officials occurred gradually during November and December 1918 and beyond as Czech and German troops and people in the region contested the border. While some local residents joined the clashes, others were apathetic. Local and regional archives are full of examples of the complicated process by which a variety of men at different levels participated in this gradual, multi-layered process.

City chronicles record that on October 28, while people elsewhere in the Bohemian Lands may have joyfully greeted the proclamation of the new state, some southern Moravian Czechs did not share this experience. Instead, they viewed the political developments elsewhere as temporary because the situation in their region was unstable.[473] In the political instability of late October 1918, many residents were uncertain of the ramifications of political developments elsewhere for their own lives. Fearing Czechoslovak claims to the region, Austrian officials worked to form a new administrative district, German South Moravia. On October 29, the German mayor of Nikolsburg/Mikulov met with representatives from municipalities in the district. Employing the language of Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points, they called for a right to self-determination and favored joining German-Austrian. On November 3, southern Moravian municipal leaders and former German political representatives of the Reichsrat met in Znaim/Znojmo, the center of German political coordination in the area. They

[473] SOkA Břeclav, Pohořelice, Kronika města 1927-1947, 7.

founded German South Moravia, a district comprising 1,840 square kilometers of land and 173,000 people. It was to be part of Lower Austria, and two days later, the province formally incorporated the district.[474] In Nikolsburg/Mikulov, district officials continued their work to secure the region from a Czechoslovak invasion and takeover, and German South Moravians began creating militias (*Volkswehr*). During the first week of November, Nikolsburg/Mikulov's German and Jewish municipalities met to discuss the city's security and how to aid those returning from the battlefield. Some of these veterans joined the local Volkswehr unit as did those who had not served. Meanwhile, the Prague government sent Czechoslovak soldiers to occupy southern Moravia.[475]

The occupation of the local railway station in Grusbach/Hrušovany nad Jevišovkou on November 1, 1918 reveals the increased armed presence in the border region in late 1918 as Czechoslovaks and Germans contested control of the region; it also reveals ongoing concerns about provisions. Two delegates from the Czech Committee (*český výbor*) in Brünn/Brno, two gendarmes, and eight Czechoslovak soldiers arrived at the train station about eight o'clock that evening and claimed it for the Czech Committee. Despite the station superintendent's attempts to prevent Czech Committee members from entering the building, the Czechoslovak representatives and troops took over the train station. Eight more gendarmes arrived from Brünn/Brno on the next train an hour later. Later that evening, the two delegates continued on to Znaim/Znojmo, but the gendarmes

[474] Miroslav Svoboda, *Mikulov: Dějiny moravských měst. Historie, kultura, lidé* (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2013), 204; and Reiner Eisinger, ed., *Heimatbuch Nikolsburg: Geschichte und Schicksal einer deutschen Stadt von den Anfängen bis zum Jahre 1946* (Melk: WT-Druck und Verlag, 1987), 372.

[475] Miroslav Svoboda, *Mikulov: Dějiny moravských měst. Historie, kultura, lidé* (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2013), 204-205; and Reiner Eisinger, ed., *Heimatbuch Nikolsburg: Geschichte und Schicksal einer deutschen Stadt von den Anfängen bis zum Jahre 1946* (Melk: WT-Druck und Verlag, 1987), 373.

and the soldiers remained, occupying the railway station. Local residents were outraged when they learned of the takeover.

Around noon the following day, many residents of Grusbach-Schönau/Hrušovany nad Jevišovkou-Šatov and Grafendorf/Hrabětice accompanied their municipal representatives to the railway station to protest the Czech Committee's takeover. The Czechoslovak official managing the train station declared that it would be vacated, and the military patrol would return to Brünn/Brno. Reichsrat Member Josef Brunner also telephoned the German State Council in Vienna to express the frustration of local residents with the takeover. That evening, telegrams from the German State Council and the Czech Committee in Brünn/Brno arrived, declaring that the station was German-Austrian territory, seemingly solving the dispute. This, however, turned out not to be the case.

The next week, the search for provisions made the area a site of Czechoslovak-German contention yet again. Early on November 10, Czechoslovak troops returned to occupy the local sugar factory. With the agreement of the local militia, a German-Austrian sergeant and his men went to the Grosbach-Schönau/Hrušovany nad Jevišovkou-Šanov station. Near the sugar factory, they came upon some fifty Czechoslovak soldiers. A Czechoslovak officer approached them with his revolver drawn; he asked the sergeant if there was sugar at the factory and if so, in what quantity. The sergeant said that he did not know, and the Czechoslovak officer replied that he and his men planned to occupy the sugar factory. The sergeant informed him that about sixty men from the former Habsburg infantry regiment No. 99 were already occupying it. Moreover, if Czechoslovak troops sought to occupy the factory, some 1,000 armed men

would arrive within an hour and disarm them. At this point, the Czechoslovak officer and his troops gave up the attempt to take over the factory and secure its supplies; instead they returned to the local train station and left for Lundenburg/Břeclav.[476]

This incident encapsulates many aspects of provincial life in late 1918. The number of armed groups in the areas increased as did the level of violence as Czechoslovak and German troops struggled to control the area. The local outcry over the Czechoslovak takeover suggests that the actions of Czechoslovak troops did not always mirror the desires of local residents. The second incident—the attempted take-over of the local sugar factory—shows how food remained a source of conflict in the provinces, in this case playing a role in establishing "Czech" and "German" territory.

In late November and early December, Czechoslovak troops advanced toward Nikolsburg/Mikulov, occupying neighboring villages and gradually surrounding the city. Situation reports from the city shed light on the occupation of the region. On November 25, Czechoslovak troops occupied the railway junction at Lundenburg/Břeclav cutting off the key railway connecting that town with Nikolsburg/Mikulov. After Gross-Seelowitz/ Židlochovice fell to Czechoslovak forces, troops launched attacks on Nikolsburg/Mikulov from this location, which was also the connection point for the telephone lines stretching north to Brünn/Brno. Czechoslovak forces also occupied other villages in the area, endangering Nikolsburg/Mikulov from the east. In the west, troops had eventually taken over Grusbach-Schönau/Hrušovany nad Jevišovkou-Šatov in the preceding weeks, posing the greatest threat of Czechoslovak takeover of the city. Czech

[476] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 756, 3753, XIX, 1918.

troops had surround Nikolsburg/Mikulov, cutting off the city from rail traffic except from the south.

How did residents react to these developments? The captain wrote in his report, "The district's population is for the most part apathetic." He explained that locals did not engage in the defense of the area because they did not view the officials as being invested in the area's defense. After four hard years of war, authorities were not in a position to defend the region from the invasion of outsiders; however, they did protect food supplies. On the evening of November 24, the post commander in Unter-Wisternitz/Dolní Věstonice, along with ten armed assistants and a number of the mustered farmers in Tracht/Strachotín, overcame a Czech division trying to seize potatoes meant for Vienna. However, the captain concluded that about 600 men with a number of machine guns would be needed to prevent the district from falling to the Czechs. The Volkswehr had only just begun to organize in the districts and could not be counted upon for assistance in the following days.[477] This was not the only case of takeover and requisitioning going hand in hand; The second situation report from November 27, described that the takeover of Lodenitz/Loděnice three days earlier, during which Czech soldiers also requisitioned a large quantity of potatoes.[478] German South Moravians lacked the resources to defend themselves, but intervention was possible, especially when provisions were available.

Meanwhile, other nearby towns remained under German administration, though they would need support if they were to defend themselves against Czechoslovak takeover. The mayor and a local militia continued to control Eisgrub/Lednice; however, they were incapable of protecting the village from a Czech attack, which seemed

[477] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 731, 3861, VI, 1918.
[478] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 731, 3861, VI, 1918.

imminent given the location of Czechs troops in the area. Officials suspected that the Czechs effort to take over Eisgrub/Lednice was part of the larger plan to invade Nikolsburg/Mikulov. The captain suggested that the potential Czech occupation could be stopped with approximately 200 additional military men to strengthen the post, joining those who were already there and the numerous militia groups who had already been activated. The captain reiterated his belief that with approximately 600 military men in addition to the standing forces and the gendarmerie, that the Nikolsburg/Mikulov district could remain part of their territory. However, the captain charged that Viennese authorities were "not energetically engaged in the preservation of the South Moravian region," a statement that echoed the local population's earlier complaint. The captain stated that there was good reason to believe that if the Czechs encountered serious resistance, they would stop their advance, but to accomplish this, military assistance would be needed immediately. At present, the district's Volkswehr numbered about 250 men. And, he pointed out at the end of the report, in Weisstatten/Pasohlávky, north of the city Nikolsburg/Mikulov, at least twenty wagons of potatoes stood ready to be delivered to the imperial capital.[479] By adding this observation at the end of the report, he made the situation in southern Moravia of clear importance to officials in Vienna. The prospect of attaining additional provisions for Vienna should have been reason for intervention in the provinces, state officials struggled to gather the resources needed to secure these supplies in a volatile area.

Some of the encounters between Czechoslovak patrols and the local Volkswehr turned violent as the Czechoslovak government sought to tighten its hold on the region,

[479] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 731, 3861, VI, 1918.

making everyday life in the provinces more dangerous than it had been in the previous four years. A copy of the fifth situation report from November 28 explained that a Volkswehr patrol member was shot, likely by a Czechoslovak patrol, and the Volkswehr patrol returned fire. The actions of the Czechoslovak commander and his crew offended the local population so that the town of Pohrlitz/Pohořelice directly asked the National Committee (Národní výbor) in Brünn/Brno for an end to the occupation. A Czech from Brannowitz/Vranovice also complained about the treatment he received from a Czechoslovak officer. A report from Brünn/Brno indicated that as soon as additional forces arrived—including 1,000 Czechoslovak Legionnaires—the military command would occupy all of southern Moravia. The situation report suggested, however, that this last information could be fabricated.[480] What was clear from the report was that the situation was increasingly tense, and outside forces caused disruption in the region, even for the Czech residents they were supposedly liberating.

As Czechoslovak troops drew closer, fear and uncertainty among Nikolsburg/Mikulov's residents increased. Knowledge of the Czechoslovak military occupation of the nearby municipalities caused alarm among residents of Nikolsburg/Mikulov and the surrounding area. The captain speculated that if unrest continued for a long time, this could in turn generate circumstances that could lead to the occupation of the town. Officials worked to calm the situation, and yet, the ability to defend the area remained in question, given the low number of available weapons and Volkswehr soldiers. The captain stated that it was desirable to establish a demarcation line with the commanders of the opposing Czechoslovak military to calm the local

[480] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 731, 3861, VI, 1918.

population. Establishing calm would also be useful for provisioning the area because the present political uncertainty meant that no one wanted to deliver goods, and trade was at a standstill. The official concluded the report noting that even temporary occupation damaged the state because it affected inhabitants and influenced them towards seeking annexation to the Czechoslovak Republic.[481] Local officials knew they lacked the resources to fend off a Czechoslovak occupation, repeatedly requesting additional support; yet, it appeared that help would not arrive in time. Meanwhile, the local population—in the face of uncertainty—refused to trade, instead looking out for their own interests.

The struggle for control of Nikolsburg/Mikulov and other communities continued into December before Czechoslovak troops gained control. Though a division of 350 marines from Vienna arrived in Nikolsburg/Mikulov on the night of December 4-5, the unrest continued.[482] Later in the month, on the night of December 15-16, Czech patrols denounced the demarcation line established on December 7 and entered the city. The Czechoslovak army occupied important local landmarks, such as the town hall, post office, and railway station with no loss of life. Shortly before the Czechoslovak army arrived, district government workers fled south to Laa an der Thaya, Lower Austria.[483] These former imperial employees would be some of the outsiders arriving on the southern side of the Moravian/Lower Austrian border in late 1918.

Securing Lower Austria

[481] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 731, 3861, VI, 1918.
[482] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 731, 3861, VI, 1918, and Svoboda, *Mikulov*, 205.
[483] Svoboda, *Mikulov*, 205-206.

While most of Lower Austria avoided the invasion of Czechoslovak troops, unrest prevailed in the region as the border became militarized, and additional outsiders arrived. Retz became a place of refuge for German-speaking officials who fled neighboring Znaim/Znojmo as Czechoslovaks took over. Retz also became home to border patrol troops, regendering this side of the provincial border with a militarized male presence.[484] The events of October and November 1918 stunned locals. Owing to the political uncertainty and tensions over the border, the city formed a militia on November 5. On November 24, two Austrian Volkswehr artillery batteries arrived, and they occupied the convalescent home, replacing the wounded who had recently left. Requisitioning in the provinces continued as Austrian forces took the community's available resources. The Volkswehr also seized the convalescent home's resources; they took all available supplies, including 5,000 cigarettes—originally purchased for the wounded soldiers—and the available furniture. At the end of December, another Volkswehr division arrived and stayed longer.[485] While Retz's residents had received, housed, and cared for many wounded soldiers during the war, the Volkswehr troops who arrived were different: They were armed and ready to protect the region, and their presence serves as one symptom of increasing unrest in the region.

These armed forces stationed in Retz for the purpose of protecting the border also endangered the local population. On the evening of December 22, 1918, a Volkswehr patrol—a corporal and four infantrymen—crossed the Lower Austrian border on the road from Mitterretzbach, north of Retz, to Gnadlersdorf/Hnanice in Moravia to disarm the Czech guard stationed there. The patrol failed at this effort because the post had moved

[484] Resch, *Retzer Heimatbuch*, 523.
[485] Resch, *Retzer Heimatbuch*, 523.

back at nightfall. The patrol went back across the border, stopping at a pub in Oberretzbach. Placing their loaded guns by the door, they sat down for a night of playing cards and drinking—consuming several liters of wine. At seven that evening, the patrol returned to Retz in a "very drunken state." During their intoxicated march back to Retz, they fired about twenty shots. At the same time, moviegoers in Retz were on their way home. The Volkswehr unit put residents' physical safety in significant danger, though a report of the incident does not mention any casualties.[486] These soldiers endangered the lives of Retz's local population, just as some soldiers had endangered the lives of those on the home front during the war. This Volkswehr unit had not been charged with protecting the people of Retz; rather, they were engaged in securing the border.

The Lower Austrian border region remained unstable in summer 1919, as German-Austrian officials were unable to provide residents with security. In Neudorf bei Saatz, a large provincial town in the district of Mistelbach, residents jointly signed a letter to the provincial government on July 28, 1919. The residents claimed:

> the uncertainly in Neudorf is almost worse than in Vienna. Theft, burglary, and grave bodily injuries are daily occurrences. Yes, one is not sure of his life here. Only recently a hearing took place at the district court in Korneuburg, that again made it clear that here similar conditions prevail as with the wild peoples of Africa.

Comparing the local situation with that in the imperial capital, the letter writers described the countryside in a way that would potentially resonate with provincial officials. This could also be read as yet another example of the provincial population suggesting their frustrations were equal to—or greater—than that of the urban population. The suggestion

[486] NÖLA, Präs. P, Box 766, 260, XIX, 1919.

that the area was like that of "the wild peoples of Africa" utilized orientalist rhetoric to describe the unthinkable, out-of-control state of the community.

To counter the unrest, the community requested a gendarmerie post in Neudorf. They repeatedly called on district officials to attend to the situation, but they were still waiting for gendarmerie support. The residents there were not protected and were exposed to theft and "ruffians." Recently, they related, the priest and the mayor had their lives threatened as a result of the violence in the area. Residents were so frustrated by the lack of assistance that they would consider the protection of the Czechs if German-Austria did nothing to help them. By suggesting that they would seek protection from the Czechs in the absence of German-Austrian support, the local population adopted language similar to that used throughout the war, calling on the state to provide assistance and charging them with failing to fulfill their paternalistic duty to protect their people. Yet, the circumstances had changed, and the stakes were higher for the German-Austrian state because the petitioners involved could now seek an alternate political authority. These petitioners likely knew that this language would gain the attention of the state, securing intervention in an area prone to violence and unrest. This could also suggest apathy on the part of the local population regarding loyalties to either Czechoslovak or German-Austrian state causes; what mattered most was securing the local community. Those who wrote the letter did not sign their names, fearing that their property would be burned and that they could be killed if others learned who had called for the gendarmes. The border situation was volatile, and some residents feared that should the situation change again, the complaint could be used against them. The provincial gendarmerie wrote to the Lower Austrian provincial government on August 8, 1919 regarding the

matter, informing them of plans for the establishment of a four-man gendarmerie station in Neudorf bei Saatz. However, the peace treaty demanded the reduction of the gendarmeries, complicating the process of establishing a new post. The situation could only be fixed once the situation with the gendarmerie reduction was known.[487] The local population in this small, border-adjacent community was fed up with the ongoing situation in the area. Indeed, the violent circumstances they describe—including bodily harm and threats against the lives of prominent community members—were those of war.

Overall, the situation in Lower Austria and southern Moravia remained volatile. The militarized forces of the fighting front had come home to the provinces to contest the new international border. The ongoing border war destabilized everyday life for residents and exposed them to more violence then during the preceding years. The recounting of events in southern Moravia reveals the gradual nature of the Czechoslovak takeover, destabilizing the importance of October 28 for those in the region. The reports from southern Moravia suggest that the Austrian state was not doing everything possible to secure the area against Czechoslovak takeover. The repeated requests resemble those sent earlier in the war asking for better provisioning; residents and local authorities continued to send petitions while the state was unable to provide. These reports, in their detailed relaying of troop movements and suspected military strategy, reflected a society at war, with the border replacing the fighting front as the location of conflict. Accounts of the border takeover in southern Moravia—gendarme reports, town chronicles—describe the events as masculine, militarized events—listing numbers of troops and weapons—with no official role for women, a sign of the regendering of the provinces. The

[487] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 764a, 1964, XIVa, 1919.

weariness and frustration of residents in the region is evident in their alleged apathy as well in their stated frustration with local disorder. The reports also suggest the importance of resources in the fight to establish the borders of the new states, as the struggle to feed the provinces—and Vienna—continued to be of critical importance to officials as well as for residents.

Food Wars and the Battle for Resources

In many areas of the former Habsburg Monarchy, the food crisis and economic troubles that began during the war deepened after the armistice, making the situation even more dire. Waves of looting and protests related to poor provisioning took place across German-Austria and the Bohemian Lands.[488] As I have suggested in the previous section, the continued food crisis was closely enmeshed with the border war. Because Lower Austria and southern Moravia had long contributed to the feeding of Vienna, the ongoing conflict in the area and the subsequent drawing of a new international border complicated efforts to feed a starving capital. Additionally, wartime experiences of food shortages and requisitioning influenced attitudes about provisioning in new states as residents narrowed their conception of community and sought to provision their own. The ongoing food crisis also led to the continuation of the urban-rural conflict. Far from over, the battle for resources was continuing and becoming increasingly complicated with the new international border.

The Battle for Resources

[488] Ota Konrád, "Two post-war paths: popular violence in the Bohemian lands and in Austria in the aftermath of World War I" *Nationalities Papers* (2017): 2, 4.

Officials in both Czechoslovakia and German-Austria sought to obtain provisions and secure their new states. The Czechoslovak government in Moravia wrote district governments as well as police in Brünn/Brno and Mährisch Ostrau/Moravská Ostrava in mid-November 1918, bringing their attention to a German-language call for the farmers in German-speaking areas of Moravia to stop all delivery of food to the Czechoslovak state and supply only German Austria. The printed materials also invited German soldiers to join German Austria's armed forces. As these measures were contrary to the Czechoslovak state's interests, officials passed along orders to prevent further distribution of these materials.[489] Securing and changing the traditional direction of provisioning lines—as well as political loyalties—was of key importance to the new Czechoslovak state.

As noted in the first situation report above, Vienna still needed food from southern Moravia in the wake of the war. A skirmish over potato stores in Tracht/Strachotín in late November 1918 demonstrates the intertwining of the food crisis—especially the ongoing need to feed Vienna—with the armed border conflict between Czechs and German Austrians. On November 26, seven German-Austrian cars from the Food Office in Vienna came to Tracht/Strachotín to transport some of the municipality's potatoes to Vienna. The cars were loaded with potatoes and stood ready to depart. Indeed, the first was already headed for Vienna when a division of the Czechoslovak military arrived, disarmed the crew, and prevented departure of the other six cars. The troops confiscated the cars and wanted to force the drivers to go northeast.

[489] SOkA Jihlava, Okresní úřad-okresní národní výbor Jihlava do r. 1949, Box 42, Inv. č. 5595, j.č. 2385, 1918.

In the meantime, a post commander led his nine-man team to free the cars and wanted to go to the Czech commander to negotiate the cars' release. However, five Czech soldiers with bayonets ready stopped the post commander and tried to disarm him. Then a Czech lieutenant came and, threatening to use force, declared the post commander arrested and made arrangements to take him away. In the confusion, Czech soldiers fired two shots at the gendarmes, and the post commander's situation was endangered, especially since those accompanying him deserted. The commander requested his release and the return of his weapon, but the Czech officer would not allow this. After a time, "some courageous, German-Austrian-minded men" came from the municipality Tracht/Strachotín and took up arms against Czech soldiers, now in a precarious position. The civilian diversion allowed the commander to regain his freedom and his weapons.

The drivers restarted the potato-filled cars. When they were ready to leave, the Czechs were arrested, and the drivers set off with three of the cars secured. The Czechs originally prevented the other three cars from leaving Tracht/Strachotín. Because the local population supported the German-Austrians, the Czech commander and his troops prepared to withdraw. The post commander gave the sign for the remaining cars' departure, and they left, eventually reaching their destination. The commander reported that the rescue of the six cars was possible only through his "energetic, unflinching, and purposeful intervention with the disregard of my own life" because he and his men had little time to react. They expected Czech reinforcements at any minute, and if that had happened, they would not have been able to save their cars and the important cargo they carried.[490] The region remained volatile while Czechs and Germans struggled to gain the

[490] NÖLA, Präs. P, Box 731, 3958, VI, 1918.

upper hand in their battle for territory and foodstuffs. The case of also reveals that some local Germans were prepared to oppose Czechoslovak troops. Their participation indicated that the provinces were now mobilized for armed conflict in their own communities, which marked an escalation of violence in the region. Now, the provinces were on the front lines of international conflict.

Elsewhere the advancing Czechoslovak occupation compromised German-Austrian provisioning efforts and boosted Czech efforts to feed residents of the new Czechoslovak state. On November 25, 1918, the district captain for German South Moravia and state council member Oskar Teufel telegraphed German-Austria's Office for People's Nutrition from Znaim/Znojmo, relaying the Czech occupation of the Misslitz/Miroslav railway station. The occupation cut off many German communities from Vienna, severing the connection to important resources. This included thousands of liters of milk that Czech train directors diverted to Brünn/Brno instead of allowing it to go to Vienna. Teufel requested immediate intervention in the situation.[491] The provisions originally intended for Vienna were now headed in the opposite direction.

At times, this international competition for resources endangered the lives of the local population. A sergeant in Misslitz/Miroslav wrote to the gendarmerie command on November 30, describing that two days earlier, a Czech patrol occupied the Damitz-Tullnitz/Damnice-Dolenice station and soldiers ruthlessly seized the food—meat, lard, and other goods—that passengers traveling to Vienna carried with them. The patrol also searched homes on the pretext of looking for food but found nothing. As one man passed through the area, the solders called for him to stop. The man did not hear them and

[491] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 120, Z. 3727.

continued on, at which time the patrol shot at him, but did not hit him or his horses. That same day, a girl carrying two milk jugs and a handbag got off the train traveling to Vienna and was walking along the train tracks towards the train station in Misslitz/Miroslav when one of the soldiers of the patrol called her to stop. The girl did not do so, perhaps due to fear, the report stated, and the soldier fired several shots at her, but did not strike her. Subsequently, the girl could not be found. In a conversation about the patrol, the Czechoslovak commander stated that he had commanded his soldiers to fire warning shots in cases where someone did not stop when called.[492] Whether these were "warning shots" or not, these incidents added to the disorder in the provinces. These Czechoslovak forces endangered the local population by taking active measures to prevent the movement of food to Vienna.

Officials on both sides of the border sought to procure food for their countries, but at the local level, many officials and residents continued efforts to provision their own communities. On November 20, 1918, authorities from the Moravian provincial government wrote to district officials charging that recently, some district authorities had ignored state needs. Instead, district officials only cared for the provisioning of their districts at the expense of the whole, and they accumulated food rather than contribute to requisitioning efforts. Provincial government officials suggested this was problematic given the current circumstances, especially due to the struggle to feed large industrial centers. They acknowledged that some local patriotism could be justified by the fear of products being exported as occurred in the former Austrian state, but this could not be compared with the current patriotic obligation to the new Czechoslovak Republic. More

[492] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 731, 3967, VI, 1918.

importantly, keeping peace and order in the new state depended first and foremost on the regular supply of large, industrial cities. Therefore, activities to accumulate supplies to secure specific districts for a longer period of time, while the industrial centers struggled, would be dangerous. It was critical that supplies be procured.[493] Loyalty to a particular region, something that intensified in the preceding years with mounting food shortages, continued and became a problem for the new Czechoslovak state. These officials would have been well aware of the provisioning challenges and subsequent protests that plagued the Habsburg Monarchy in the preceding years, destabilizing society and leading residents to question state authority. Officials knew they needed to fulfill the role of patriarchal provider for their people, especially those in industrial areas, otherwise they could face potentially delegitimizing social unrest. And yet, for those in the province, the immediate local conditions superseded the greater interests of the state. The previous years of deprivation had conditioned them to think about their own needs before that of the state, whatever state that may be.

Winter-Spring 1919

The winter of 1918-1919 and the following spring mirrored the provisioning patters of previous years: The circumstances in the provinces continued to deteriorate and locals refused to allow officials to requisition food. On January 3, 1919, the food inspector visiting Mistelbach reported on the supply and seizure of goods in the area. The grain and potato harvest had been bad, and residents were disinclined to turn over their goods as part of requisitioning efforts. Several districts had declared that they

[493] SOkA Jihlava, Okresní úřad-okresní národní výbor Jihlava do r. 1949, Box 42, Inv.č. 5601, j.č. 2405 1918.

would deliver surplus grain only to the municipality of Vienna, but not to the War Grain Distribution Institution. Producers did not want to turn over sources of fat. Four days later the inspector reported on meeting with municipal and district officials in Horn. There, too, fat could not be obtained, in part because local pigs were too lean. More pressing, however, the local population was unwilling to part with their goods, and the "home comers" (*Heimkehrer*)—those who had been away at the fighting front—had incited the local population against handing over requisitioned goods. Later in January, the inspector reported on the conditions in Oberhollabrunn, noting that control of the fat supply in the district left much to be desired and efforts to promote requisitioning had not been effective. Based on his observations of the area, where the trafficking of goods continued, he believed that a new effort to requisition potatoes would be a total failure. He noted the illegal sale of food stemmed from the lack of petroleum and candles as well as the small allotments of sugar. The Hamsters from Vienna allegedly had unknown ways of finding large sources of supplies for lighting as well as sugar, which they brought to the countryside to exchange for food. The inspector believed that if those in the provinces were better equipped with these articles, then it would be easier to requisition the products the authorities requested as they would not have to trade with Hamsters to procure them.

While the food crisis was ongoing, the border situation added to the crisis, driving some south into Lower Austria—to Retz—and increasing the number of mouths local officials had to feed. The food inspector continued his journey from Oberhollabrunn north to Retz, where he met with exiled German South Moravian officials from Znaim/Znojmo and other district officials. The municipality of Retz had issued 600

ration cards for potatoes, but at this time had not received any provisions to distribute. From Znaim/Znojmo, about sixty officials had come to Retz, of which about thirty were gendarmes, who relied on the local community to feed them. However, some things had not changed: Locals complained about poor provisioning and high prices.[494]

The food inspectors continued their work, reporting on deteriorating conditions in their areas in early 1919 as the states distribution plan failed and in turn residents failed to turn over their produce. One inspector noted that conditions were worse than ever in the district of Waidhofen an der Thaya in early February. What accounted for this? The inspector explained that there had been a total failure to distribute allotments of bran. Although the district had obtained eighty-five percent of the total grain quota and had more than the previous year, it had not received a kilogram of bran in four months. The lack of bran, used to feed cattle, resulted in lower milk production. As a result, the population was bitter and did not want to hand over any other products to officials, implying the community's noncompliance with continued requisitioning and distributing efforts. Their response suggests a tendency to provide for the local community, rather than operate in a way that would benefit the state at large.[495]

Just as they had done over the previous four—almost five—years, residents continued to complain to officials about not receiving their rations. On April 22, 1919, Theresie Schmied, a day laborer from Kirchstetten in the Mistelbach district, wrote that she and her family of six had been without ration cards for six weeks. Before Easter she had received just over a kilogram of meat, but none since them. The other residents of Kirchstetten, all dependent on ration cards, were in the same predicament. Authorities

[494] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 129, Z. 7150.
[495] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 129, Z. 11307.

from the State Office for People's Nutrition in Vienna acknowledged Schmied's complaint three days later in a draft informing the Lower Austrian provincial government of the situation.[496]

Directing provisions to hungry residents took on special importance in border areas because both Czechoslovak and German-Austrian officials sought to feed their citizens. On April 9, 1919 officials from Haugsdorf, in the Oberhollabrunn district, wrote to the provincial Office for People's Nutrition seeking assistance for the town, which had just over 2,100 inhabitants, 1,200 of whom relied on bread ration cards. The municipality needed 1,200 kilograms of flour per week for provisioning but there had been no flour for three weeks. The community was unable to fill these ration cards, as it had delivered all its foodstuffs to the War Grain Distribution Institution, and the Institution in turn had not allocated any flour for the community. The mill in Seefeld, which was to provide the municipality's flour, was not grinding any grain. As a result, 1,200 people had been left starving for three weeks. The letter writers questioned how the workers were to have the strength to do their jobs. Given the circumstances, "They all collapse as a result of hunger under the weight of their work." Children became susceptible to lung diseases as a result of being underfed. Self-sufficiency was impossible, officials explained, because even those with bread cards were unable to pay the high prices.

The officials explained in the letter that food trafficking in the region continued: Political authorities established set prices for different goods, but farmers could get more from illicit trade with the urban population. Farmers would not sell to a local resident, for example, potatoes at the fixed maximum price allowedof fifty-six Hellers per

[496] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 150, Z. 20746.

kilogram, when they could get six Crowns from the Hamsters. Why should farmers sell one liter of milk for eighty Hellers when they can sell it for two or three Crowns? The officials explained that the local population, which consisted mostly of poor returnees who worked as day laborers and small wage earners, could not possibly pay this large sum. The local population's continued experience of hunger could not continue, they charged. They also suggested that the Viennese—for the most part—received the quota listed on the bread card, that they had more vegetables than those in the provinces, and that they also received fat when those in the provinces had only received one ten-dekagram ration of fat since June 1918. As a result, Haugsdorf's officials reported that "for a long time, the starving population has quietly waited, now they have reached the limit of their consideration."

Political instability in the region made the need to provision the area more urgent. The committee highlighted the daily increase of communists and Bolsheviks among the poor. Furthermore, their community was located near the Moravian border. It was therefore "not impossible or unlikely" that these hungry residents could cross the border with the train line from Zellnerdorf to Lundenburg/Břeclav in order provision the poor population with food at a cheap price. In order to prevent this, which would be damaging to the Lower Austrian state, the committee in Haugsdorf requested that the German-Austrian Office for People's Nutrition quickly provide flour and bread as well as other food. If the flour and bread were to be provided by the War Grain Distribution Institution, they would have to use the Seefeld mill, and it would not help, because the mill had been without coal for a long time. The committee related that while some had been able to procure wagons of coal, including employees of the Haugsdorf railway

station who had recently procured two wagons of coal and distributed it among themselves, the mill, which was needed to provision the whole population with flour, received no coal. The committee and the mayor of Haugsdorf requested a quick response.

The German Austrian Office for People's Nutrition forwarded the Haugsdorf complaint to the provincial government in Vienna, mentioning the problems with flour and fat distribution, the lack of coal for the mill, and that the population could wish for a Czech occupation. The Lower Austrian provincial government responded on June 5, 1919, suggesting that the food situation had been remedied and that the problems with coal provisioning had been reported to the proper authorities.[497] This petition from Haugsdorf and the following responses from state organs indicate the continued seriousness of the food crisis in the provinces, containing complaints similar to those lodged earlier, but the letter also reflects the new realities of the international border and overall political uncertainty in German-Austria that created additional complications for local, provincial, and state authorities. The letter from local officials makes clear that residents had reached the limits of their patience and described complaints similar to those made earlier about provisioning in the provinces versus in Vienna. However, the stakes had changed in 1919: German-Austrians could willingly cross over the border to the Czech side if their needs were not being met, or, they could at least use the threat of doing so to force Austrian authorities to act.

The Provinces Win the Food War

[497] ÖStA, AdR, BMfVE, Box 150, Z. 18252.

The armistice did not bring an end to the flow of Hamsters to the provinces, and the rural population continued to play a key role in feeding the Viennese. On October 22, 1922, the *Neues Wiener Journal* published an article by Alois Ulreich titled "Sunday in the Province," in which he explained, "The ways of God are known to be wonderful. They often lead to Oberhollabrunn." He then described the aesthetic beauty of the area before recounting his own journey to the town, departing from Vienna's Northwest train station. Previously, the station had been used by those engaged in the cucumber trade in Znaim/Znojmo and the production of sauerkraut, as well as by "Berlin theater people" who went back and forth in the night. However, "Now, the northwest train has become a 'sack train'" and there were no more express trains, except those to Retz. In his assessment, the nature of the northwest train station and the railway lines emanating from it had changed, from one that linked Vienna with the southern Moravian economy, as well as to the larger cultural German world. Now, however, the railway line retained only its economic importance because it permitted Hamsters to move back and forth from the capital to the province on a "sack train," an exchange that continued well after the armistice.

He went on to observe that the Viennese knew the provinces only through hearsay, since for them, Vienna was Austria; now however, "The provinces have come to power and esteem, they have achieved meaning and influence. The economic hardships have strengthened them." While those in the capital may have undervalued the provinces, now, those in the provinces with the food controlled the situation, putting political and economic pressure on those in Vienna. Another circumstance, the author suggested, "that has contributed to making the provinces independent" is the industrial

development of recent years, especially the enterprises that moved to small communities after the end of the Monarchy. Industries could obtain more space in the provinces and could feed their workers more than in Vienna, and, "So it happened that one in the provinces no longer gravitates to Vienna…" He describes a changed economy in which the provinces had gained the upper hand over the former imperial capital.

Once in the town, Ulreich noted, one encountered a street like those in Vienna, "the elite street of Oberhollabrunn." Here the Oberhollabrunners promenaded. On Sunday mornings, it was filled with young people, and the town was home to several schools, making it a center for intellectual life. The author noted the healthy, strong appearance of the boys and girls, alluding to them as being well-fed, a contrast to what one found in the capital at the time. He also suggested that "the long arms and rough hands of the boys reveal that their immediate ancestors had been accustomed to hard work, and their cumbersome walk allows you to recognize that their ancestors had trodden behind the plow all their lives…" The wealth and abundance these individuals enjoyed was newly acquired. The residents of the city and surrounding villages mingled here, and many young peasant girls were there Sunday mornings, exchanging their peasant headscarves for "urban hats." Furthermore, "There is no shortage of peasant youths who have come from the villages to meet their friends. This peasant world [*Bauernwelt*] occupies the large market place and exchanges economic experiences or speaks about incidents of price fixing." This information was not inconsequential, as the author argued that the farmers and peasants here lived comfortably. Their wealth was clear and evidenced by the small town having two savings banks, neither of which had experienced financial trouble. To the contrary, both banks received a large number of

deposits on Saturdays. Further alluding to the recent acquisition of this wealth, the author pointed out that Oberhollabrunn had many old houses, but none of historical significance. At noon, he observed, the people left the square and the street that resembled Vienna to stuff themselves at home. His assessment suggests that they had plenty to eat. The author also hypothesized that the prominent street near the train station was important as it connected the community to the world and to Vienna. He concluded that even if those in the provinces act as if they had freed themselves from the political and economic influences of Vienna, the city "still retains the power of its spiritual dominance. One gravitates in this sense still to Vienna…"[498] The tension between the capital and the provinces continued, with the understanding that the balance of power had shifted to the provinces, and the ongoing food crisis remained central to the relationship between urban and provincial milieus.

Food shortages that had plagued the region from the war's outset continued and worsened from late 1918 into 1919. But now, the stakes had changed for German-Austrian officials. The problem had become entangled with the Czechoslovak occupation of parts of the region and with the struggle to establish the international border. Not only did German-Austrian officials face the continued task of feeding the local population, but they also faced the possibility of losing a traditional source of food—as well as the loyalty of their citizens—to the Czechoslovak state.

Refugees and Citizenship

[498] *Neues Wiener Journal*, October 30, 1922, 3. Reprinted in "Beiträge zur Bezirkskunde Hollabrunn," Volume 83, January 5 1996. I thank Walter Fitner from the Stadtarchiv Hollabrunn for bringing this article to my attention.

Beginning in late 1918 it was clear that the stakes for refugees had changed; the refugees were no longer within the borders of the Habsburg Monarchy, but in new successor states. For Czechoslovak and German-Austrian authorities, the refugees were neither German-Austrian nor Czechoslovak citizens; they were outsiders who did not belong to the states in which they were residing, posing a threat to the integrity of these new so-called nation-states. While many refugees had returned to their pre-war homes because the Austrian state had attempted to repatriate refugees in wartime as soon as possible, many remained in Lower Austria and Moravia in late 1918. The end of the Monarchy had a particularly deleterious effect on the refugees, especially Galician-Jewish refugees whom the new states urged to return home, although hostilities were ongoing in Galician Poland. The Polish-Ukrainian War of late 1918 to 1919 and the Polish-Soviet war of 1919-1920 made returning home dangerous.[499] In light of these circumstances—new states, new borders, ongoing war—the refugees in Lower Austria and Moravia were excluded from the state building process.[500] These new states also had to address what would happen to those who had arrived during the war.

Authorities in nascent states predicated on the idea of the nation state faced questions of who belonged within their borders. Other former Habsburg Austrian citizens regarded the refugees as "strangers" among other former Austrian citizens, as

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[499] Michael R. Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees from the First World War Through the Cold War*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 51, 61-68.

[500] On emigration policy and nation building, see Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free* World (New York W. W. Norton & Company, 2016), 17. Rebekah Klein-Pejšová has argued that Jewish refugee policy in interwar Czechoslovakia served as a means of state consolidation "by fortifying state legitimacy, demonstrating good will, and positively distinguishing the state from its predecessor." See Klein-Pejšová, "Beyond the 'Infamous Concentration camps of the Old Monarchy': Jewish Refugee Policy from Wartime Austria-Hungary to Interwar Czechoslovakia" *Austrian History Yearbook* 45 (2014): 150-166. See also, Nick Baron and Peter Gatrell, eds, *Homelands: War, Population and Statehood in Eastern Europe and Russia, 1918-1924* (London: Anthem Press, 2004).

Vienna's orthodox Jewish weekly, the *Jüdischer Korrespondenz*, reported on November 28, 1918. Jewish refugees were no longer the concern of the new states in which they were residing. Certainly, Czechoslovakia, which had been established with the help of Western powers, did not provide a welcoming environment for these refugees. Prime Minister Karel Kramář argued that the housing shortage necessitated the return of the refugees to their pre-war homes, now located across international borders.[501]

Leaders in German Austria used similar rhetoric, asserting that these refugees were not citizens of the places in which they were living. The housing shortage, as well as food shortages, was given as the reason to deny refugees entry into German Austria. Interior Ministry correspondence with the Lower Austrian Provincial Government in November 1918 revealed officials' fear that antisemitism prevalent in the "Slavic areas" coupled with Hungary's reduced refugee funding would lead to a large influx of refugees from Bohemia, Hungary, and Moravia. They were to be denied entry at the border stations.[502]

The refugee issue was an important point of contention between German Austria and Czechoslovakia. In December 1918, authorities from German Austria's Interior Ministry wrote about additional concerns. They believed that though the Czechoslovak government had promised to support impoverished refugees until December 15, there had been several reported instances in which they had deported refugees to German Austria. In order to prevent Czechoslovakia from sending unwanted refugees across the border, it was necessary for German-Austrian police to establish stations to monitor transit. Only those who were being repatriated to another country would be allowed passage. These

[501] *Jüdischer Korrespondenz*, November 28, 1918, 2.
[502] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 764a, 475, XIIe, 1919.

authorities believed that monitoring transit would be easy to accomplish because Jewish refugees were "easily identifiable."[503] Given that these were mostly Eastern European Jews, this was likely the case. German Austrian authorities perceived the refugee problem—at least in part—as a problem caused by Czechoslovaks, but it was also a distinctly a Jewish problem.

By early 1919, border controls were taking on additional significance, keeping out undesired refugees. In February, police officials observed that border inspection stations had primarily served the interests of the tax authorities; however, new additional stations would be needed, particularly along rail lines, and additional police forces would be necessary.[504] The refugee crisis and the formation of the borders went hand in hand: State management of refugees helped to reinforce these new international borders in order to keep outsiders out.

The desires of those governing to determine the composition of the country far outweighed the interests of the refugees, some of whom wanted to remain in the places that had become home to them during the war. Leo Kraus, born in 1888 in Breschan/Brzeżany/Berezhany, Galicia, wrote to the Police Directorate in Brünn/Brno, on September 9, 1919, arguing that "expulsion by the Interior Ministry would completely destroy me." Kraus made his case for staying in Czechoslovakia: Following demobilization, he had arrived in Brünn/Brno in 1918 and was employed as a language teacher. He had no father and was responsible for supporting his mother and sister. He contended that it would be impossible to find work in Galicia. He acknowledged concerns about the housing shortage, which had been used as the justification to return

[503] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 764a, 475 XIIe, 1919.
[504] NÖLA, Präs P, Box 764a, 475 XIIe, 1919.

refugees to their prewar homes and stated that he was living "in only a small closet." Based on the evidence he provided, he hoped to be permitted to stay.[505] The local Poale Zion, the Jewish Social Democratic Labor Party, in Brünn/Brno submitted a letter on Kraus' behalf, confirming that he was a language teacher and director of teaching.[506] The Interior Ministry granted Kraus' request, along with those of several others, but not all refugees were permitted to remain.[507] Though in some ways not a typical Galician refugee, because he had only arrived in 1918, Kraus' case highlights what was at stake for many of these refugees who claimed they had nothing to return to elsewhere. His own education and current employment—both of which made him atypical—strengthened his application to stay. Kraus' letter reflects a keen awareness of the process of being granted permission to stay. His appeal includes numerous reasons for his displacement and subsequent desire to stay in Brünn/Brno. He understood what factors could impede approval of his request and addressed them. That Kraus was allowed to remain showed that some refugees took part in the state building process as well, applying to stay, albeit not always with the outcome they sought.

Post-war political developments allowed for the repatriation, or long-desired expulsion, of many refugees. Coping with the refugee crisis, managing the "outsiders" who had arrived during the war, and drawing the new international border were intertwined processes. Monitoring these borders increased in part as a response to managing refugees. However, state officials were not the only ones influencing these

[505] MZA, B26, Box 2180, letter from Leon Kraus to Polizeidirektion Brünn, September 9, 1919.
[506] MZA, B26, Box 2180, letter from "Poale Zion" Brno, September 21, 1919.
[507] MZA, B26, Box 2180, Ministerstvo Vnitra to Policejním ředitelství v Brně, September 30, 1919.

discussions. Refugees themselves engaged in this process, though they were at the mercy of the new states.

Conclusion

The residency of refugees, as with the provisioning of the provincial population, became more complicated from late 1918 as Czechoslovak and German-Austrian, subsequently Austrian, officials sought to establish their authority and their borders. The ongoing conflict over border disputes caused unrest beyond the armistice as additional outsiders entered the region in effort to claim territory. This border conflict brought increased violence and unrest to the area as returning veterans and some local residents took up arms in the fight to maintain territory. Indeed, this occurred as the provinces were regendered and men reasserted their place in the public sphere. Some soldiers had returned from the fighting front only to become involved with armed conflict at home. The struggle to establish new states involved securing resources, making food procurement a key issue, owing to ongoing shortages. Both Czechoslovak and German Austrian authorities understood the importance of fulfilling their obligations as providers to their peoples. The process of securing borders also meant that states needed to secure the populations of their state. Refugees, who were not Czechoslovak or German Austrian residents, had to be removed.

Conclusion

The military's formation of the warfare state during the First World War changed the relationship between the Habsburg Monarchy and its people. It created the conditions for new cultural, political, and social developments, including changing gender relations. The state of emergency and the military's takeover of civil society in 1914 set in motion the gendered reorganization of the provincial social landscape that I have analyzed in my dissertation. The changing social landscape, coupled with mounting wartime privation, altered the relationship between the provinces and Vienna. As a result, people in the provinces sought to provision their own communities and operated outside of official state channels, undermining the Monarchy. Habsburg officials sought to meet the needs of the Monarchy's people but were unable to do so and the effort exhausted both residents and officials in the provinces.

The first five chapters of my dissertation reveal how events on the home front hastened the breakdown of Habsburg civil society, which was evident in changing gender roles in wartime. As the first chapter demonstrates, the war sparked the gendered remaking of society, in which men—often young—were rushed to the fighting front, many leaving girlfriends, wives, mothers, and children behind. Their absence changed the gender balance at home and helped feminize the home front. Shortly thereafter, emasculated men—POWs, refugees, including men too old or ill to serve in the military, and wounded soldiers—began arriving in the provinces. These outsiders would require the resources of the provinces and the state, resources that would become increasingly scarce, and friction between residents and outsiders would increase.

Habsburg officials actively attempted to cultivate broad support for the war effort. Few aspects of wartime life epitomize the efforts of home front officials to unite home front residents and maintain Habsburg gendered social order more than the nail monuments that recalled the sacrifice and chivalry of medieval knights. Women and children on the home front joined male Habsburg representatives and organizations in showing their support for the heroic men on the fighting front by purchasing nails to drive into these monuments. The empire-wide employment of these monuments aimed, in part, to maintain Habsburg, male-dominated social order, something the Habsburg Monarchy was unable to accomplish.

The wartime reconfiguration of provincial society contributed to home front unrest. From the very beginning of the war, women on the home front—many without male bread winners at home owing to mobilization—repeatedly demanded that imperial authorities fulfill their patriarchal roles, above all feeding residents. The Habsburg bureaucracy tried to meet the needs of its people, and officials sought to forge good relations between home front residents and the outsiders. Women played important new roles in local and provincial affairs through their leadership and participation in bread demonstrations. But, demonstrations were not the only way that provincial residents made known their dissatisfaction with the state. One of the biggest contributions this project makes to the existing literature on the First World War is the examination of requisitioning and the appearance of Hamsters in the provinces. Provincial residents faced a kind of wartime deprivation different from residents of more urban areas. Requisitioning efforts undermined the relationship between residents and local, regional, and imperial male officials, who failed in their role as providers. This failure to provide

led residents to take provisioning matters into their own hands, sometimes undermining the state's requisitioning and distribution plan. These actions also contributed to hunger in the capital; therefore, this study demonstrates that the provinces contributed to the capital's collapse. Thus, this study contributes to the overall understanding of the collapse of Habsburg society in the First World War and provides a model for examining wartime provisioning in other contexts.

The wartime refugee crisis reflects the desperate attempt of women, children, and men to get support from the state to meet their basic needs. Despite attempts to construct and organize housing and direct resources for refugee Habsburg citizens, the government proved unable to provide. While some residents would provide aid, many complained to officials about refugees disrupting society and destroying property. The arrival of outsiders also contributed to residents increasingly clinging to their local identities. These relations would contribute to the breakdown of home front society. Many communities sought the refugees' removal, foreshadowing efforts to send refugees home in late 1918. State officials in Czechoslovakia and German Austria sought the rapid expulsion of Habsburg refugees.

POWs also undermined the stability of home front society. Local women sometimes replaced their husbands with POWs, evidence that not everyone on the home front considered POWs to be enemies. Their relationships also suggest the Monarchy's failure to fully rally all its people against a common enemy. Women formed relationships with POWs despite authorities' forbidding them to do so, and in the process, they undermined the social order that authorities wanted to maintain. Some women's wartime relations with the POWs reveals the degree to which residents ignored imperial

wartime strictures, instead creating relations of their own choosing. Though many POWs would return home, some remained in their wartime homes and established families with the women they met during the war, providing one example of how the war permanently shaped society. In sum, this project shows the breakdown of Habsburg society in wartime with women playing an important role.

Some of these changes in gender relations that I address in this project would be long term. Like those in many other belligerent states, women in both German Austria and Czechoslovakia gained the right to vote in 1918 and 1920, respectively. Yet, public memory would ignore women's wartime work and sacrifices between the wars as many men returned home, where they reasserted themselves in the public sphere and continued bearing arms—this time to establish the new international border. Commemorations honored men who had died at the front, and memorials of wartime heroism and sacrifice in both countries would be limited to them. Both Austrian and Czechoslovak Germans' monuments honored the male war dead as heroes of the homeland (*Helden der Heimat*). However, Austrian soldiers who returned home alive did so as losers; only those who had died at the front were heroes.[508] In Czechoslovakia, memorials honored the war dead as victims. In contrast to Austria, some Czechoslovak men were valorized in the interwar period. Those soldiers who switched sides, many of whom had been taken prisoner and spent time in camps, were especially honored as an important part of the Czechoslovak foundation myth. Commemoration especially honored the heroes of the 1917 Battle of Zborov and other Legionnaires. While this project analyzes the impact of returning

[508] Maureen Healy, "Civilizing the Soldier in Postwar Austria," in *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, ed. Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 51.

soldiers on both sides of the new international border, future research could expand upon the remaking of families from late 1918 through the 1920s as well as compare how soldiers on both sides of the new international border understood their wartime service.

Moreover, I demonstrate that conflict did not end in the provinces at the same time as it did on the fighting front; indeed, it continued, even increased, in late 1918. Chapter six reveals the fluidity of the concept "war's end," as economic, political, and social unrest continued in Habsburg Central Europe and elsewhere. The issues that had led to the breakdown of the Habsburg Monarchy would not be easily resolved. Beginning with the Armistice in November 1918, additional outsiders entered the border area with the intent to claim territory—sometimes employing violence—in establishing new international borders. Outsiders continued to influence events in the provinces as Czechoslovak troops and diplomats at the Paris Peace Conference helped establish the new international border, ignoring calls from some locals for self-determination and connection with German Austria/Austria. These outsiders were also able to capitalize on the weariness of locals and of German Austrian officials after years of conflict and deprivation. Ultimately, this project shows the extended effect of wartime deprivation and low morale, conditions that laid the groundwork for Czechoslovak takeover of Southern Moravia. Moreover, by suggesting that the process of takeover occurred gradually, this project adds nuance to our understanding the founding of the First Czechoslovak Republic: Not everyone who lived in this border wanted to be part of the Czechoslovak state nor did they embrace it.

Epilogue

National tension in the Austrian-Czechoslovak borderlands continued after the signing of the Treaty of Saint Germain on September 10, 1919, which took effect the following July 16. Uncertainty that had begun during the war continued even with the peace agreement. The events in Feldsberg/Valtice provide a case study that exemplifies attitudes along the border to Czechoslovak takeover as well as male dominance in the takeover process. This example and the fate of the nail memorials from 1918 reflect ongoing political developments and social reconfiguration of former Habsburg society as well as the ambiguity of the conflict's end.

On July 30, 1920, the day before the Czechoslovak government takeover of the formerly Lower Austrian municipalities of Feldsberg/Valtice and Garschönthal/Úvaly, the mayors of Feldsberg/Valtice and Poysdorf, Lower Austria, which would remain part of Austria, organized a joint farewell celebration, a sign of change this caused to local life. The mayors and town councilors gathered at an inn in Feldsberg/Valtice before walking to the town hall, where they met other representatives and residents from Feldsberg/Valtice and Garschönthal/Úvaly. The mood was mournful as authorities began their speeches. The first of several male speakers optimistically suggested that the connections in the region would not be completely severed. He thanked the municipal council in Feldsberg/Valtice on behalf of the Austrian civil service for their work and hoped that residents on both sides of the border would maintain close relations despite the new international border separating them.

Several speakers celebrated the town as an economic and cultural center in the district, alluding to the economic problems the border caused. They also mentioned the

competing Austrian and Czechoslovak claims made to the area. One speaker commented that residents in Lower Austria would miss the town's well-regarded Provincial-, Farming-, Fruit-, and Viniculture School, which had educated workers throughout the region. Feldsberg/Valtice Mayor Matthias Nistler remarked that those gathered would have been much happier had their town remained part of Lower Austria. It was clear, he claimed, that the year-long discussions of the border's establishment had not yielded the result they had hoped. And now, Nistler commented, "We are given over to foreign rule." His comments foreshadowed issues of German residents' loyalty to Czechoslovakia, which would play an important role in interwar politics. The situation was a sad event "for our old Austrian and true-German (*treudeutsche*) city, which loses its hinterland through the separation," which the mayor suggested might lead to economic ruin. He thanked those in attendance for their friendship, remarking that "for us, Lower Austria remains forever the homeland that we love above all, which we will always strive for, and which we want to be reunited with soon." He encouraged crowd members from the soon to be Austrian side of the border to support efforts to reunite this territory with Austria, to engage with the government, to elect representatives who were aware of their plight and would work tirelessly on their behalf. They would not give up their hope of reunification with the fatherland. He ended his speech by wishing those in attendance a heartfelt farewell and exclaimed "Heil Austria!" Others then spoke, echoing this call for quick reunification. One speaker, resentful of the actions taken by outsiders, stressed that "today's farewell is not a separation of hearts and not alienation, but a solemn pledge of everlasting faithfulness that no stroke of a pen of the condemnable peace treaty of Saint Germain can shake." Another speaker claimed that the Austrian administration lacked

energy in the fight for Feldsberg/Valtice, and he urged the municipalities to remain loyal in case they were returned to "the fatherland." The gathering concluded with the call "Heil Austria!"[509]

The following morning, thirty Czechoslovak gendarmes arrived in Feldsberg/Valtice, and soon afterward the red-blue-white Czechoslovak tricolor began flying from atop the town hall. The new district captain informed the assembled community representatives that the Treaty of Saint Germain had awarded Feldsberg/Valtice and Garschönthal/Úvaly to the Czechoslovak state. He continued:

> On behalf of the Czechoslovak government, I take the liberty of welcoming you as new citizens of the Czechoslovak Republic and take over the city of Feldsberg as well as the municipality of Garschönthal into the Czechoslovak administration. Furthermore, I declare that from this hour all inhabitants of the city Feldsberg, as well as the municipality of Garschönthal equal in their rights and duties of the citizens of the Czechoslovak Republic…

According to this account of the events included in the city's municipal council records, Feldsberg/Valtice's residents continued their daily work during the takeover, and no one, except for a few children, was in the streets to watch the change in governments.[510] The events of July 31 were peaceful, but according to this account, local residents did not warmly welcome their inclusion in the Czechoslovak Republic. Instead, the previous day's gathering indicates that many residents opposed becoming part of Czechoslovakia and hoped the decision might still be reversed. Some local German residents never gave up their goal of *Anschluss* with Austria and the larger German community. They would get their wish of unification with Lower Austria and the larger German Reich in October

[509] SOkA Břeclav, Valtice, Obecní úřad Valtice, Sitzungsprotokoll, Abschieds-Feier in Feldsberg, July 30, 1920.

[510] SOkA Břeclav, Valtice, Obecní úřad Valtice, Sitzungsprotokoll, Die Übernahme der Stadt Feldsberg durch die Tschechen.

1938, when parts of southern Moravia were annexed to the Nazi *Reichsgau Niederdonau* in the wake of the Munich Conference of autumn 1938. My project provides the basis for future research that examines continuity and change in the careers of municipal and imperial officials beginning in late 1918. The fate of displaced Habsburg civil servants is a relatively understudied topic as is the fate of the German speakers from across the former Monarchy who returned to rump Austria in the wake of the war.

The farewell celebration in Feldsberg/Valtice demonstrates the fluidity and ambiguity of the end of hostilities that began in 1914 owing to contested borders and the ongoing movement of people. Indeed, after the armistice, residents of the border regions faced a new quandary: How could they know precisely when the struggle between Austrian and Czechoslovak authorities had reached its end? Neither the armistice, nor the signing of the Treaty of Saint Germain ended the unrest in the provinces. Even after the signing of the treaty, which awarded Czechoslovakia predominantly German-speaking regions, the Prague government was unable to sway the hearts and minds of many living within its new borders.

Figure 10. Vienna's Wehrmann, today at the corner of Felderstrasse and Rathausstrasse. (Photograph by the author.)

The afterlives of the nail memorials—the changing popular meanings ascribed to them beginning in late 1918 and their varied fates during the interwar period—reflect greater political developments across interwar Habsburg Central Europe. Vienna's Wehrmann, which remains standing today, survived numerous political changes. Even before the Armistice, plans had been made to move the Wehrmann to the corner of Felderstrasse and Rathausstrasse, across the street from the city hall. After the war, however, the Wehrmann was placed in storage until officials again found the imagery of the knight a useful symbol with the rise of the Fatherland Front and in the wake of the Austrian Civil War in February 1934. Thus, the Wehrmann was again unveiled on Schwarzenbergplatz on May 7, 1934 in a ceremony that included local and national dignitaries. The statue had a new base, providing space for nails to be driven in to raise

money for the new monument to the war dead of 1914-1918 at Vienna's Äußeres Burgtor.[511]

In Czechoslovakia, the Wehrmann in Brünn/Brno, like some other statues and symbols of the defunct Habsburg Monarchy and the Bohemian Lands, was removed from public space.[512] On March 30, 1919, the Brünn/Brno newspaper, *Moravská orlice*, described the removal of the Wehrmann from Franz-Josef-Platz, now renamed Náměstí Svobody, or "Freedom Square," as a "noticeable breakthrough" in the victorious Czechs gaining control of "former German possessions."[513] The meaning ascribed to Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann changed. On July 27, 1930, the fifteenth anniversary of the statue's unveiling, *Lidové noviny*, the influential Czech-language daily published in Brünn/Brno, ran a story recounting the details of the 1915 event. It included a photograph of the large crowd at the unveiling ceremony, as well as two sketches of the statue. The article referred to the legend of William Tell, who long ago had played an important role in ending Habsburg rule in Switzerland, and the Habsburg Bailiff Albrecht Gessler, who placed a pole topped with his hat in the canton of Uri. Though Gessler expected the locals to bow to this symbol, the article noted that the Swiss treated the hat disrespectfully, throwing stones at it, and that a sparrow nested in it.

The author described Czech resentment of Habsburg symbols, comparing the Czechs to the Swiss of Gessler's time. The writer likened Gessler's hat to the

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[511] Gunda Achleitner and Bernard Denscher, eds. *Der Wehrmann in Eisen: Nägel für den guten Zweck/Nails for a Good Cause* (Vienna: Verlag Bibliothek der Provinz, 2014) 26, 30-38.

[512] For more on the cultural and linguistic construction of a Czech national identity following the First World War, see Cynthia Paces, *Prague Panoramas: National Memory and Sacred Space in the Twentieth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), Chapter 5; Cynthia Paces and Nancy M. Wingfield, "The Sacred and the Profane: Religion and Nationalism in the Bohemian Lands, 1880-1920," in *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*, ed. Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblit (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 115-121; and Nancy M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints*, Chapter 5.

[513] *Moravská orlice*, March 30, 1919, 3.

Wehrmann, claiming that the memorial had been a source of amusement among Czechs from the moment of its unveiling. The 1930 article claimed that the statue had a strange appearance, as if it were "absent-minded" and "naked." The author also remarked that the sculptor had carved the statue's face to reflect a certain "German hardness." However, Brünn/Brno had been a predominantly German-speaking city, and *Lidové Noviny*, though subject to wartime censorship, had not been critical of the statue during the war. The author observed that while the nails covering the statue had filled in quickly, this was in part a result of nailing ceremonies involving school students, who could participate in the nailing at a reduced rate. This meant that ceremonies did not raise sufficient funds. Moreover, the author contended, the memorial soon began to rust. Indeed, "The fate of the warrior in iron was as sad as its patron and all of Austria. He was disarmed before the K.u.k. Army. Even before October 28 some logically thinking resident pulled out of his hands the useless, rusty sword. And after the demise [of the Monarchy], residents of Brno knocked Gessler's hat to the ground."[514]

The Wehrmann embodied social as well as political change—the downfall of Habsburg social order and the establishment of Czechoslovakia. This *Lidové Noviny* article shows ascription of new meaning given to the statue after its removal from Náměstí Svobody. There no room for symbols of the Habsburg Monarchy in the public spaces of interwar Czechoslovakia, especially not a memorial that recalled the battle front sacrifices of men— "Czech" or "German"—who had died fighting for the Habsburg Monarchy. However, Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann was not destroyed, simply removed. Photographs show it standing inside the city's New Town Hall in 1942.

[514] *Lidové Noviny*, July 27, 1930, insert, 1.

Across the Habsburg Monarchy, nail memorials had been part of a unifying network aimed at reinforcing traditional patriarchal society and recognition of male sacrifice during the First World War. The varied afterlives of the memorials indicate that they failed to serve as a symbol uniting the Monarchy around a common Habsburg wartime project. However, the interwar efforts of successor states to remove the statues, as in Brünn/Brno, reflect their success as wartime symbols of the Monarchy. Their removal was part of a larger rejection of Habsburg monuments and symbols in the Monarchy's successor states. The postwar fates of these statues also offer a means to analyze masculinity. Vienna's Wehrmann, symbolic of Austria's emasculating defeat and the dismantling of the Monarchy, went into storage. The article on Brünn/Brno's Wehrmann indicates that triumphant Czechs, celebrating their vibrant and victorious young state, removed the memorial. The postwar lives of these memorials varied, dependent on the political developments in their location. Some of the nail memorials survived while others were torn down as representative of the defunct Monarchy. Some can be found today on display in museums, while others remain in storage, hidden from public view, such as Iglau/Jihlava's Wehrschild.[515] These memorials, which privileged male sacrifice, were part of an ongoing Habsburg-Central Europe-wide practice of commemoration that downplayed or ignored altogether home front and female wartime sacrifice. The breakdown of `Habsburg political and gendered social order created a situation in which a variety of interwar reactions were possible, and these nail statues and their fates serve as examples of some of those possibilities.

[515] The Wehrschild can be found in the Museum Vysočiny Jihlava's collection.

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